

[Deepika Sawhney](#)

1. Why should people who care about social justice vote for you?

Recently I have been volunteering with the sheltered families in Lexington, along with members from LexRAP and LICA. Interacting with little children, I have seen them share toys, food, and soothe others, even though they are not siblings. It reminds me that it should be easy to be caring, inclusive adults. We need to center our basic kind natures from childhood.

As an experienced town meeting member, I have come to rely on a mental rubric. Even though Lexington may appear quite homogenous on the surface, we have a complex population mixture with residents/citizens of varying age, ability, economic, faith, family, gender identity and race. Therefore, I prioritize the most vulnerable first, evaluating the impact on them, then consider public good versus private benefit/loss, and then ultimately the cost to the town budget (thence to all taxpayers). This rubric ensures that my decisions are in keeping with Lexington's progressive values while being fiscally responsible.

2. Why do you support or oppose LPS's Serious Talks curriculum?

I am fortunate to live in Massachusetts, which codifies in *An Act Relative to Gender Identity* (Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011, G.L. c. 76, §5 [DESE](#)) "*No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.*" Lexington Public Schools (LPS) has been following that guideline in its curriculum, instruction and operational practices. In all our curriculum reviews, every program is first researched, piloted, improved, and then evaluated before being used as the base for a more comprehensive curriculum districtwide.

The *Serious Talks* curriculum, or the *Understanding our Differences* program, reflects the world we live in. For some of our students, being unique can be scary and punitive. For others, differences can occasion mockery or bullying. These are serious consequences for any child. We are all aware of the mental health crisis amongst children. The Massachusetts Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (MYRBS) results show that sub-populations of students are often victimized and can inflict self harm. Our duty is to keep all children safe and thriving. As a graduate student in Prof Gretchen Brion-Meisels' class at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2022, I did a deep dive into our MYRBS data ([link](#)). As a course end assignment I designed a simple card game for children which introduced different family types ([link](#)). I support the DEI curriculum at LPS which makes learning a rich experience for all our students.