

NEWS

Parent, educator, Kate Campbell brings wide experience to Quincy School Committee race



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The Patriot Ledger

May 22, 2025, 4:30 a.m. ET

Key Points

Kate Campbell, an early childhood educator and director of Oxford Street childcare cooperative, is running for Quincy school committee.

Campbell prioritizes staff and open communication with parents.

Campbell has been a vocal proponent of adding Lunar New Year to the school calendar.

QUINCY – [Kate Campbell](#), an early childhood educator and director of the childcare cooperative [Oxford Street](#), has announced her bid for one of three open seats on Quincy's school committee.

Campbell joins incumbent [Tina Cahill](#) and three other challengers: [Tom Leung](#), [Kai Lee](#) and former Quincy High and Central Middle School principal Frank Santoro. Santoro sat on the school committee as recently as 2023, when he lost his reelection bid.

Committee members Douglas Gutro and Emily Lebo announced they will not seek reelection.

Campbell has two daughters who graduated from Quincy public schools. A third adopted daughter now attends kindergarten in the district and a fourth, pre-adoptive daughter will begin kindergarten next year.

She recently sat down with The Patriot Ledger at her home to discuss her experiences in education, the state of Quincy Public Schools and her years of advocacy in favor of [adding the Lunar New Year holiday](#) to the district's academic calendar.

A parent, a teacher, and administrator and an advocate

Campbell said she's experienced the educational system from many angles.

"It's given me a lot of different perspectives on what's happening in people's lives, what families and children need to be successful in a school setting," she said.

"As a parent ... I've experienced what life is like," she said. "As a teacher, I understand the resources teachers need. As an administrator, I have the ability to communicate effectively, to connect with parents."

Campbell directs a cooperative childcare center at Harvard University. Given the political climate, Campbell said she's had to think a lot lately about priorities.

"Your budget is your value statement," she said. "What do I value? I value my staff. I had to tell my teaching staff, hey, this (building) renovation is not going to happen. I value the staff, the people. They are resources more than the building we're in."

Campbell participated in Quincy's parent-teacher organization for a decade, serving as co-president for the last four years. The role keeps her informed of concerns from across the district, she said.

One issue that comes up frequently at PTO meetings is targeted bullying, Campbell said, an issue she has tackled before during home visits with parents of special education students.

"It taught me it's all about the relationship," Campbell said, relationship she said are forged by "leaning in" to ensure parents feel heard.

"Sometimes you just need to look at things more deeply so that someone's child has a more successful experience," Campbell added.

On teacher resources and parent communication

Another issue Campbell encounters in her advocacy is teacher resources.

Some parents, whose students see specialists as part of individualized education programs, experience anxiety over services, Campbell said.

For instance, if teachers are out sick, specialists may be called in to cover classes when substitutes can't be found, she said.

"If you have a child with any sort of unique or special educational needs, as a parent you feel more vulnerable about making sure that your child is getting everything they need to be successful."

Campbell said the situation increases anxiety, whether or not a child misses specialized instruction or therapy. Better communication would go along way toward addressing the problem, she said

"Unless there's a clear way to communicate that a child received their services, parents may make the assumption," Campbell said. "I think some of it is factual – kids missing services – and some of it is perception from a lack of communication that kids received their services."

Quincy elections 2025: [Tina Cahill seeks reelection to Quincy school board. Talks budget, Lunar New Year, more](#)

More: [Controversial issue draws second challenger to November field. What he has to say](#)

On the Lunar New Year debate

One of the more controversial issues debated in school committee over the past several years is whether to make Lunar New Year a day off from school.

Approximately 40% of the district's student body identifies as Asian. Advocates have pushed for the change for years, but the committee has repeatedly voted it down.

Campbell, whose husband and two of her daughters are of Chinese descent, has been at the forefront of Quincy's Lunar New Year movement.

"Until we had children, our first daughter, I didn't recognize how important it was," she said. "Now I know."

Campbell said her family observes Lunar New Year every year, inviting many guests to their home to celebrate. It's important for her family to have that time together, she said.

In Quincy, though schools remain open, students can have an excused absence provided they alert administrators in advance. But Campbell said the district's communication on this option falls short.

"No communication went out to all parents saying that children could stay home," she said. "That's where this year failed."

Quincy elections 2025: ['Representation is important.' Challenger announces bid for Quincy School Committee](#)

Lunar New Year debate: [Quincy council ordered schools closed on this holiday. They stayed open. What now?](#)

'I will push for more communication.' Strengths and weaknesses

Campbell singled out the district's educators and leadership, particularly Assistant Superintendent Erin Perkins, as strengths. She said communication with parents could improve.

The district does issue weekly notices highlighting special school events, an effort Campbell said she appreciates.

She recommended using the same format to communicate more significant issues, such as measures to improve student outcomes and how they're progressing.

"That home-to-school connection keeps parents engaged day in and day out," she said. "I will push for more communication."

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