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Ken Platform

* Work with teachers and administrators to close the educational gaps created by the pandemic.
* Support the Merrimack School District and teacher’s association to become one of the most desirable and competitive school districts in the state to work for.
* Create a 21st century learning environment that provides tools for every student to be successful in the real world.
* Address our student retention rate and find where the disconnect occurs.

**About Me:**

Born and raised in Manchester, NH my family and I moved to Merrimack in 2017 and we are thrilled to be establishing roots here.

On top of being a taxpayer and resident of our great town, I am also the parent of a 2nd grader at Mastricola Elementary School. For the past seven years, I have been the Director of Instrumental Music at Winnacunnet High School in Hampton, NH. I previously taught elementary and middle school band and general music classes in the Goffstown School District for 9 years

As a lifelong NH resident, I have been actively involved in our public schools in some aspect since I was 5 years old, as a student, educator and now parent. I served on the executive board for the New Hampshire Music Educators Association (NHMEA) for 10 years and have been a part of multiple educational committees and task forces for the NHMEA as well as the New Hampshire Department of Education.

There is no better reflection of the success of a community than its public schools.

Beyond being a source of rigorous curriculum and providing developmentally appropriate social-emotional learning, our schools should also be a source of inspiration. Students are challenged every day and our schools need to be ready for when those challenges arise. Schools need to be a safe, inclusive environment where all students and their families feel valued and appreciated. Our diversity makes us stronger and should be celebrated.

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## **Ingredients for Success**

## Two ingredients are needed in order for schools to be successful and we are very lucky that we already benefit from an abundance of riches with the first.

## **Educators**

## Our devoted, creative and talented educators in Merrimack create miracles every day. They deserve our respect, energy and support to ensure that they have the resources they need to continue the high level of educational standards that have been set. They must also uphold their end of the bargain and remain vigilant to their craft. Keeping up with the latest educational technology and practices is essential for our students to be ready for the real world in the 21st century.

## **Community Buy-In**

## The second ingredient is 100% buy-in from our community. A school’s success is a direct result of the community that supports it. Concerts, art exhibits, sports and academic showcases can be life changing moments in a child’s life and our community needs to be there to support those moments, both physically and emotionally. Community participation in schools needs to be encouraged. Whether it’s chaperoning a field trip, joining a booster club or volunteering to help in the library, community members should be encouraged to take an active role in the educational community

## **Budget Considerations**

## While I am an optimist by nature, it’s important to keep a focus on the financial realities that we face as a community. The past few years have been a challenge for everyone for a number of different reasons and we are all feeling those challenges in our check books. It is our duty to make sure our schools are financially supported and that those tax dollars are put to good, appropriate uses. I remember the paper shortages and lack of textbooks that we were forced to endure due to lack of funds during my student years in the Manchester School District. Despite the financial challenges, my teachers made our schools flourish and a place I wanted to be. When you have great teachers, money isn’t everything. But it can make things easier in a number of ways.

## **Outcome Flexibility**

Schools need to provide paths and opportunities for students to discover their passions and encourage them to explore those passions. There is not a “one size fits all” educational model that works for all students and families. Schools need to be flexible and explore educational avenues for those students who might thrive under alternative education assignments.

While college remains an appropriate and attainable option for many families after high school, it is imperative to recognize this path is not for everyone. Trade schools, the armed services, and the workforce remain as important today as they have ever been and we need to ensure that those students are also well equipped with the skills they need to walk down those paths.

I have been in schools with massive budgets and never ending resources. I have been in schools without financial or community support. These experiences provide me with valuable insights into not only what makes a school successful, but also to assess what things aren't working. I ask for your trust and the opportunity to make positive change in the education of our most important community asset, the children of Merrimack.