

2025 BMRB/Dorchester Reporter CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: BACKGROUND/PERSONAL

1. What is your name, age, and neighborhood where you live?
My name is Rachel Nicole Miselman. I am 53 years old. I live in East Boston.
2. What is your present occupation? I work as an educator. Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy. I have also worked as an associate in a law firm with a focus on land and housing issues. My formation is, in fact, that of a barrister with a concentration in human rights. I received further training in this area of law in Austria, Belgium, Hungary, and Israel.
3. Please detail your educational background and achievements. I graduated from Boston Latin School. I then received an A.B. from Harvard/Radcliffe. I later received an LL.M. Finally, I finished my bar vocational course at the Inns of Court School of Law.
4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations, and political groups. I have spent the last seventeen years attending meetings with various civic associations and non-profits. I have equally spent a lot of time volunteering with the Boston Medical Reserve Corps over the last nine years. More recently, I became a member of CERT (Community Emergency Response Team).
5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader? Having worked in both the legal and educational fields, I learned to view situations holistically, find common ground among different interested parties, and explore creative ideas to broker sustainable solutions.
6. What are the three accomplishments you're most proud of?
I would say that the three achievements of which I am most proud are my graduation from Boston Latin School, my successful push to relaunch the Boston Human Rights Commission, and my advocacy and research over a two-year period to create and conceptualize a commission to combat anti-Semitism at the state level.
7. When not on the campaign trail, how do you relax? I enjoy walking in wooded areas and spending time by or on the water.

Section 2: POLITICS & ELECTIONS

1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology? I am a Republican. Pragmatism permeates my every act. Some people talk about common sense, but I believe that being pragmatic is more essential at this

stage. There is so much polarization in Boston. I prioritize results. So, I am willing to sit down with people from a wide variety of backgrounds to find solutions.

2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices. Shirley Chisholm is definitely one of my role models. She showed tremendous courage, grace, and poise under such extreme circumstances. I think what really stayed with me was her visit to Governor Wallace after he had been shot. She was an incredible force of nature. With her visit, she built a bridge where others could only ever see a divide.
3. What would you do to increase voter turnout in the city of Boston, especially for local races? I would like to advocate for a program on municipal level that would be modeled on the Citizens' Legislative Seminar. This would teach adults about the history and purpose of the Boston City Council. It would also offer residents the chance to debate and discuss issues and proposals as councilors in a mock meeting.

Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES

1. What is your top priority if elected? How would you use your role as a city councillor to help address or accomplish it? I actually have three top priorities: 1.) expanded and more strategic educational opportunities for residents 2.) public safety and 3.) economic growth.

I would, however, put a lot of muscle into crafting proposals to address, once and for all, the City of Boston's two Methadone Miles as the problems that flow from these two danger zones threaten to engulf the whole city.

2. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain. Respectfully, the Department of Equity and Inclusion needs an overhaul. There have been hate crimes against the Jewish community, and not much, if anything, has been done in response. Next, throughout the City of Boston, many people feel left out of the conversations in which decisions are made. Finally, given the importance of the ideas of diversity and equity, the department's operations and the initiatives should be public knowledge. People should know that this department exists and its purpose.
3. What is your position on residency requirements, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston? I really think that it is best for city workers to live in Boston. However, municipal workers must be paid a livable wage. Improvements have to be made to the City's infrastructure. Most critically, issues around public safety must be discussed and addressed. All of this would ensure that someone, municipal worker or not, could live comfortably here.
4. Do you favor a return to an elected School Committee? Please explain. I favor a hybrid school committee. I believe that a mix of elected and appointed members

could offer this body both stability and independence. It would then be more answerable to the people.

5. Boston is facing a housing shortage that is impacting the affordability of living in the city. Separately, the Wu administration is pursuing zoning reform to spur development in certain areas and wants to see a return of the city's population to 800,000. What is your assessment of this target — and what would your office do to balance growth with the concerns that many have about displacement in neighborhoods? While I appreciate the figure of 800,000, it has to be juxtaposed to the challenges that the City of Boston currently faces. Only then can a realistic timeline be put into place. Further, to strike a balance between a push for population growth and concerns over displacement, I would remain abreast of any development projects from the very beginning: initial conversations, Project Labor Agreements, etc.
6. Do you support the City's current Inclusionary Zoning policy, which was [revised](#) in 2023? If not, what changes would you make? I largely support the City's current Inclusionary Zoning policy. Nevertheless, I would be interested in exploring a (small) increase of the proportion of the project that is income-restricted.
7. What is your position on rent control? I believe that the real estate industry should be able to flourish, but people cannot be gouged. So, I support rent stabilization. Concerning rent control, I would want to look at what version is being proposed. Equally, I would want to create more economic opportunities. Housing has to become more affordable, but at the same time, I want people to have more money in their pockets. I do not simply want them to navigate any fiscal challenges more easily.
8. What is your assessment of the Wu administration's overall performance? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer. I think that at various critical points, concerns could have been easily assuaged had there been more apparent attempts to listen. Although I appreciate certain efforts that have been made in regard to the arts or creation of community spaces, I still feel that issues of development and use of green spaces are considerable. I also believe that the two Methadone Miles are really big knots that absolutely must be resolved. So, much improvement is needed in order for every neighborhood to prosper.
9. The August 2024 closure of Carney Hospital left a huge hole in the city's public health sector. What would you do as a city councillor to address this problem and what is your position on how the Dorchester campus of Carney Hospital should be re-purposed or re-developed? I would certainly push for the establishment of health centers in Hyde Park and West Roxbury! I would like to see the Dorchester campus of the Carney Hospital reopened. I spent a part of my childhood down the street from it, so I understand what this hospital meant to the community. If it must be re-purposed, I would like for it to become a community center, with a dedicated section for adult learning.

10. What are your plans to address traffic congestion, commuter safety and transportation needs? Please discuss bike lanes as part of your answer. I would work with members of the Massachusetts Legislature to put regulations on Uber and Lyft. Currently, drivers can pick up passengers anywhere in the Commonwealth. So, many drivers come to Boston. The City even sees many drivers from neighboring states. This greatly contributes to traffic congestion. In addition, as Boston now holds a seat on the MBTA board, residents should be able to be heard more easily. Respectfully, that is not the case, so I would want to see this member of the board be more proactive. Finally, bike lanes might be a good idea to lessen traffic congestion in some parts of the City. However, in light of Boston's layout, the weather, and the lack of implementation of a bike culture, it is, respectfully, not a feasible solution for the entire City throughout the year.
11. How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities? Youth and adults alike need places where they learn, build, and innovate. Not enough of those places exist. Further, at the risk of belaboring a point, more economic opportunities are desperately needed. Fulfillment on a multitude of levels can counter some of the gun violence. Finally, stress management and adequate mental health resources can help beat this scourge as well.
12. How would you confront the drug epidemic, safety, and sanitation issues affecting residents near Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard?
I would support Boston working with other municipalities to combat this issue as opposed to the City bearing the brunt of this pressure-cooker situation. Additionally, I would call upon the governor to support this idea and to talk to her counterparts in other states about partnerships and expectations.
13. According to DESE's most recent data, 40.4% of Boston's public schools were classified as 'requiring assistance or intervention. In June 2022, Boston Public Schools entered into an agreement with the state to make improvements to the state of the Boston Public Schools. As the agreement expired in June, how would you work to ensure continued accountability for the City's schools, close achievement gaps and ensure that all BPS students receive a quality education? As a councilor, I would tour schools at every opportunity and host monthly roundtables with BPS educators.
14. 81.6% of BPS students are classified as high needs, compared to 55.8% at the state level. Do you believe that BPS is adequately serving high needs students, including English language learners and special education students, and if not, what can be done to improve their approach? I think that educators are doing the best that they can, but they are sometimes asked to do too much. I think that there must be adequate staffing, which includes a sufficient number of paraprofessionals. This would better allow teachers to execute lesson plans without as many pauses or as much disruption. Concerning English language learners, there should be greater emphasis on reading and writing. The four components of language acquisition (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) are not always given equal attention.

15. Most of Boston's revenues come from property taxes, and robust new growth in recent years has enabled substantial budgetary increases, an average of 5.4% over the last decade. However, new growth in FY25 was \$90.5M, 25.7% less than FY24, and a slowdown in new construction in the city may impact future proceeds from the new growth that drives the City's budget.

How will you approach these budget challenges and balance the needs of residents and commercial property owners? In the City of Boston, money is being left on the table. The City can leverage its Sister Cities Program and explore other avenues to generate revenue. The go-to does not always have to be raising taxes; groups do not have to be inadvertently pitted against one another.

Thank you for participating in the Boston Municipal Research Bureau/Dorchester Reporter questionnaire. Please send the completed document as a PDF or WordDoc to dhalky@bmr.org by Friday, Aug. 15, 2025.