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To the members of the Berlin-Boylston Regional District School Committee:

Please consider this letter and enclosed resumé as my application for the open seat on the Berlin-Boylston School Committee.

I began teaching professionally after graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Spanish from the College of the Holy Cross in 2000, and have taught at a variety of levels, including middle and high school, as well as undergraduate courses at Boston College while a graduate student there. I have always been passionate about languages and education, seeking to help students expand their knowledge and understanding of other peoples and cultures while helping them develop their ability to communicate with these peoples in another language. From 2015 to 2024, I worked as a Spanish teacher at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. During my time there, I was able to teach a variety of class levels while working with my department to transition from traditional textbook-based curricula by developing authentic resource and proficiency based materials that focus on growth and achievement opportunities for students of all ability levels. I decided to resign at the end of the 2023-2024 school year so that I would have more time to spend with and support my family, especially as our youngest son was entering kindergarten in fall 2024. As a result, I was able to volunteer and chaperone various activities last year and share those experiences with him. While this school year began in much the same way, in November I made the decision to return to ABRHS to cover the classes of a former colleague who was out on medical leave. I originally planned to help out only for Term 2, but as the winter break approached, I realized I could not abandon my students (who had already experienced a tumultuous Term 1) nor my department, who have always been so supportive of me. Thus, I will continue teaching my classes at AB until my colleague returns or until the end of the school year if need be.

My family and I moved to Boylston in 2022, and my youngest son began attending Boylston Elementary School in the fall of 2024. Because I'm invested in making sure my child, along with the other students at BES, have the best possible educational experience, I have become involved with the district in a variety of ways. I've attended in person or watched through YouTube almost every School Committee meeting since the announcement of the need for an Interim Superintendent in the summer of 2024. Having unfortunately missed the meeting at BES that allowed for community input into the type of permanent superintendent we sought, I made sure to attend the one available at Berlin Memorial School so that I could contribute as well as learn what other parents' and community members' concerns were. I emailed early in the process in fall 2024 to ask to be added to the list of those interested in being on the superintendent search/interview committee and did apply in the fall through the Google Form sent out, though I wasn't selected. When the four superintendent finalists were selected, I made sure to attend each meet-and-greet session with them so that I could learn more about them in person and have the opportunity to talk with them, ask questions, and share my observations and concerns. Additionally, I was a parent member of the School Council at BES and attended monthly meetings during the 2024-2025 academic year. Also, during the fall of this school year, I volunteered multiple times at the BES library to assist the paraprofessional librarian in adding a significant number of books to the library's inventory so that students could have a greater variety of high-interest materials to choose from.

Being an educator gives me a unique perspective that I can share with the School Committee: I am able to understand how budgetary issues and committee decisions impact students, as I have experienced those impacts alongside them. For example, I know that this year the committee and district administration are trying to put together a level-funding budget to be approved by the towns. Given the current economy and the finite resources available, this makes sense. However, since the resources and services (such as energy, transportation, supplies, etc.) the schools need continue to become more

expensive, a level-funded budget actually translates into cuts which can affect student outcomes through increased class size, fewer course options, and loss of talented faculty and staff. Through attending both Berlin and Boylston Finance Committee meetings, I understand the financial limits of the towns. While I do not have an easy solution readily available, I would greatly like to help work toward one that has the least negative effect on the district's students and the education they receive.

I hope that, by sharing a bit about myself, I have shown the passion, commitment, and value I could bring to the School Committee. I recognize the steep learning curve that exists by joining the committee at this point in the year, in addition to the potentially large amount of work and time becoming a School Committee member would entail, and I am ready to meet that challenge. I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you all and discuss the ways I may be able to contribute to the community, the school district, and the School Committee.

Sincerely,

Tara A. Sujko