

Kellyanne Mahoney: Inclusive education needs Quaverly Rothenberg

I know the real Quaverly Rothenberg, and the picture some have painted of her as “uncivil” could not be further from the truth. I spent the majority of my career as a National Board-certified educator teaching in the Boston Public Schools and hold a master’s degree in special education. From that perspective, I value leaders who listen deeply and who will not look away when students with disabilities are being failed. Quaverly Rothenberg is one of those leaders.

Quaverly is not only a strong advocate for inclusive education — she lives it. As an openly autistic city councilor and a parent of children with special needs in Northampton’s schools, she brings lived experience and urgency to the conversation about how we support every learner. That voice matters more than ever. The recent Department of Elementary and Secondary Education findings show that our district has repeatedly failed to fully deliver on students’ IEPs. Families are understandably frustrated, and trust is shaken. We need councilors who will push for transparency and accountability, not remain silent.

Speaking up is not incivility; it is responsibility. Quaverly asks hard questions and refuses to accept vague reassurances when students’ rights are at stake. That persistence benefits every child and every family — not just those with disabilities. It’s the kind of courage I hope we model for our students: to name problems and work toward solutions.

I know Quaverly to be thoughtful, collaborative, and deeply invested in making Northampton a place where all kids can thrive. Her willingness to challenge the status quo is exactly what’s needed if we want meaningful change in our schools and our city. Ward 3 — and Northampton as a whole — will be stronger if we return Quaverly Rothenberg to the City Council. She is the right person for the job.

Kellyanne Mahoney

Northampton