

## **Craig Gruber's Response**

I believe my experiences in Special Education make me especially attuned to the needs of learners with special needs in Wayland. This began with my time as a high school teacher. In my first year of teaching, I had a student who I identified as dyslexic. Working with her, her parents, and the school, we got an IEP team together, arranged for the appropriate services, and not only got her through, but put her in a position in which she thrived! It was that experience that led me to understand the importance of special education programs. I took that experience with me through teaching in Maryland, my administrator training, and my work as a building administrator in Massachusetts. I have overseen guidance departments, and chaired IEP meetings. Everyone benefits when families, teachers, and administrators work in concert to develop a plan for student success that focuses on what is in the best interests of the child.

What has made Wayland one of the leaders in education and educational delivery in the state is the ability to identify children with special needs at the earliest opportunity, develop individualized educational plans to meet their needs, and implement those plans exceptionally well. Wayland's past exemplary practices in this area have made us well-known for our ability to assist every learner, from Gifted and Talented, mainstream, and those with special needs, 504 plans or IEPs. We are fortunate that we have the established mechanisms in place to ensure that every student has the best opportunity to succeed, and we as a community should ensure that we proceed on the path of doing what is in the best interest of every learner.

As a School Committee member, I want to ensure that Wayland continues its excellence in special education programming, and educational delivery. I am concerned by the high level of turnover Wayland has had in the special education program and I want to understand why the number of IEP's in Wayland is now being questioned. Bringing out the best in everyone is what Wayland Public Schools is all about. We all have a vested interest in special education. The skills and efforts by teachers to support special education students ultimately benefit all students. Wayland specializes in helping students thrive, and bringing resources to support students at all levels. As a member of the School Committee, I will work to ensure that we continue to provide the historical support that Wayland has been known for providing.