

Pioneer Valley Regional School District

Bernardston • Leyden • Northfield

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PVRSD Community,

I am writing to share information about write-in candidates for School Committee in the November 3, 2026 elections.

The district does not typically share information about write-in candidates. However, the district made errors that have had a consequential and negative impact on candidates. Given these errors, it is appropriate to share the names of the candidates affected.

We deeply regret the errors and have taken steps to ensure they are never repeated.

Three candidates: District missed deadline

Three district residents, all of whom are sitting school committee members, gathered the required signatures to have their names placed on the November ballot. The district missed the deadline to send the certified names to the state by one day. The names, therefore, were not printed on the ballot.

The three residents must now run as write-in candidates. As this was the district's error, we are sharing the names of the write-in candidates:

Bernardston: **Melissa Gerry**
Leyden: **Sharon Fontaine**
Northfield: **Reina Dastous**

Leyden candidates: Historical error

The Secretary of State's office notified the district this summer of errors on school committee ballots going back several election cycles.

The impact during this election cycle is that two Leyden school committee members—who reasonably thought their seats were in place until 2028—must now run as write-in candidates. Again, as this was a district error, we are sharing the candidates' names:

Leyden: **Stephanie Arroyo**
Leyden: **Michele Giarusso**

In total, five people must now run as write-in candidates because of mistakes made by the district:

Bernardston: **Melissa Gerry**
Leyden: **Stephanie Arroyo**
Leyden: **Sharon Fontaine**
Leyden: **Michele Giarusso**
Northfield: **Reina Dastous**

Residential addresses: Not needed

The Secretary of State's office has advised that voters do not need to include the residential address of a write-in candidate in order for that vote to be counted – as long as the name is clear and the Town Clerk is therefore able to discern the intent of the voter.

For additional information about this challenging situation, please see these two memos to the School Committee: [9/1/26](#) and [10/8/26](#).

Lastly, while other community members may be running as write-in candidates, we are sharing only the five names above because these are the people who were directly and negatively affected by the district's errors.

If you have any questions about this information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Patricia Kinsella](#)

Superintendent