

## More Letters

### Vote for David Chen

#### To the editor:

We need David Chen on the Souhegan School Board in order to get adequate attention applied to the problem of high fixed costs during times of declining enrollment. He showed great thoughtfulness and courage when he raised this topic forcefully in the 2014 Deliberative Session. David is the only person we can count on to keep the pressure on and get the costs down and in line with the population of the school.

*Peter de Bruyn Kops  
Amherst*

### Support for Dwayne Purvis for SCSB

#### To the editor:

I am writing in support of Dwayne Purvis for Souhegan Cooperative School Board (SCSB). I believe Dwayne has the commitment necessary to fulfill this obligation with integrity and purpose. School Board members face the difficult challenge of balancing the educational needs of our students within the constraints of limited resources. Dwayne has demonstrated his commitment to learning both the budgetary, as well as the policy work board members undertake on a regular basis. He has been a consistent participatory member of the audience at the Souhegan, Amherst, and SAU School Board meetings over the last 3 years, and served as a member of the Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee for the last 2 years. As a member of the Amherst School Board, I have known Dwayne to be steadfast in his expectation of excellence. He is respectful, involved, and dedicated, and I am certain that he will bring these qualities to the SCSB.

*Thank you,  
Amy Facey  
Amherst*

### Nate Jensen For Amherst Selectman

#### To the editor:

My name is Nate Jensen and I am running for one of the two open seats on the town's Board of Selectmen. I am honored to have this chance at another capacity to serve the town that I have come to love so much.

Since I first put myself forward for a position on the Select Board two years ago, I have immersed myself in town government and I believe I am well prepared for the serious work of the coming three years. I am currently Co-Chair of the Town Ways and Means Committee and I was deeply involved in our due diligence and cost cutting advocacy for the fiscal year 2015 and 2016 budget cycles. In 2014, the voters of the town elected me moderator of the Amherst School District (Clark-Wilkins School and the Amherst Middle School) and I conducted the FY 2016 deliberative session (my first) just last month. In addition to those roles, I have been an on-call fire fighter for almost five years and I have been an active member of various other community, charity, and social organizations in town and across the state.

Before getting involved in Amherst, I had an extensive career in public service and private industry. I began as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Eastern Europe. After a Masters Degree in Political Science at Boston University, I entered the U.S. Foreign Service and developed broad experience in government at the federal and international level as a diplomat in some of the hardest places on Earth. After leaving State, I received my MBA at USC and entered the private sector where I worked in several large corporations, as well as consulted with and helped found several Internet startups. In 2012, I retired from business so I could be the stay-at-home parent for our sons Stuart and Drake while my wife and best friend Amanda has continued her business career.

My three main goals for my term as Selectman are: 1) to continue the strong efforts of the current board to keep town government as transparent and responsive to the public as possible; 2) to build on the strategic planning process initiated over the last few years in order to set clear, long term goals for the town and the town's departments and to develop standard performance metrics to measure and report our ability to meet those goals; and 3) to refine the budget planning process according to a repeatable schedule to ensure that we are as efficient and cost conscious as we can be. Above all, I will work to keep our municipal tax rate as low as possible and our town services the best value for residents.

Please vote for me on March 10th.

*Warm regards,  
Nate Jensen  
Amherst*

*Sincerely  
Paul Spiess  
Amherst*

### We Strongly Encourage Yes Vote on Full Day Kindergarten

#### To the editor:

We, the members of the Amherst School District Ways and Means Committee, who voted in the majority for Warrant Article 13, Full Day Kindergarten, strongly urge the citizens of Amherst to be fully informed about having a full day Kindergarten in Amherst.

The curriculum that the Amherst School Board and the SAU have already implemented in accordance with NH state standards has increase requirements and expectations for Kindergarten students in reading and math. The teachers have worked hard this year addressing the requirements. However, they have found it difficult in the current half-day program to teach the required material, allow time for the students to demonstrate they understand the concepts, and also have time to address the students' social and emotional needs in the classroom setting. A full day program will give the teachers more time to properly teach and work with students to make sure they are not sent to first grade already behind in their academic requirements. The academic expectations will not change with a full day program because those expectations are already in place. A full day would allow the students to meet the expectations in a less stressful way and give the teachers more time to truly meet all the academic, social and emotional needs of the students.

The School Board and the SAU Curriculum Director have stated that the Full Day Kindergarten program would include instruction time, time for the students to practice what they learn in a proper educational/play setting, art, music, and physical education. The teachers would be given the time to work with the students on any social and emotional issues that arise during the day.

The reason for the Full Day Kindergarten Program that is being put forward to the tax payers, is because it does address all Amherst Kindergarten students. There are other local communities that have added a full day kindergarten program as a paid option for parents without added cost to the taxpayers. The Amherst School Board, Principal and other administrators feel strongly that this type of program is NOT in the best interest of our students, and we agree. In such a program, the teaching of academics is still compressed into the first half of the day as it would be inequitable to the students who do not attend school the rest of the day. The students who cannot afford the tuition or are not selected into the "lottery" miss out on having the time to further develop their skills, including social and emotional.

As we do for all aspects of the proposed budget and warrant articles, Ways & Means conducted due diligence in examining the value of having a full day kindergarten. Research in favor of full day kindergarten was well presented and was further supported by experts in the field of education and economics. The information provided by the SAU and the School Board is available on the SAU website (<http://sau39.org>). Further research and information is available on the following link <http://amherst-full-day-k.org>.

The full day Kindergarten warrant article presents our community with the opportunity to see our tax dollars directly benefit every child who comes through the Amherst School District. We recommend a yes vote on Warrant Article 13, Full Day Kindergarten in Amherst, we strongly encourage you to vote on Tuesday, March 10, 2015.

*Claire Bryson  
Stephanie Grund  
Gene Kuczewski  
Mark Vincent*

### David Chen Deserves Our Support for Souhegan School Board

#### To the editor:

David Chen is running to represent Amherst on the Souhegan High School Board and he deserves our support. David is a long term resident of this community, raised his two sons in the Amherst school system, and has been an active member in community affairs and youth sports programs. In recent years he has served on the Souhegan Budget Committee, and is familiar with the school's finances and distinct philosophy.

Recently, David has raised important questions about the high school's cost structure and its "costs per pupil" relative to other comparative school systems (see letters to the editor in the January 27 issue). His findings and perspective are important and, in my opinion, the Board needs to initiate a public process to develop a plan to bring costs in line with other high performing districts.

Having brought these issues forward to the Board and the public, David has decided to seek a position on the Board to advance his concerns. I think that our community will be well served if David is elected and can continue to promote efficiency and accountability on the Souhegan School Board.

### The Metrics Don't Add to Justify Full Day Kindergarten

#### To the editor:

We, the minority on Ways & Means, do not support full day kindergarten and here are the metrics.

0 – the number of studies that show a positive effect of full day over half day kindergarten past the 3rd grade. The Friedman article reports results of kindergarten vs. no kindergarten. Hanover Research paper supports this statement.

87 – the number of SAU's with full day kindergarten; the majority of these programs are funded thru Title I and parent paid tuition. The closest examples, Hollis and Bedford, are full day for those who choose to pay tuition, basically day care.

0 – the number of other SAU's with the same program that is proposed for Amherst. In researching other SAU's and in phone calls to them, we could find no other district utilizing the proposed Amherst model.

0 – the number of tracking metrics currently in place to follow any changes to curriculum.

0 – the number of proposed tracking metrics to determine if this will help or hinder our children. There is currently no data presented to us that shows the need for this program or will reflect any outcomes to this program. The district will implement a change, not measure before or after results and declare success. We have done this in the past; remember Whole Language and New Math? We could spend the next 5 years and nearly \$3 million dollars and discover that we are doing more harm than good.

0 – the number of realtors we could find who agree with the statement that higher taxes mean higher home values. Standard response to that claim was "HUH?" They do report that Bedford, with a much lower cost per pupil, is much easier to sell.

**\$620,000 – the cost of the first year of this program**

**\$550,000 to \$580,000 – the cost of this program, per year, over the subsequent 4 years.**

Brings the total to nearly \$3 million with no certainty that this will produce any positive results. We have heard 2 responses to this metric. "So what?" and "Sometimes you just have to throw the dice and see what happens." As members of the Ways Means, we feel it is irresponsible to gamble with your money, or your children.

We have been asked to support a program whose need has not been measured except in anecdotal stories, whose outcome will not be measured and whose impact on the children is unclear. These are the reasons we have said no. We ask that you join us until better metrics are in place.

*Amherst School District Ways & Means  
Full Day Kindergarten Minority Opinion  
Tedd Landon, Donni Hodgkins, Fred  
Iannelli*

### Don't Shoot The Messenger Exoneration for Punxsutawney Phil

MILFORD - The court of public opinion at Hampshire Hills Athletic Club declared full exoneration for Punxsutawney Phil. Citing the tenet of **Don't Shoot The Messenger** the club offered Phil asylum in hopes he would become so comfortable he would no longer fear his shadow. The club's FIVE acre indoor complex is replete with saunas, steam rooms, warm swimming pools, a hot whirlpool, indoor fields, and sun filled rooms.



After a short visit Phil said "Hey, I could get used to this. It's better than Bermuda." Phil also noted, "Hampshire Hills doesn't give me that caged in feeling that other clubs do." Who knows, after a few good workouts with some of the world's top trainers Phil might just be ready for summer. Are you?

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(L) Heather Leach  
(M) Mike Rasmussen  
(R) Karen Keating

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**NEXT ISSUE:**  
Tuesday, March 24

**DEADLINE:**  
Wednesday, March 18

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