

## Out of Control School Budgets

To the editor:

I was appalled when I read that Lucienne Foulks, chair of the Amherst School Board, justified the need for all day kindergarten as the "best decision to increase our property values". I, for one, am sick and tired of the repetitive tax increases in this town brought about by the actions of the school boards in a row of year after year declining enrollments. There must be no one on these boards who understands that salaries are not keeping up with tax increases. To justify a full day of kindergarten based on an increase in property values is nuts, to say the least, but to say it politely, it is called "collapse of domains." Since when do we expect elected public representatives to be making their spending decisions based upon what would or would not increase our property values? NUTS! NUTS! NUTS!

There is an issue about whether children learn better at an all day kindergarten, an incredibly expensive program. In the Huffington Post I found an interesting article that said:

"A reasonable compromise would consist of offering part-time instruction in the morning and allowing parents the option to pay for afternoon care if they so desire. This afternoon care could be delivered by a fully accredited teacher, an Early Childhood Educator, or a day care worker, depending on a parent's desire or ability to pay."

Do little kids really possess the capacity to pay attention all day? I will not be voting for this, or any increase in any school budgets for the foreseeable future.

Linda Kaiser  
Amherst

## Dokmo for Cemetery Trustee

To the editor:

My name is Cynthia Dokmo and I am running for the position of Cemetery Trustee in the upcoming election. During the 36 years I have made Amherst my home, I have volunteered in the schools, served on the Planning Board, the Amherst School Board, as your State Representative, and as Moderator of the Souhegan School District. I continue to actively participate in several local organizations. I am running for Trustee because I believe that my knowledge, experience and perspective would be an asset to the position. As a retired attorney, I have the time, energy and interest to fulfill the fiduciary duties required of a Cemetery Trustee. I have no personal agenda, other than to continue to serve the citizens of Amherst. I would appreciate your vote on March 10th.

Cynthia Dokmo  
Amherst

## All Day Kindergarten – Yes or No?

To the editor:

In January 1991 I moved with my family to Amherst. When we arrived there was no public Kindergarten in the Amherst Public Schools and Souhegan High School was not yet open. Hard to imagine 24 years later what our lives would be like without SHS or Kindergarten at Clark School. I do recall a vigorous discussion surrounding establishing public Kindergarten – very strong feelings from both sides when townspeople brought the issue forward. I have observed the debate/discussion in 2015 of expanding Kindergarten in Amherst from a half day to all day. I am impressed at the passion with which people explain their position on the issue and am reminded that it is somewhat similar to the discussion of @ 20 years ago.

While my children are well beyond Kindergarten age I do have interest in the topic as a citizen and taxpayer of Amherst and as a local residential real estate broker. Today's home buyer has access to many online resources to learn about a town. A year ago a buyer who googled Amherst might have found information about voters choosing between a playground and a cemetery. Those of us who live here know the issue was much more complex than simply choosing a cemetery or a playground. But in the fast paced, internet based, social media crazed world we live in the message was clear: Amherst NH voters chose a cemetery over a playground. Today a search of Amherst might yield results about all day Kindergarten vs half day Kindergarten. It is difficult to determine if the lack of all day Kindergarten in Amherst influences a buyer's decision to move to our town. May I suggest to voters who have not made up their minds that they consider how outsiders might view an all day Kindergarten program? Will all day Kindergarten make Amherst an even more desirable place to live? A better place to buy a home and raise a family?

I think all day Kindergarten improves and enhances the educational offering in Amherst and makes our town an even more attractive place to live... for me all day Kindergarten is easy to support.

Anne McNallen  
Amherst

## School News



Front Row – Mike Mancini, Shaina Eichel, Olivia Cerra, Katie Casey, Duncan Szok, Tom Carlson, Alex Rubright; Middle Row – Emma Johansen, Brooke Tanguay, Hannah Howe, Rhiannon Allison, Rachel Gagliuso, Ms Rakhimshanova, Ms Rahmetova, Ms Tusarova, Mr. Alimkhanov, Lloyd Mosher, Collin Titus, Abby Fitzgerald, Callie Cinque, Josh Massa; Back Row – Jerrell Webster, Tyler Judkins, Alex Williams, Hannah Chick, David Wiczerczak, Spencer Rees, Brad Wall, Danny Tiso, Jeff Johansen, Nick Herbert

## Visitors from the Youth Information Services of Kazakhstan Visit SHS

On Monday, February 9, a group of Souhegan juniors in the World Studies/World Literature classes of Adam Theriault and Kathy Maddock met with four visitors from the Youth Information Services of Kazakhstan. The Youth Information

Services is a nonprofit organization that unites young people of Kazakhstan "to contribute their knowledge, energy and intellect to the development and prosperity of Kazakhstan." Ms Rakhimzhanova, Ms Rhametova, Ms Tusa-

rova and Mr. Alimkhanov were visiting the area through the efforts of the World Affairs Council of New Hampshire and discussed with Souhegan students the similarities and differences across their and American cultures.

## SHS Track Needs Replacement

SUBMITTED BY SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD

The track at Souhegan High School, installed in 1991, has seen its share of use and enjoyment. Most mornings and evenings, you will see community members, both young and old, using the facility for exercise, training, or simply a safe place to walk while socializing with friends. Souhegan's highly successful track program has developed over the years, with its members using that same track to train their bodies as well as learn about sportsmanship and cheer each other on through victory and defeat. And cheerleaders have spent many a Friday night on that same track, cheering on the Souhegan football team. In addition, Souhegan's track remains the training grounds for the Amherst Middle School's track team, as well as countless Recreation Department groups. But now, the track has seen its better days and with all this wear, it has become unsafe.

In 2007, two different suppliers recommended that the complete base and surface of the track be replaced. As is often the case, to save money in the short term, the School Board approved the funding for resurfacing only. That resurfacing was

meant to last only three years and suppliers will not support another resurfacing as a viable option due to the condition of the base.

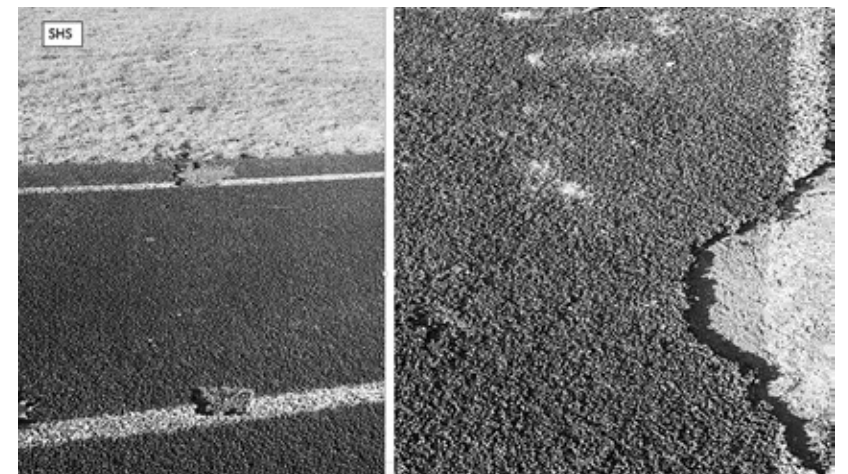
The 2010 Gale Report, commissioned by the School Board to comprehensively report on the state of our facilities, recommended a full track replacement, noting base layer deterioration and cracking and surface delamination, typical of asphalt aging.

Fast forward to today, 2015, and the track is now a safety issue for all those who come to enjoy it. George Bower, a long time Amherst resident, has been coaching track and field since 1978 at the collegiate and post-collegiate level, with our Amherst Recreation Department program, and at our high school. George explained the safety risks well in these comments, "Currently the condition of the track surface has deteriorated to a point that it is unsafe to use for many events. In the Amherst Track and Field youth program we have stopped coaching hurdles because the surface is so worn and irregular that you can not reliably take off over the hurdle with the take off leg nor land with the lead foot. The same unacceptable

risk of injury exists with the high jump, long jump, triple jump and pole vault. When the surface is wet it poses even greater risk." He went on to say, "There are areas that are worn and the underlying asphalt is exposed. This is unacceptable. The granules of crumb rubber are also loose on the surface due to the deterioration. The rubber granules actually act like small ball bearing under your foot."

For these reasons, the Souhegan Cooperative School Board is asking for your support on Warrant Article 4 to replace the track. While the to-

tal cost of the track is \$220,000, the Board is asking for your permission to raise \$110,000 of the cost to be by taxation. The remaining \$110,000 will be withdrawn from the School Maintenance Fund, an expendable trust fund established for this type of purpose. A majority vote is required to pass. Please come out March 10, 2015 to support this article. Amherst voters vote at Souhegan High School from 6 am to 8 pm. Mont Vernon residents vote at the Mont Vernon Village School from 7 am to 7 pm. Thank you for your consideration.



The Souhegan track shows significant wear and needs replacement

**ARTICLE 5**  
Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District vote to raise and appropriate up to \$65,000 from the year-end undesignated fund balance (surplus) if available on July 1, 2015 to be added to the Expendable Trust Fund known as the School Maintenance Fund previously established in March, 2005?  
Majority vote required to pass.

The estimated tax impact of this article is an increase of \$0.03 per \$1000 of assessment for Amherst.

The estimated tax impact of this article is an increase of \$0.04 per \$1000 of assessment for Mont Vernon.

The Souhegan Cooperative School Board unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 7 to 0.  
The Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 7 to 0.

YES  NO

End of Ballot

**OFFICIAL BALLOT**

**SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ELECTION**

**MARCH 10, 2015**

*C. Butler*  
Catherine Jo Butler  
School District Clerk

For use by Mont Vernon Voters

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Instructions to Voters  
Vote Yes or No on questions by making a cross (X) in the box next to your choice.

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**SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT ARTICLES**

**ARTICLE 2**  
Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amount set forth on the budget posted with the warrant, or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$18,161,347? Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be \$17,992,364 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Souhegan Cooperative School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.  
Majority vote required to pass.

The estimated tax impact of passing this article is an increase of \$0.07 per \$1000 of assessment for Amherst and a decrease of \$0.01 per \$1000 of assessment for Mont Vernon.  
The estimated tax impact of not passing this article is a decrease of \$0.02 per \$1000 of assessment for Amherst and a decrease of \$0.11 per \$1000 of assessment for Mont Vernon.

The Souhegan Cooperative School Board unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 7 to 0.  
The Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 6 to 2.

YES  NO

**ARTICLE 3**  
Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District vote to approve the costs included in the agreement reached between the Souhegan Cooperative School Board and the professional and support staff of Souhegan Cooperative High School which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at current staffing levels:

Year	Estimated Costs
2015-2016	\$29,894
2016-2017	\$80,377

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$29,894 for the 2015 – 2016 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits over those of the appropriation at current staffing levels?  
Majority vote required to pass.

The estimated tax impact of this article is an increase of \$0.01 per \$1000 of assessment for Amherst.  
The estimated tax impact of this article is an increase of \$0.02 per \$1000 of assessment for Mont Vernon.

The Souhegan Cooperative School Board unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 7 to 0.  
The Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 7 to 0.

YES  NO

**ARTICLE 4**  
Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate \$220,000 to replace the running track at Souhegan High School due to the safety concerns over the existing condition of the track, with \$110,000 to be withdrawn from an expendable trust fund for this purpose known as the School Maintenance Fund previously established in March 2005 and \$110,000 to be raised by taxation?  
Majority vote required to pass.

The estimated tax impact of this article is an increase of \$0.06 per \$1000 of assessment for Amherst.  
The estimated tax impact of this article is an increase of \$0.07 per \$1000 of assessment for Mont Vernon.

The Souhegan Cooperative School Board unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 7 to 0.  
The Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee unanimously recommends the passage of this article by a vote of 7 to 0.

YES  NO

Please turn over to continue to vote...