

# Schools

## Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching Granted to Souhegan School Teacher, Jennifer Deenik

WASHINGTON, DC -- President Obama recently named Souhegan High School Science teacher, Jennifer Deenik, as a recipient of the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

As a 10th grade biology teacher for 18 years at Souhegan High School, which serves the towns of Amherst and Mont Vernon New Hampshire, Jenny Deenik has led the way in using dynamic inquiry-based science in her classroom to engage students in authentic learning experiences. An example of her innovative approach to teaching is her collaboration with The Concord Consortium to pilot a genetics software program. Geniverse is an inquiry based program in which students learn about Mendelian and Non-Mendelian genetic concepts while breeding dragons. The students are challenged to apply their learning to solve the heredity problems that arise in their dragon flocks. "I love the discussions in my classroom that are born from curiosity and an innate desire to learn," Deenik said, adding, "I work very hard to ensure that every student in my classroom has the opportunity to challenge and push themselves out of their cognitive comfort levels. The award



Jenny Deenik receives Presidential Award

is testament to my goal of providing authentic and engaged learning experiences for all of my students every day."

Souhegan High School Principal, Rob Scully echoes Deenik's efforts, saying, "Jenny epitomizes the spirit and intent of this award. She is tireless in her efforts to challenge students to think critically and creatively. Her classroom is a dynamic learning environment based on collaboration and inquiry."

In addition to her classroom responsibilities, Deenik is a lead facilitator of the Critical Friends Group program in her district in which teachers focus on student learning and engagement in reflective dialogue in order to create transformational learning experiences for all students. Deenik is also the coordinator for the school-wide advisory program, which is designed to personalize the educational experience for students. Deenik has a B.S. and M.S. in natural resources and a M.S. in secondary education from the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH.

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is awarded annually to outstanding K-12 science and mathematics teachers from across the country. The winners are selected by a panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and educators following an initial selection process done at the state level. Each year the award alternates between teachers teaching kindergarten through 6th grade and those teaching 7th through 12th grades. This year's awardees teach 7th through 12th grade.

"These teachers are shaping America's success through their

passion for math and science," President Obama said. "Their leadership and commitment empower our children to think critically and creatively about science, technology, engineering, and math. The work these teachers are doing in our classrooms today will help ensure that America stays on the cutting edge tomorrow."

Indeed, Scully values Deenik's commitment not only to her discipline, but more importantly, to her students, saying, "This award recognizes an understated but profound characteristic of excellent educators: sincerity. Jenny is genuinely committed to student learning. She is determined to provide every student with a dynamic learning experience. Jenny sincerely believes in science being taught in the spirit of exploration and collaboration. We are already extremely proud of her for her daily efforts on behalf of our students. This award allows us to pause and offer adequate gratitude for her amazing efforts."

Winners of this Presidential honor receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation to be used at their discretion. They also are invited to Washington, DC to formally receive their awards, attend educational and celebratory events, and visit with members of the Administration. This year's awardees represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools.



**From the Office of The Superintendent of Schools SAU 39**

**Happy summer everyone! I hope this short letter finds you healthy and rested.**

**Join us at these important meetings:**

On Thursday, August 27th at 6:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor of the Souhegan Learning Commons, I will present the SAU #39 Strategic Plan. Our school board members committed many hours to the construction of this comprehensive plan for the future, and I am proud to present this to you.

On Thursday, August 6th there will be a Public Forum on the proposal for a new Turf Field at Souhegan High School. You may know that a local businessman has come forward with a donation of \$500,000 to support the installation of the field. The Forum begins at 7:00 p.m. in the high school theater. Information about the forum can be found at [sau39.org](http://sau39.org)

**Let's celebrate:**

- Mont Vernon Village School will provide a full day kindergarten program for its students for the first time this fall.
- Jenny Deenik, a Science teacher at Souhegan High School, was recently awarded the prestigious
- Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science. More information regarding Jenny's award can be found at [sau39.org](http://sau39.org).
- Members of the Souhegan High School Class of 2015 were accepted to over 200 colleges, technical schools and universities.

**A fond farewell:**

A special farewell to our recent retirees and those who have accepted new positions. We wish you all the best in the coming years.

**A final thought:**

I wanted to share a quote that I heard recently:

*"The most influential of all educational factors is the conversation in the child's home."*

— William Temple

We appreciate your feedback and the support of our schools. As always, please feel to let us know if you have questions or suggestions. We are looking forward to another exciting school year.

Sincerely,  
Peter Warburton,  
Superintendent of Schools



"Village Gem" by Jeff Hall



"Hand and Butterfly" by Eric Bouldin

### Friends of the Amherst Town Library

## Teachers and Staff from Amherst School Districts Art Show

The Friends of the library would like to welcome some superheroes from our school districts who are displaying some of their beautiful art pieces at the Amherst Town Library. The faculty and staff from Clark-Wilkins, Mont Vernon Vil-

lage, Amherst Middle, and Souhegan High schools were invited to participate in a six week exhibit from mid July to the end of August of their personal artwork honoring their talents outside teaching our children. Come on in to see some

gorgeous wood carvings, amazing pencil drawings, serene photographs, and whimsical paintings on the main floor of the library. Eric Bouldin, MaryBeth Gilpin, Amy Hanson, Lisa Lyon, Mary Prescott-Ninness are participating

from Clark-Wilkins Elementary School. Jeff Hall and Martha Rives are participating from Souhegan High School and Sue Leger from SAU 39 Office is also participating.

### AMS Soccer Coach

Amherst Middle School has an opening for girls soccer coach. Season begins on August 31 and ends in mid October. If interested please contact Athletic Director Jeff Wing by email at [jwing@sprise.com](mailto:jwing@sprise.com).

### Attention Graduates Class of 2010

Cumulative folders are available to graduates of the Class of 2010. They can be picked up in Student Services between 7:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Please call ahead (673-9940 ext. 5308 or 5309) so that your cum folder will be available when you arrive. All folders not claimed by Monday, August 3rd will be destroyed.

### Renovation of SHS Track: Work in Progress

Voter-approved renovation of the Souhegan HS track started in early June and has continued throughout the summer. Those attending the Independence Day celebrations at SHS noted the work in progress

1. Old surface is dug up, ground up and deposited as the base for the new track installation.
2. Concrete drainage system is a multi-step construction process.
3. Completed drainage system will

serve the new track and can accommodate the proposed artificial turf field.

4. Track is graded in preparation for the surface installation.
5. Two layers of pavement are applied prior to the topmost track surface.

The track awaits the final surfacing, painting and finishing touches. Returning Souhegan athletes as well as community members should be "back on track" in late August.

### ► Turf Field Hearing

at 7pm in the Souhegan High School auditorium to learn about turf field construction, its benefits and costs and plans for fundraising. The hearing will include local presenters and professionals. Members of the public are invited to participate.

When the donation was announced, the Souhegan School

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Board made it clear that it would commit no public funds to construction. Hence, plans have been laid to secure the additional \$500K as well as funds to pay for the ongoing maintenance. Other matters, including the use of capital reserve account and a usage fee schedule for non-Souhegan activities, are also being addressed.

**REGISTER NOW FOR BACK TO SCHOOL CLASSES!**

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[amherstkaratestudio.com](http://amherstkaratestudio.com)

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Nest Issue: August 25th

Preschool, ages 3-5  
Morning or Afternoon extended Kindergarten offered from 8:15 a.m. drop off, until 3:00 p.m. walk to Clark or pick up

- Social & emotional readiness
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- Family events
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**Souhegan High School Artificial Turf Field Public Forum**

You are invited to attend a community forum to discuss and take input on the artificial turf field proposed for the Souhegan High School Stadium.

Public Forum

Thursday, Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>

7 p.m.

SHS Theatre