

WARRANT ARTICLES - SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING

The following are the warrant articles that the Andover School District Meeting 2013 will vote on. Background information is provided, where appropriate, in square brackets [].

School District Meeting starts at 7 PM on Monday, March 4, in the Andover Elementary/Middle School gym.

ARTICLE 1: To see if the District will vote to accept the reports of Officials, Agents, Auditors, and/or Committees as printed in the School District report.

ARTICLE 2: To see if the District will vote to authorize the School Board to make application for, to accept and expend on behalf of the District any and all advances, grants, or other funds for educational purposes which may now or hereinafter be forthcoming from the United States of America and its agencies or from the State of New Hampshire and its agencies.

[This article must appear every year to authorize the School Board to accept and spend the state and federal aid it anticipates being available in a given year.]

ARTICLE 3: To see if the District will authorize the School Board to accept and expend on behalf of the District private gifts and contributions for

educational purposes.

[This article must appear every year to authorize the School Board to accept and spend private donations in a given year.]

ARTICLE 4: To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Million, Four Hundred Forty-Eight Thousand, Three Hundred Eighty-Six Dollars (\$4,448,386) for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries of school district officers and agents, and for the payment of statutory obligations of said district, and to authorize the application against said appropriation of such sums that are estimated to be raised from the state's equalization payment, together with other income. The School Board shall certify to the selectmen of Andover the amount to be raised by taxation of said town.

The Budget Committee recommends passing this article. The School Board recommends passing a budget in the amount of Four Million, Five Hundred Fifteen Thousand, Three Hundred Eighty-Six Dollars (\$4,515,386).

[This article raises the money to run the district and is worded according to regulations set forth by the Department of Revenue. The

amounts mentioned do not include any of the amounts mentioned in any of the other warrant articles. The amounts of all the warrant articles that pass get added together to determine the final 2013 School District budget.]

[The Budget Committee and the School Board each recommend a different budget. See "2013 Budgets Set For Annual Meetings" on page 1 of this issue and the complete School District budget on page 69 of the Andover Town Report 2012 for details.]

ARTICLE 5: To see if the School District will approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Andover School Board and the Andover Education Association, which calls for the following estimated increases in salaries and benefits:

2013-2014	\$36,142
2014-2015	\$29,657
2015-2016	\$30,027

And further, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$36,142 for the 2013-2014 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

The School Board recommends passing this article.

[Once School District Meeting approves a collective bargaining agreement, future budget-year amounts will appear in each future year's budget.]

[This budget-year's amount, however, couldn't be included in this year's budget because School District Meeting hadn't approved the agreement yet. So this warrant article asks the meeting to both approve the agreement *and* raise and appropriate the amount stipulated for this budget year.]

[The Budget Committee didn't vote on whether to recommend or not recommend this article.]

ARTICLE 6: To see if the School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty-Four Thousand, Four Hundred Twenty-Eight Dollars (\$64,428) to fund a full-day kindergarten program. The Budget Committee does not recommend passing this article. The School Board recommends passing this article.

[See page 13 for more information.]

ARTICLE 7: To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

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social skills that are expected to be mastered before kindergarten begins, such as remaining on task, following directions, and cooperating with peers (taken from Grade Level Expectations/Common Core State Standards, December 2012). With the exception of those children who have severe disabilities, most can learn

these basic skills before entering school, but many do not.

In order to learn, a student must be able to communicate through reading, writing, speaking, and receiving language. It has been stated that in the period between kindergarten through the third grade, a student learns to read, and beginning in the fourth grade a student reads to learn. Educators have the re-

sponsibility of teaching students to read early and read fluently. It is the foundation for all other skills. Therefore, it is relevant to provide as much intervention as possible to achieve this goal for each student at the primary level.

From the economic standpoint, investing in early education programming and supportive services can prevent long-term expenses in the area of Special Education. As students develop skills and self-confidence in their abilities, they become more motivated towards learning. In the future, there will be lower dropout rates, and a higher percentage of students will move on to postsecondary educational opportunities. Schools are expected to prepare our students to become productive and competent employees, having acquired the necessary skills to contribute to society. Supporting our early education programs is an investment in our future.

Warrant Article

A warrant article will be proposed to the taxpayers of the Andover School District at School District Meeting on Monday, March 4, asking for support in appropriating funding for the salary and benefits of a kindergarten teacher. The hiring of this position will allow the district to offer a full-day kindergarten program.

Full-day kindergarten has many advantages, including a smoother transition to the first grade. Students develop self-esteem and stamina, ready to approach the routine and structure of the years ahead. The "whole child" instructional approach received in the full-time kindergarten program benefits students

academically, socially, artistically, and physically with multisensory activities and lessons. Teachers are able to provide more observation time of individual students and are able to focus on any potential learning issues, developing intervention strategies. More time is spent on reading instruction compared to what is available in a part-time program.

From the perspective of Special Education professionals, early intervention is a preventive strategy towards further learning challenges, and this can be accomplished for many students if enrolled in a full-time kindergarten program.

In the February 2013 issue of *The Andover Beacon*, Andover Elementary/Middle School Kindergarten Classroom Teacher Laura Witt describes the time constraints of her current program, being able to devote approximately 90 minutes daily to core academics in a "typical" week. For the 40% of students mentioned above who enter school below grade level, there is extra time, teaching, and guidance required to support their areas of deficit beginning on that first day of school.

To accomplish this, along with providing for the needs of the average child and the student in need of enrichment challenges, is an enormous task. Preparing our children by providing them with a solid foundation through the provision of time and resources is not an aspiration, but a necessity. Our goal as educators is to help each and every child to become successful. Community support is relevant in advocating for School District Warrant Article 6. "It takes a village."

Robert Ofenloch, Dogsitter

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