

To the Woodbridge Boards of Selectmen and Finance
Woodbridge, CT
20 April, 2020

Greetings:

It has come to my attention that the Board of Finance has proposed cutting the budget of the Woodbridge Board of Education for 2020 to 2021, already held at .76%, and that one effect of that will be to reduce the hours of Library Media Specialist Larissa Crocco. Cutting the budget of the elementary school at all—especially while proposing large increases to a number of other town agencies—is almost impossible to understand. I am sure there are reasons to be sympathetic to all needs and requests and that the decision to reduce the funds of the school were difficult. However, the decision to trim .76% from the Beecher Road School budget will have a specific effect that will result in disadvantage to the school far beyond its cost.

Over the last few years Ms. Crocco has become an effective and innovative liaison between the school and other town educational institutions. Other letters from the Amity and Woodridge Historical Society Board will be listing more of her outreach efforts, but I want to speak specifically to the program I participated in last spring.

The third grade curriculum covers local history, and the AWHS has for many years invited the school to bring the students to the Darling House for a program that supports that curriculum. In the last few years, spurred, as I understand it, and certainly very actively supported by Ms. Crocco on behalf of the school, we have expanded that to include the old South School and lessons about learning in the one-room schoolhouses of the 19th century.

Last spring the Historical Society was asked to participate in yet another new local history-related field program, a tour of the Center. Working “for” Larissa, I developed a unit that described the history of the site before the government buildings were put there and how it grew as a town center. We followed up by providing photos for the students to see back in the classroom.

Larissa is imaginative and industrious, and she keeps up with her partners even when we aren’t dreaming up a new project. Clearly, in the case of Ms Crocco what you get for your investment is exceptionally valuable not just to the students but to the community as a whole. Cutting the budget of the school should not be considered.

Yours,
Mary Dean
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