

Editor:

I have been employed as a cafeteria worker with the Windham Board of Education for 13 years. I am a local resident and a taxpayer.

Both of my children attended our public schools. I am proud of the hard work my fellow workers and I are able to provide for the kids in our community, maintaining healthy and high quality food service.

In these economic times, I believe it is extremely shortsighted for our superintendent, with the blessing of our elected school board members, to be looking to contract our food service to a private contractor.

All of the companies that provide this service are for-profit companies. Our current food service program does not have to make a profit to provide the same service.

In order to make a profit, the quality of food service must go down. Contractors will do this by lowering food service standards or lowering the workers' standard of living.

When local workers are less able to contribute to the local economy, that lowers standards for all of us.

Although the food service we provide is our main employment, many of us, including myself, have to work two jobs to provide for our own families.

When our wages are further lowered or our health insurance is eliminated or reduced, our only option may be public assistance, adding to the burden on all of us.

We work hard for all our community's children and are proud of the service we provide. We ask that the school board not take our dignity away for a short-term solution that will have long-term consequences.

Elli LeClaire

**Food Services assistant manager
Windham High School**

Editor:

The talent found within the walls of the Horace W. Porter School enables those who are so graced to live in such a small town swell with pride.

Again and again, year after year, I am amazed at their accomplishments with our

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children. Each year I discover an entirely new group of people who embrace not only my children but many of yours as well. They welcome them into their hearts and minds to teach and enrich.

Being a teacher is an art form unto itself. I appreciate and recognize their gifts and am grateful that the town we chose to live in has such a school rich with talent and heart. So, thank you Horace Porter staff and teachers for the work that you do and the quality of service you provide to our children.

In this sad economy, we greet another year whereby our elected officials have requested our board of education to reduce their budget yet again. Cut more staff. Cut more teachers. Cut more programs. After last year's cuts, the school is operating on bare bones.

The most valuable assets we have are our children. They are our future. It is a parent's wish to bestow upon their children a better life and to be all that they can be. Find their hidden talents and build upon them.

So let's rally around our school and the board of education members. Let's rally in support

of our kids.

Send a letter to FIPAC (financial planning & allocation commission) in support of the school budget as it is. If enough funding is not available this year then can it be found elsewhere?

We, the people, have the power to effect change. Each and every one of us can make a difference. I left March 30's board of education meeting feeling quite hopeless and frustrated. Then I thought to myself, what can I do?

Let's have an old-fashion booster drive to save our school, save a third- or fourth grade teacher, save the arts, drama and band, save the programs that matter and make a difference for our kids and bring pride to our community.

Have you been to a band concert? They're awesome. Have you bought your Willy Wonka tickets yet? I hear it's almost sold out.

I wonder what would happen if everyone in town gave \$1 or \$5 or whatever they can spare to help make a difference?

Support our school. There have to be better solutions than cutting the budget further. Let's think out of the box, keep the budget intact and get the job done.

**Maryann Potter
Columbia**