Hello Windham community members,

I am writing this letter to help residents understand my reasons for supporting both Erin Kehoe and Bridget Corby for the Windham School Board. Here are my thoughts:

\* I believe having parents of school aged children on the board is extremely important.

\* Learning now is advancing as technology advances.

\* Erin has been asking parents what they want to see in the school. She is very approachable and easy to talk to.

\* Bridget has served on the school board at The Little School in Weston where her son attends. She has first-hand experience working with others on another board—a board that serves parents at a school that’s doing exceptionally well in our area.

Please take into account all angles when voting this upcoming March. Something I struggle with as a parent is, “Why do neighboring schools offer so much more than Windham?” I have attached a letter I have written to the school board below.

Dear Windham School Board,

I would like to thank you for all of your dedicated work with and for the school. Putting together a budget is a daunting task especially in a town so affected by school attendance.

My daughter is really enjoying her time at Windham Elementary as this is her first year there in first grade. She, like most Vermont kids enjoy winter sports and time spent outside. The cross-country skiing and shelter-building are invaluable activities. Sally and Craig are doing great work with them. The sewing project was also wonderful. I think that is a skill everyone benefits from.

As far as academics I believe Windham is on track with other schools. I was concerned about this because last year when my daughter was in Mountain School at Winhall she was getting some homework. This year she is not aside from reading to me. I spoke to Mr. PJ about this and she is doing well. I think MSW may just be ahead of the curve. I voiced concern with Mr. PJ about computer work which he agreed they could do more of. Friends of ours that go to Flood Brook have been taking home Chromebooks since last March and are fluent working with them. Mickey and Sara are doing a great job educating the children. With what resources they have I believe they are going above and beyond. I am always up to date with what is going on pertaining to school.

I think because of Covid I was just really happy to see her getting in-person instruction that I overlooked other aspects of learning. I understand that last year the budget needed to be cut. So, electives are always the first to go. A Music program and Art program taught by trained instructors is important to me. I equate WES with the learning I got as a child. Music and Art were considered electives but never cut. I had the opportunity to learn 3 different instruments. The Booster Club had different companies come in that traveled the world. The school would assemble as a whole and enjoy theater, dance, music, the Harlem Globetrotters, magic shows and public speakers coming in to talk about peer pressure and drugs to name a few. These events brought culture and diversity, hard enough to come by in Vermont, and are needed to form a well-rounded individual.

A couple of other concerns for me include not having a nurse on site, a guidance counselor, hot lunch program, after school program or team sports at the school. My question is what can be done about this? Funds are already tight with one licensed teacher. Next year with the influx of students will another teacher be hired? One teacher instructing 18 children of all different grades is inconceivable. If another teacher is hired won’t the numbers be comparable to last year and taxpayers will be in the same boat as last year? What I’m hearing from friends of ours whose children go to other schools is how their kids learned to say different French phrases in Kindergarten. I feel as though schools around us are evolving and changing with the times but Windham is staying the same. Why is that? Why are the families in Windham supposed to settle with less than what comes standard at most schools around us?

School Board Meetings are difficult for my husband or I to make at 4 pm because my husband and I both work and our schedules are constantly changing. I will try my best to attend the next one even if I’m working. I would really like to see some positive changes happen.

Kind regards,

Bridgette Blanchard