

Letter to the Editor

Dear Fellow Reading Voters:

This letter is NOT about my tax bill. This letter IS about trust.

How's your memory? Think back to the time we were being asked to vote on the construction of a new elementary school. Do you remember the hearings hosted by the School Committee and School Administration? Do you remember being told that once the new school was built, the only new hires for that school would be a principal, a secretary, a custodian and possibly two new teachers? The plan was that the students and the teachers occupying the four elementary schools would be channeled into five schools. I kept scratching my head thinking, "What about the specialists? If there is only one of each specialist position in each of the four schools, how would they be divided into five schools?"

My curiosity led me to write a letter to our local newspapers in January 2003 asking if we would or would not be hiring a librarian, school psychologist, speech therapist, reading specialist, resource room supervisor, and a nurse. I did receive one answer and it was that the new hires would be a principal, a secretary, and a custodian. Still puzzled, I spoke to a school official fully knowledgeable of the new elementary school plans and asked,

"What about the specialists?" He explained to me that when the new school opened, the specialists would be servicing more than one school.

Let's come back to the present. The Wood End School is built and it's time to budget the new staff. In case you missed it, the following is an excerpt taken from an article in the January 13, 2005 issue of a local paper. "The driving issues for the fiscal 2006 budget include the staffing and operations of the new Wood End Elementary School, a 'wonderful problem to address,' according to Schettini. Staffing for the new school is budgeted at \$395,000 and would include a principal, school psychologist, reading teacher, librarian, secretary, nurse and two custodians. Additionally, three classroom teachers and a specialist for art, music and physical education are budgeted at \$135,000.

Guess what? I'm scratching my head again. I'm wondering where the money is going to come from to cover the additional staff that was not included in the "original bill of sale" when we "bought" the new elementary school. However, as I said at the outset, this letter is NOT about my tax bill. This letter IS about trust - eroding trust.

Peace,

Betty Vanasse