



Weare in the World

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For Weare Residents, by Weare Residents

Meet the Candidates

Editor's note: Due to technical oversights (i.e. pesky spam folders), the surveys below were not included in our Feb. 24 edition. We are pleased to bring our readers this information in time for Election Day: Tuesday, March 9.



Name: Susan Morin

Length of time in Weare: 33 years

Community involvements and affiliations: Past PTO President; Kindergarten Committee (2000); Weare Athletic Club volunteer; Weare Library Trustee; Weare School Space Needs

Committee; Master Plan Update Committee; Weare Finance Committee; Weare School Board member

1. What motivates you to run, and if elected, what will be your priorities? I have a great respect for the value of education and was proud of what my children accomplished through our schools. I decided to run because, after years of attending the meetings and being active in the schools, I felt it would be a way to be more informed and have a voice in the decisions about the direction in which the schools were going. I was discouraged by the constant space needs issues and continue to struggle with the increased technology investment, promoted as a necessity for student success, while student achievement remains well below state targets. There are many factors involved in these issues and I would like to be a part of the necessary discussions that are needed to address them.

2. What can be done to improve student achievement and ensure everyone who graduates is ready to enter college, the workforce or another path? We have the unique opportunity to inspire a love of learning with the goal of creating lifelong learners. Early years of instruction should be creative and fun so students explore areas they are naturally interested in. Most importantly, we need to give them a strong foundation in basic math and language skills.

3. What is your position on establishing full-day kindergarten in Weare? I support the idea of full-day kindergarten but do not think we are at a place to implement it at this time. I believe in the value of a play-based curriculum, which encourages exploration and excites the students but can take more time to accomplish, and I support our teachers in promoting its practice. Recent legislation now allows for the funding of full-day kindergarten and if our schools had the capacity to house such a program, I would be in support of it at this time. We are in a position, however, where our administrators are telling us they are stretched beyond their limits, necessitating that we build or rent more space in order to initiate such a program. This is not a solution I favor.

4. What are your plans for attracting and retaining qualified teachers in the district? I cannot overstate my opinion of how valuable teachers are in the success of their students. While I have been on the board, I have tried to uncover all the reasons involved in our lack of teacher retention as I feel it is such a large factor in our current student outcomes. While the fact that our teachers are paid significantly less than many other comparable school districts is the simple answer, my impression is that it is not the only reason. The fact that so many of our dedicated teachers and staff remain in our district tells me their paycheck is not their sole focus. We can only accomplish significant change if we work in a climate of trust and compromise within our buildings and within our negotiating teams.

5. How does a school board balance the need to provide a high-quality education with the need to respond to the local taxpayer burden? The New Hampshire School Board Association informs all new members that we have two main responsibilities: to set policy and the budget. Our decisions should always be made through the lens of what is best for our students. I agree. That being said, I believe it is in the best interest of

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our students to have community support of both what we do within our buildings as well as what we put on the ballot. Thankfully, I also believe dollars spent is not the key factor of student success. This year, we have seen new faces join our team and take on new responsibilities within the administration and I am excited to have the opportunity to work with them on these challenges. I hope to be given the chance to be a partner in finding a balance through innovative curriculum choices, new efficiencies and a new long-term vision of what education looks like.

6. What changes should be made on the state and local level regarding public education? The state must stop requiring more and more from local school districts without providing the necessary funding. In this budget year alone, this is evidenced in the mandatory increases in both retirement and healthcare costs. Past examples include increased assessment mandates that help drive our current technology requirements, which represent a growing portion of our annual budget, as well as increasing mandated services to meet our students' needs. On a local level, we need to counter these increases with innovative ways to keep the costs within our control to the lowest they can be while still serving the needs of our students and allowing them to succeed. I welcome the chance to be part of the thinking-outside-of-the-box discussion this will require.



Name: Daniel Recupero

Length of time in Weare: Four years

Occupation: Self Employed

Community involvements and affiliations: I am a member of and endorsed by the Weare Taxpayers Coalition **Contact:** djrecupero@gmail.com

1. What motivates you to run, and if elected, what will be your priorities? As a concerned taxpayer, former educator (K-12 certified) and a current business owner with family in our school system, I want to do my part to help our community manage its school district. With a priority of maintaining a quality education for our students at an affordable cost to taxpayers, it is important for me to look at everything from both sides of the equation.

2. What can be done to improve student achievement and ensure everyone who graduates is ready to enter college, the workforce or another path? The best way to improve student achievement and ensure readiness at

graduation is to inspire our students, teachers and parents to do their best with the curriculum, programs, tools and resources put in place to support them.

3. What is your position on establishing full-day kindergarten in Weare? Kindergarten is very important and it's always great to have more educational options for our children. However, Weare is not ready at this time as space and financial issues have not been resolved. This would be a perfect time to see a plan come from the administration and school board. In the interim, there are other options available.

4. What are your plans for attracting and retaining qualified teachers in the district? To create an exciting and challenging environment in which our teachers work, while backing them with the support of their school board and partnering together to help develop innovative programs. Also, to ensure that they are provided with quality professional development and training.

5. How does a school board balance the need to provide a high-quality education with the need to respond to the local taxpayer burden? I think we need to look carefully at every program and service to determine 1) whether it is meeting the needs of our community and 2) whether it is being utilized in the most cost-effective way.

6. What changes should be made on the state and local level regarding public education? Allow the districts to have more local control and freedom to innovate curriculum and programs. Local districts know what is best for their students at a more personal level and additional state-level mandates do not help.

Get Informed! Upcoming Zoom Sessions

Wednesday, March 3 at 7 p.m. / Meet the candidates for Weare Board of Selectmen. Email Town Administrator Naomi Bolton at nbolton@weare.nh.gov for the link or to submit a question for the candidates.

Thursday, March 4 at 6 p.m. / School District budget session with School Board Chairs Wendy Curry and Zach Lawson, Superintendent Jacqueline Coe and Business Manager Christopher Roy. Info at www.SAU24.org.

Thursday, March 4 at 7 p.m. / Meet the Weare School Board candidates. Email Town Administrator Naomi Bolton at nbolton@weare.nh.gov for the link or to submit a question for the candidates.

