

## **Souhegan Cooperative School District – Officers & Agents**

### **School Board**

(A) Stephanie Grund – Chair  
(A) James Manning – Vice Chair  
(MV) James Strozier – Secretary  
(A) John Glover  
(A) Raj Gupta  
(MV) Stephen O’Keefe  
(A) Christine Peters

### **Office of the Superintendent**

Michael Berry – Superintendent  
Robert Jozokos – Assistant Superintendent  
Amy Facey – Business Administrator  
Heather Jennings – Director of Student Services

### **Moderator**

George Bower

### **Souhegan High School**

Dana Curran – Principal

### **Clerk**

Elizabeth Kuzsma

### **Treasurer**

CJ Butler

### **Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee**

Jeanne Ludt – Chair  
Laura Taylor – Vice Chair  
Nicole Christensen – Secretary  
Mark Cheney

Paul Lavertu  
Thomas McLeod  
Mary Lou Mullens  
Xindi Hennessey (alternate)

## **Souhegan Cooperative School District Voting**

Souhegan Cooperative School District follows the guidelines of Senate Bill 2 (SB2) which are outlined in RSA 40:13. Voting on budgets, appropriations, and other articles culminates with ballot voting; however, prior to the March ballot vote is the Deliberative Session in February and the Public Hearing in January.

All warrant articles that are presented at the Deliberative Session, including articles that are amended, are then placed on the official ballot and moved to the second session (ballot voting) of the annual meeting for a final vote.

### **Ballot Vote: March 10, 2026**

Amherst: 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Souhegan High School Gymnasium

Mont Vernon: 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Mont Vernon Village School

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# SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT THIRTY-NINE

Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts



MICHAEL BERRY  
Superintendent of Schools

ROBERT JOZOKOS  
Assistant Superintendent

AMY FACEY  
Business Administrator

DR. HEATHER JENNINGS  
Director of Student Services

## **Introduction Souhegan Cooperative School District For Amherst and Mont Vernon Residents**

**February 2026**

This guide is the culmination of a six-month process to develop a budget and provide critical information to the residents of Amherst & Mont Vernon. The Souhegan Cooperative School District is governed by a School Board that cares deeply about students' educational experience and the stewardship of community resources.

The Board adopted and committed to the 2025-2026 school year goals:

- Establish a shared understanding of board governance, clarifying the relationship between RSA statutes and the Souhegan Constitution.
- Strengthen trust and transparency by improving communication of the district's strengths, needs, progress, and achievements.
- Deepen the board's understanding of academic programs, focusing on Math and Science, and support strategic improvement in student outcomes and facilities.

The work continues in SAU 39. We are encouraged but not yet satisfied; we have made strong, definitive gains on our improvement journey. Some highlights of student engagement are below.

- 284 enrollments in the Advanced Placement program/332 enrollments in dual enrollment programs
- 43 students are participating in Career Technical Education Programs
- 527 students are participating in interscholastic sports/ 378 students are participating in clubs

In addition, Mathematics is the focus of an intensive self-study, as updated resources are allocated in this budget to better support student learning.

For the past six months, Board members, administrators, and SAU staff have been preparing a budget for the coming year. The proposed FY27 Souhegan Cooperative School District budget shows a 4.5% increase.

This year, the School Board was joined by the Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee to review and provide insights on the budget. Appreciation has been extended to the community volunteers for their time and effort. Their vote is also included in each article on the Warrant. As you review the warrant and accompanying articles, you will notice a change. Due to state law, information that used to be provided separately is now included on the warrant itself.

We hope this Voter Guide provides the information necessary to make an informed decision.



# SOUHEGAN HIGH SCHOOL

Souhegan High School is a vital part of the Amherst and Mont Vernon communities, grounded in democratic values, student voice, and shared responsibility. Through a strong commitment to personalization, students are known, supported, and challenged to grow academically, socially, and civically. Together, the indicators that follow reflect a school that is engaging, inclusive, responsive to student needs, and responsible in its use of public resources while delivering meaningful outcomes for students and the community.

## DEMOCRACY, PERSONALIZATION, & EXCELLENCE

### Community Council

Community Council is a defining feature of governance at Souhegan. Founded in 1992, it embeds student voice and shared responsibility into daily school life through a representative, student-led decision-making body that works alongside school leadership and the Souhegan Cooperative School Board.

- 47 members, intentionally student-majority
- Students discuss, debate, and vote on issues related to student life, school initiatives, and school procedures
- Models democratic practice through authentic participation

#### Recent Work

- Hallway and Display Review: Led a schoolwide process to reimagine shared spaces during the building refresh
- Constitution Review: Updating the Souhegan Constitution to reflect current practice and community feedback

**Why this matters:** Community Council ensures students learn democracy by practicing it, strengthening civic responsibility and shared ownership of the school.

### Academic Outcomes

#### College & Career Readiness (Class of 2025)

- 73% four-year college; 27% other postsecondary pathways
- 43 students in Career & Technical Education across 18 programs at 4 centers

#### Advanced Achievement

- AP School Honor Roll, Bronze (24-25)
- 68 NH Scholars across multiple pathways
- National Merit recognition: 1 Scholar, 1 Finalist, 1 Commended Student

#### Academic Rigor & Opportunity

- 617 AP and dual enrollment course enrollments (25-26), offering college-level coursework and credit
- 22 students accelerated in math (24-25)

#### Experiential Learning

- 29 Extended Learning Opportunities completed in the past two years

#### Recognition

- Ranked #11 in New Hampshire by U.S. News & World Report (2025)

**Why this matters:** Souhegan's academic program combines rigor, personalization, and multiple pathways to deliver strong postsecondary outcomes.

# STUDENT LIFE & ENGAGEMENT

## Athletics

Athletics at Souhegan extend the classroom through teamwork, leadership, and competitive excellence.

### Programs

- 36 varsity, 24 sub-varsity, 3 unified teams

### Student Participation (2024–2025)

- 48.5% fall · 32.5% winter · 35.4% spring

### Competitive Excellence

- State Champions: Field Hockey (25–26); Football, Golf, Baseball, Girls Tennis, Boys Swimming (24–25)
- State Runner-Up: Football, Golf (25–26); Girls Lacrosse, Bass Fishing (24–25)

### Student Achievement

- USA Lacrosse Bob Scott Award (24–25); USA Lacrosse All-American (25–26)
- 11 collegiate athletic commitments (Class of 2026)
- 32 NHIAA Scholar-Athletes (Class of 2026)

### Leadership & Wellness

- SALT promotes leadership, mental wellness, service, and school engagement

**Why this matters:** Athletics support student health, leadership, and accountability while sustaining competitive and academic excellence.

## Clubs & Activities

Souhegan offers a wide range of student-led clubs that promote exploration, leadership, and engagement beyond the classroom.

- 561 club enrollments across 711 students; many students participate in multiple clubs
- Representative offerings: Leadership & Service · Academic & Competitive · Career & Professional · Creative & Design · Recreation & Interest-Based · Honor Societies

**Why this matters:** Clubs provide meaningful leadership, interest exploration, and real-world skill-building that strengthen student engagement and connection.

## Performing Arts

- 21%+ of students participate in a performing arts course or ensemble
- 18 All-State selections across multiple disciplines (24-25, 25-26)
- Regular concerts and community performances across Amherst and Mont Vernon
- Annual fall play and spring musical

**Why this matters:** Performing arts engage students while strengthening community connection and pride.

# COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Souhegan High School extends learning beyond the building and into the Amherst and Mont Vernon communities through meaningful civic engagement, service, and partnership. Students and staff participate in community traditions and service efforts such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day events, community service days, blood drives, Operation Pumpkin, holiday family sponsorships, and senior project panels, while also supporting local organizations including SHARE, Friends of the Dartmouth Cancer Center, and the New Hampshire Youth Leadership Academy.

## **Souhegan Cooperative School Board Report**

Each year, residents of Amherst and Mont Vernon play a vital role in shaping the future of our school through their participation in Souhegan Cooperative School District's budget process and voting at annual meeting and elections. This voter's guide is designed to help community members make informed decisions by providing clear, accessible information about proposed budgets and warrant articles. We would like to thank the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator, Principal of Souhegan High School, and the staff at the SAU and at the high school, as well as the Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee for reviewing the budget and challenging us to work harder to do the best for students while keeping the taxpayer in mind.

Public education thrives when community members are engaged and informed. The decisions made at our district meeting directly influence educational programs, staffing, facility maintenance, and the overall learning environment for our students. By taking time to review the issues and understand the financial and educational impacts of each article, voters ensure that Souhegan High School continues to offer an exceptional and equitable education for all students.

We encourage all residents to participate in the process. Your voice is essential in maintaining the strong partnership that makes our schools and community thrive. Together, we can ensure that every student at Souhegan High School is prepared for success in college, career, and life.

### **Souhegan Cooperative School Board**

Stephanie Grund (Chair), Jim Manning (Vice Chair), James Strozier (Secretary), John Glover, Raj Gupta, Stephen O'Keefe, Christie Peters

## **Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee Report**

I would like to thank our volunteer committee members for their dedication and hard work in providing important citizen/taxpayer oversight into the proposed fiscal year 2027 budget for the Souhegan Cooperative School District. All our work is designed to enable the taxpayers of Amherst and Mont Vernon to feel confident that the budget has been thoroughly reviewed and deemed reasonable and justified and that the recommendation of the Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee can be trusted.

It is important to note that the budget process begins in October with input from Souhegan staff and administration and the Superintendent. The Business Administrator continued to make adjustments to the proposed budget over the course of the next several months with input from the Finance Committee, Administration and Department Heads; resulting in 3 subsequent drafts. As an example of the type of change that takes place between drafts, there was a decrease of over \$100,000 from Draft 1 to Draft 2 as a result of reductions in requests and/or the correction of errors. It is a fluid document that becomes final once approved by the Board at the Public Hearing and when presented at Deliberative.

The respectful collegiality between the Souhegan School Board and Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee has resulted in a final budget that reflects many of our recommendations and that we feel is something we can confidently recommend to the taxpayers for their support. We particularly appreciated the time that Amy Facey (Business Administrator), the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, the administration, department heads, and representatives of the School Board provided us throughout the process, making it easy to get answers to our many questions.

### **Souhegan Advisory Finance Committee:**

Jeanne Ludt – Chair (Amherst), Laura Taylor – Vice Chair (Amherst), Nicole Christensen – Secretary (Amherst), Mark Cheney – Amherst, Paul LaVertu – Mont Vernon, Thomas McLeod – Mont Vernon, Mary Lou Mullens – Amherst, Xindi Hennessey – Alternate (Amherst)

## Article 2: Operating Budget (\$22,599,250)

### **BOARD:** Recommended (7-0)

The FY27 budget is \$976,546 or 4.5% increase from the current year. Main factors of the cost increase are:

- Salary increases for all staff and administrators of approximately \$287,550
- The health insurance increases range from 11.6% to 15.9% and dental insurance increase is 4.4%. This adds \$406,990 to the budget
- New transportation contract increases the budget \$79,429
- Special Education has an increase in one FTE. There is a reduction of two special education para-professionals offset by an increase of three ABA special education para-professionals due to students matriculating from Amherst Middle School.
- The increase in the SAU assessment of \$106,945 due to increase in salaries, a retirement payout and contractual support budgeted for a new Business Administrator, as well as a movement of one FTE from the Amherst School District to the SAU which will streamline work, support the Facilities Director, and properly allocate costs to all school districts.
- Property & Liability insurance increase of \$12,611
- Increase in textbooks of \$34,625 due to the need to purchase new math books to support instruction
- More students are attending CTE programs increasing tuition costs by \$20,000

<b>Sub-Committee</b>	<b>FY26 Operating</b>	<b>FY27 Proposed</b>	<b>\$ Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Transportation	\$827,113	\$902,726	\$75,613	9.1%
Student Services	\$4,805,786	\$5,220,566	\$414,780	8.6%
Administration	\$3,303,690	\$3,528,201	\$224,511	6.8%
Facilities	\$1,723,119	\$1,802,854	\$79,735	4.6%
Curriculum	\$9,057,593	\$9,292,877	\$235,284	2.6%
Athletics	\$881,305	\$891,569	\$10,264	1.2%
Food Service	\$510,957	\$495,710	(\$15,247)	(3.0%)
Technology	\$513,141	\$464,747	(\$48,394)	(9.4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$21,622,704</b>	<b>\$22,599,250</b>	<b>\$976,546</b>	<b>4.5%</b>

### **SAFC:** Recommended (7-0)

The SAFC worked diligently to scrutinize the proposed budget line by line but also looked beyond the surface to understand any new initiatives. We were committed to not only vet the proposed budget numbers but also to look deeper at what those dollars were being spent on and whether they were an efficient use of tax dollars toward improving teaching and learning. We found the year over year budget increase of 4.5% to be justified and agreed unanimously that we could support the budget as a whole with a vote of 7 to 0.

As in years past, we noted that the significant increases in Health and Dental Insurance were the central drivers of the increase to the operating budget – something over which there is no control. In addition, this year's budget reflects the NH Retirement Employer Contribution rate of 19.23% for Teachers and 12.75% for Non-Teachers. The proposed budget also reflected an additional increase due to the new transportation contract. And finally, there was a reduction of 2 Special Education Paraprofessionals countered by the addition of 3 ABA Special Education Paraprofessionals needed to meet the needs of incoming Freshmen. What stands out is that the proposed operating budget clearly supports the core objective to improve student performance through improved classroom instruction. The budget reflects the goals of the Board to give students additional instructional time, to offer programs that meet the ever-changing needs of our students, and to continue to provide teachers the time, support, and feedback to provide high quality instruction. Of particular note was the Math Program Self Study that resulted in significant changes to the math program with an effort to align the introduction of math concepts with the SAT test. The budget includes the request for new math textbooks to facilitate this realignment.

### **Article 3: Long Range Planning & Cost Review (\$50,000)**

**BOARD:** Recommended (7-0)

Article 3 requests a modest, one-time investment to engage independent experts to support Souhegan's planning in response to changes in New Hampshire's public education environment. The work will be directed by the School Board in partnership with school leadership. Outside experts will not make decisions for Souhegan. Their role is to provide independent analysis, comparative information, and technical expertise to inform local decision-making. This request reflects current conditions affecting public schools statewide, including expanded school choice, public school open enrollment, Education Freedom Accounts, changing family expectations, fiscal constraints, and demographic shifts. These factors are already influencing enrollment patterns, revenue stability, and long-term sustainability for districts across New Hampshire. Families are also expressing clear expectations for schools. They are seeking learning that is personalized, academically rigorous, connected to real-world application, and grounded in strong student-teacher relationships. Schools are increasingly expected to prepare students for postsecondary education, careers, and civic life in a complex and evolving environment. Article 3 allows Souhegan to assess these conditions proactively, test assumptions, and plan deliberately rather than reactively. It is a one-time investment intended to support responsible governance, sound financial planning, and long-term stewardship on behalf of students, taxpayers, and the community.

**SAFC:** Recommended (5-2)

For the most part, members of the SAFC support the concept of doing a long-range study of Souhegan, but 2 were concerned about the lack of specificity of the article and/or the use of taxpayer dollars to fund it.

### **Article 4: Souhegan School Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund (\$325,000)**

**BOARD:** Recommended (7-0)

Our Director of Facilities has established a plan for the maintenance of Souhegan High School. Based on the estimated cost of the projects projected, a funding amount has been estimated to add to the fund each year in order to have the funds available for the scheduled work. Our Director of Facilities also maintains an approximate balance of \$180,000 for any emergencies that might occur at any time.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Withdrawal</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>Balance</b>			\$447,000
<b>FY27</b>	\$325,000	\$304,000	\$468,000
<b>FY28</b>	\$350,000	\$125,000	\$693,000
<b>FY29</b>	\$325,000	\$673,000	\$345,000
<b>FY30</b>	\$325,000	\$450,000	\$220,000
<b>FY31</b>	\$325,000	\$215,000	\$330,000
<b>FY32</b>	\$325,000	\$483,000	\$172,000
<b>FY33</b>	\$300,000	\$153,000	\$319,000
<b>FY34</b>	\$300,000	\$41,000	\$578,000

**FY27** – Crack-fill and Sealcoat, Auditorium (rigging, lighting, stage), Controls BMS, DHW Generation, Café and Stage Floors, Double Steamer, 2 Door Fridge, Transformer & Pump upgrades

**FY28** – Annex Building Generator, Fridge/Cooler Mechanical Equipment

**FY29** – Phase 4 Skylights, Kitchen Burner Gas Range

**FY30** – Main Building Boilers (2), Grounds Building Project

**FY31** - Roof-Rubber Membrane (Annex), Flat Top Stove, Appliances

**FY32** – Crack-fill & Sealcoat, Site Lighting, Emergency Lights, Classroom Ceilings, Halls/Stairs/Lobby, Gymnasium/Locker Room/Restrooms, Cafeteria and Stage Walls, Library Walls/Ceiling/Floors, Admin/Support Offices Walls/Ceilings, Kitchen Walls/Ceilings

**FY33** – Classroom Walls, Landscaping, Exterior Walls – Metal Panels

**FY34** – Boilers, Elevator Cab

**SAFC:** Recommended (7-0)

These articles (Articles 4-7) meet the recommendations that have historically been made by the SAFC that the administration and Board create long term plans to meet the needs for upkeep and maintenance of the facilities as well as to start a fund to replace aging technology and expand our internal transportation system in order to save transportation costs and the board has chosen to fund these items with the unassigned fund balance so as not to burden the taxpayers further.

## Article 5: Recreation Revolving Warrant Article (\$100,000)

**BOARD:** Recommended (7-0)

The Recreation Revolving Fund is used for capital needs related to the athletic fields. The past few years, the voters have approved funds to increase this balance related to the turf field replacement. Last year, the Director of Facilities reviewed athletic maintenance needs and requested additional funds for the replacement of light poles that are reaching the end of life as well as making Calvetti Field ADA accessible. The following chart shows how the money will be requested for the next 10 years and how it will be spent.

Fiscal Year	Contribution	Withdrawal	Balance
<b>Balance</b>			\$550,000
<b>FY27</b>	\$100,000	\$0	\$650,000
<b>FY28</b>	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$650,000
<b>FY29</b>	\$100,000	\$190,000	\$560,000
<b>FY30</b>	\$100,000	\$625,000	\$35,000
<b>FY31</b>	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$60,000
<b>FY32</b>	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$85,000
<b>FY33</b>	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$110,000
<b>FY34</b>	\$100,000	\$0	\$210,000

**FY28** – Bleacher Project – ADA Ramp and aisle to front section of press box bleachers on Calvetti Field

**FY29** – Resurface Track

**FY30** – Turf Replacement, Phase 1 Light Pole/Lighting Upgrade

**FY31** – Phase 2 Light Pole/Lighting Upgrade

**FY32** – Phase 3 Light Pole/Lighting Upgrade

**FY33** – Phase 4 Light Pole/Lighting Upgrade

**SAFC:** Recommended (7-0)

These articles (Articles 4-7) meet the recommendations that have historically been made by the SAFC that the administration and Board create long term plans to meet the needs for upkeep and maintenance of the facilities as well as to start a fund to replace aging technology and expand our internal transportation system in order to save transportation costs and the board has chosen to fund these items with the unassigned fund balance so as not to burden the taxpayers further.

## Article 6: Technology Warrant Fund Article (\$50,000)

**BOARD:** Recommended (7-0)

The Technology Capital Reserve Fund was established to plan for larger projects for the technology department including the Wide Area Network infrastructure, alarm and communication systems, and network switches. Through this plan, we can estimate a level funding amount each year.

Fiscal Year	Contribution	Withdrawal	Balance
<b>FY25 Balance</b>			\$75,000
<b>FY26</b>	\$50,000	\$35,000	\$90,000
<b>FY27</b>	\$50,000	\$35,000	\$105,000
<b>FY28</b>	\$50,000	\$39,300	\$115,700

**SAFC:** Recommended (7-0)

These articles (Articles 4-7) meet the recommendations that have historically been made by the SAFC that the administration and Board create long term plans to meet the needs for upkeep and maintenance of the facilities as well as to start a fund to replace aging technology and expand our internal transportation system in order to save transportation costs and the board has chosen to fund these items with the unassigned fund balance so as not to burden the taxpayers further.

## Article 7: Vehicle Fund Warrant Article (\$20,000)

**BOARD:** Recommended (7-0)

This fund supports essential vehicle use needs to maintain facilities and reduce reliance (and cost for) on third party transportation services by acquiring and maintaining an in-house fleet. We regularly evaluate existing vehicle resources to forecast end of useful life replacement or schedule of major repairs.

Fiscal Year	Contribution	Withdrawal	Balance
<b>Balance</b>			\$40,000
<b>FY27</b>	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
<b>FY28</b>	\$20,000	\$60,000	\$0
<b>FY29</b>	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000
<b>FY30</b>	\$20,000	\$0	\$40,000
<b>FY31</b>	\$20,000	\$0	\$60,000
<b>FY32</b>	\$20,000	\$0	\$80,000

Vehicle Fund supports long term savings for replacing and repairing (major) existing or purchasing new vehicles, including the following current fleet:

Student Services: 2021 Minivan (replace 2035) and 2022 10 Passenger van (replace 2039)

Athletics: 2022 10 passenger Van (replace 2036) and 2024 10 Passenger Van (replace 2042)

Facilities: 2014 Tractor (replace 2030), 2022 Truck (replace 2037), 2023 Gator (replace 2034)

**SAFC:** Recommended (7-0)

These articles (Articles 4-7) meet the recommendations that have historically been made by the SAFC that the administration and Board create long term plans to meet the needs for upkeep and maintenance of the facilities as well as to start a fund to replace aging technology and expand our internal transportation system in order to save transportation costs and the board has chosen to fund these items with the unassigned fund balance so as not to burden the taxpayers further.

## Article 8: Open Enrollment

**BOARD:** Recommended (6-1)

In the fall of 2025, the State Supreme Court issued a decision in an open enrollment case between Pittsfield School District and Prospect Mountain school district. Prospect Mountain became an open enrollment district by presenting a warrant article to their voter which passed. When a student from Pittsfield school district decided to attend Prospect Mountain through open enrollment, Pittsfield school district was required to pay 80% of their cost per pupil to Prospect Mountain. This court decision exposed all school districts who are not open enrollment schools to potentially be liable to pay 80% of their CPP to another school district who is an open enrollment school.

The RSA states that a school district that becomes an open enrollment school can decide to allow 0% - 100% of students in their district to leave or to accept into the school district.

We believe it to be prudent to add our own warrant article about becoming an open enrollment district. This would allow us to make our own decision of 0% of students being allowed to leave under the open enrollment provisions and we would accept up to 2% of current ADM (Average Daily Membership) into Souhegan High School through this provision. If we stay silent, our taxpayers could be "on the hook" for 80% of our Souhegan cost per pupil being paid to other districts for each student that may choose another open enrollment school.

**SAFC:** Recommended (6-1)

The issue around being designated as an Open Enrollment School is complicated and will require the Board to communicate clearly to the public why a yes vote is needed to protect Souhegan's ability to manage the number of students going out and coming in and the financial implications that result. Our greatest concern is that the voters will not understand the need to vote yes because they won't fully understand why this is being put forth.

**Article 9: Souhegan Tuition Expendable Trust Fund (\$200,000)**

**BOARD:** Recommended (6-1)

This is a trailer article to the Open Enrollment Article. If the Open Enrollment Article does not pass, then this article asks to raise \$200,000 from new taxes in order to put it in a reserve account to pay tuition if any students choose to go to another school through the Open Enrollment Program. If the Open Enrollment article does pass, then this article will not raise any money as it will not be needed.

If the Open Enrollment article does not pass and we are not able to set a percentage of students who can leave the school, then the tax payers are at risk of paying 80% of Souhegan cost per pupil to another school district. One student leaving does not equate to removing one teacher or reduction in most costs. Remember that Cost per pupil is an average of total costs divided by the number of students. If you reduce your number of students and don't reduce costs enough, then the cost pupil actually goes up. This reserve account would allow us to pay the tuition without harm to the regular education budget.

**SAFC:** Recommended (7-0)

The companion Article 9 was actually suggested by the SAFC to make sure there were funds available outside the budget to cover unanticipated tuition obligations to other schools that would occur should Article 8 fail.

**ABSENTEE  
OFFICIAL BALLOT  
SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AMHERST, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MARCH 10, 2026**

*Elizabeth J. Kuzma*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT CLERK

**INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS**

1. **To Vote:** Completely fill in the oval  to the right of your choice like this:  . For each office vote for up to the number of candidates stated in the sentences: "Vote for not more than 1;" or "Vote for up to X;" "X will be elected." If you vote for more than the stated number of candidates, your vote for that office will not be counted.
2. **To Vote by Write-in:** To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write in the name of the person in the "write-in" space and completely fill in the oval  to the right of the "write-in" space like this  .

<b>FOR SCHOOL BOARD</b>	
(3 Years)	Vote for up to <b>2</b> ; Two will be elected
STEPHANIE GRUND	<input type="radio"/>
CHRISTINE PETERS	<input type="radio"/>
(Write-in)	<input type="radio"/>
(Write-in)	<input type="radio"/>

**ARTICLES**

**Article 2.** The average cost-per-pupil for the preceding year as calculated in accordance with RSA 189:75, 1(a) is \$25,841. ELA Proficiency: 79%; Math Proficiency: 41%; Science Proficiency: 58%.

Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling twenty two million five hundred ninety nine thousand two hundred fifty dollars (**\$22,599,250**)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be twenty two million five hundred twelve thousand five hundred ninety dollars (**\$22,512,590**), which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Souhegan Cooperative School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only?

**Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.47 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.01 per thousand for Mont Vernon. Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is \$0.44 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.04 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

**\*NOTE: Warrant Article 2 (operating budget) does not include appropriations proposed in any other warrant articles.**

YES

NO

**Article 3.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (**\$50,000**) for the purpose of developing a long-range plan to ensure Souhegan High School remains educationally strong, student centered, fiscally responsible, and well-aligned with academic, technological, enrollment, facility, and other needs over the next decade?

This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the development of the long range plan is completed or by 6/30/2028, whichever is sooner. This sum to come from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (5-2)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.02 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.01 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

YES

NO

**Article 4.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to three hundred twenty five thousand dollars (**\$325,000**) to be added to the Souhegan School Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established in March 2005? This sum to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No amount to be raised from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon. Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is -\$0.11 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.09 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

YES

NO

**TURN BALLOT OVER AND CONTINUE VOTING**

**ARTICLES CONTINUED**

**Article 5.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Souhegan Recreation Revolving Fund previously established in March 2016? This sum to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No amount to be raised from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon. Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is -\$0.03 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.03 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

YES

NO

**Article 6.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Technology Capital Reserve Fund previously established in March 2023? This sum to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No amount to be raised from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon. Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is -\$0.02 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.01 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

YES

NO

**Article 7.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be added to the Vehicle Expendable Trust Fund previously established in March 2024? This sum to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No amount to be raised from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon. Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is -\$0.01 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.01 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

YES

NO

**Article 8.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District adopt an open enrollment school program, designating Souhegan High School as open enrollment school pursuant to NH RSA 194-D, for the purpose of enabling the district to admit non-resident students to Souhegan High School, with one hundred percent (100%) of its eligible resident pupils permitted to attend Souhegan High School and zero percent (0%) of its resident pupils permitted to attend open enrollment schools located outside of the District, and further, to limit the number of non-resident pupils who may attend Souhegan High School under the provisions of RSA 194-D to no more than two percent (2%) of the total enrollment in the Souhegan Cooperative School District? **Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (6-1)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (6-1)**

YES

NO

**Article 9.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District establish a Student Tuition Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 198:20-c, V for the purpose of paying student tuition as required by RSA 194-D, Open Enrollment School Program, and to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to be placed in this fund, and further, to name the Souhegan Cooperative School Board as agents to expend from said fund. This sum is to be raised from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

Article 9 shall only take effect if Article 8 fails, and shall be null and void if Article 8 passes.

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (6-1)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.07 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.05 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

YES

NO

**YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED VOTING THIS BALLOT**

**ABSENTEE  
OFFICIAL BALLOT  
SOUHEGAN COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
TOWN OF MONT VERNON, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MARCH 10, 2026**

*Elizabeth J. Kuzma*  
SCHOOL DISTRICT CLERK

**INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS**

1. **To Vote:** Completely fill in the oval  to the right of your choice like this: . For each office vote for up to the number of candidates stated in the sentences: "Vote for not more than 1;" or "Vote for up to X;" "X will be elected." If you vote for more than the stated number of candidates, your vote for that office will not be counted.
2. **To Vote by Write-in:** To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write in the name of the person in the "write-in" space and completely fill in the oval  to the right of the "write-in" space like this .

<b>FOR SCHOOL BOARD</b>	
(For 3 Years)	Vote for not more than 1
<b>JAMES STROZIER</b>	<input type="radio"/>
(Write-in)	<input type="radio"/>

**ARTICLES**

**Article 2.** The average cost-per-pupil for the preceding year as calculated in accordance with RSA 189:75, I(a) is \$25,841. ELA Proficiency: 79%; Math Proficiency: 41%; Science Proficiency: 58%.

Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling twenty two million five hundred ninety nine thousand two hundred fifty dollars (**\$22,599,250**)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be twenty two million five hundred twelve thousand five hundred ninety dollars (**\$22,512,590**), which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Souhegan Cooperative School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only?

**Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.47 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.01 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

**Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is \$0.44 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.04 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

**\*NOTE: Warrant Article 2 (operating budget) does not include appropriations proposed in any other warrant articles.**

YES

NO

**Article 3.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (**\$50,000**) for the purpose of developing a long-range plan to ensure Souhegan High School remains educationally strong, student centered, fiscally responsible, and well-aligned with academic, technological, enrollment, facility, and other needs over the next decade?

This special warrant article will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the development of the long range plan is completed or by 6/30/2028, whichever is sooner. This sum to come from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (5-2)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.02 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.01 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

YES

NO

**Article 4.** Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to three hundred twenty five thousand dollars (**\$325,000**) to be added to the Souhegan School Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund previously established in March 2005? This sum to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No amount to be raised from new taxation. **Majority vote required.**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)**

**Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)**

**Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

**Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is -\$0.11 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.09 per thousand for Mont Vernon.**

YES

NO

**VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT**

ARTICLES CONTINUED

Article 5. Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Souhegan Recreation Revolving Fund previously established in March 2016? This sum to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No amount to be raised from new taxation. Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is -\$0.03 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.03 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

YES

NO

Article 6. Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Technology Capital Reserve Fund previously established in March 2023? This sum to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No amount to be raised from new taxation. Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is -\$0.02 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.01 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

YES

NO

Article 7. Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District raise and appropriate the sum of up to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be added to the Vehicle Expendable Trust Fund previously established in March 2024? This sum to come from the June 30, 2026 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2026. No amount to be raised from new taxation. Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (7-0)

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.00 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.00 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

Estimated tax impact of not passing this article is -\$0.01 per thousand for Amherst and -\$0.01 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

YES

NO

Article 8. Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District adopt an open enrollment school program, designating Souhegan High School as open enrollment school pursuant to NH RSA 194-D, for the purpose of enabling the district to admit non-resident students to Souhegan High School, with one hundred percent (100%) of its eligible resident pupils permitted to attend Souhegan High School and zero percent (0%) of its resident pupils permitted to attend open enrollment schools located outside of the District, and further, to limit the number of non-resident pupils who may attend Souhegan High School under the provisions of RSA 194-D to no more than two percent (2%) of the total enrollment in the Souhegan Cooperative School District? Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (6-1)

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (6-1)

YES

NO

Article 9. Shall the Souhegan Cooperative School District establish a Student Tuition Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 198:20-c,V for the purpose of paying student tuition as required by RSA 194-D, Open Enrollment School Program, and to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) to be placed in this fund, and further, to name the Souhegan Cooperative School Board as agents to expend from said fund. This sum is to be raised from new taxation. Majority vote required.

Article 9 shall only take effect if Article 8 fails, and shall be null and void if Article 8 passes.

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School Board (6-1)

Recommended by the Souhegan Cooperative School District Advisory Finance Committee (7-0)

Estimated tax impact of passing this article is \$0.07 per thousand for Amherst and \$0.05 per thousand for Mont Vernon.

YES

NO

VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT

# SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT THIRTY-NINE

Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School Districts

MICHAEL BERRY  
Superintendent of Schools

ROBERT JOZOKOS  
Assistant Superintendent

AMY FACEY  
Business Administrator

DR. HEATHER JENNINGS  
Director of Student Services



## **Open Enrollment - Souhegan Cooperative School District Frequently Asked Questions**

### *What is open enrollment?*

Under New Hampshire law (RSA 194:D), open enrollment is a state-approved school choice option that permits students to transfer to schools outside the districts in which they live. When a student transfers, their home district must pay 80% of its own per-pupil-cost to the student's new district as tuition.

The state Supreme Court ruled last October that unless a school district's voters approve an open enrollment policy, that district may not limit the number of its students who transfer to another school district, regardless of the total cost to the home district.

Also, districts without open enrollment policies cannot accept transfers from other districts or collect tuition for them.

### *What do the open enrollment warrant articles propose?*

Article 8 establishes an open enrollment policy for Souhegan High School, designating it as an open enrollment school and setting the number of students who may use tax dollars to transfer to other communities' schools at zero (0). The number of students who would be permitted to transfer from outside school districts would be set at no more than 2% of SCSD's enrollment. Fewer could be admitted.

Article 9 would apply only if Article 8 failed to pass. Article 9 would raise \$200,000 through new taxation to create a trust fund that would be used to pay tuition to outside districts to which SCSD resident students transfer.

### *Why has this warrant article been proposed?*

Without open enrollment policies and designations in place, the school district would be at risk of being forced to use local taxpayer dollars to fund tuition for students who transfer outside the district. This will increase financial pressures on the community, create challenges with budgeting and enrollment projections, and jeopardize staffing levels and program continuity.

As the State Legislature continues to discuss changes to open enrollment, these warrant articles attempt to ensure that decisions about enrollment remain under the control of Amherst and Mont Vernon voters.

### *What does your vote mean?*

A **YES** vote means:

- Souhegan High School may accept up to 2% of its total enrollment (up to 14 students, based on current enrollment) if all eligibility criteria are met.
- Students cannot use school budget funds to pay tuition at another town's public school through the open enrollment process.
- District funding, planning, staffing, and course offerings are protected.

A **NO** vote means:

- An unlimited number of students may leave to attend other open enrollment schools and District taxpayers would have to pay their tuition.
- The school districts will lose 80% of the per-pupil funding for each student who leaves, even if the student's destination district has a lower cost per pupil.
- SHS will not have the option to admit non-SAU 39 students and receive tuition for them.

*What is the current per-pupil cost in the three local school districts?*

Recently, the annual per-pupil cost has been about \$25,800 at Souhegan. Transferring from the district would take 80% of that funding with them to their new district. The approximate amount of taxpayer funding per student leaving Souhegan High School would be \$20,700.

*Can any non-resident student enroll at SHS?*

No. Students will need to meet academic and other eligibility criteria established by the school through an application process.

*How will special education costs be handled?*

Students' home districts will remain financially responsible for special education services when working with SHS's team of special educators.

*Will class sizes increase?*

Students will be accepted only if space is available and services are not affected.

*Why would we want more students at SHS?*

Souhegan's philosophy and culture may appeal to non-resident students, generating additional revenue.

*Does this mean no one can transfer out of Souhegan High School?*

No. Traditional options still exist.

## SAU 39 Director of Student Services Report

Student services encompasses special education, 504 accommodation supports and services, specialized equipment, specialized transportation, and English for Speakers of Other Languages supports and services. Souhegan Cooperative School District services 115 students with Individualized Education Programs. The District's budget is driven by the following priorities: targeted professional development in co teaching and specially designed instruction, increasing integrity and capacity of our specialized programs in providing wrap-around supports and services and monitoring effectiveness, and bolstering the transition practices and services. Budget development focused on existing needs, while new or unexpected needs will be funded through IDEA grants. Highlights from the Souhegan Student Services Department this year include the participation in targeted professional development for co teaching and specially designed instruction, strategic scheduling of students and services to increase targeted instruction and maximize students' time, and expansion of transition skill offerings and partnerships within the specialized program of Transitions. We continue to examine best practices for inclusionary services, literacy services and generalization of skills for access to Core content, and increasing independence and natural support as students move through high school. The student services department assesses effectiveness by examining percent participation in regular education settings, growth on state assessments, graduation rates, and post high school outcomes.

Dr. Heather Jennings, Director of Student Services

Souhegan Cooperative School District  
Actual Expenditures for Special Education Programs and Services  
FY 2023-2024 and FY 2024-2025 per RSA 32:11a

	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Special Education Aid	\$387,967	\$302,199
IDEA Grant	\$87,726	\$257,760
Medicaid	\$65,264	\$40,272
Total Revenues	\$540,957	\$600,230
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Salaries	\$2,314,535	\$2,148,500
Employee Benefits	\$1,189,769	\$1,186,486
Purchased Services	\$1,424,119	\$1,861,195
Supplies	\$29,299	\$23,691
Equipment	\$730	\$425
Total Expenditures	\$4,958,452	\$5,220,297
Net Cost of Special Education	\$4,417,495	\$4,620,067

**Souhegan Cooperative School District  
Annual Report of the Treasurer  
as of 6/30/2025**

	Starting Balance	Deposits	AP-PR Expenses	Ending Balance	Interest Earned
July-2024	\$1,594,263.10	\$1,756,868.64	(\$1,420,117.88)	\$1,931,013.86	\$6,145.32
August-2024	\$1,931,013.86	\$1,969,102.08	(\$2,069,095.23)	\$1,831,020.71	\$7,276.68
September-2024	\$1,831,020.71	\$2,025,043.21	(\$2,455,976.69)	\$1,400,087.23	\$6,615.05
October-2024	\$1,400,087.23	\$1,563,363.72	(\$2,089,406.66)	\$874,044.29	\$4,094.37
November-2024	\$874,044.29	\$2,025,157.96	(\$1,595,621.84)	\$1,303,580.41	\$4,116.07
December-2024	\$1,303,580.41	\$1,443,530.21	(\$1,996,941.05)	\$750,169.57	\$3,627.09
January-2025	\$750,169.57	\$2,580,408.82	(\$1,687,967.94)	\$1,642,610.45	\$4,804.96
February-2025	\$1,642,610.45	\$1,466,850.31	(\$1,532,733.93)	\$1,576,726.83	\$4,242.10
March-2025	\$1,576,726.83	\$1,497,227.35	(\$1,716,403.35)	\$1,357,550.83	\$4,215.74
April-2025	\$1,357,550.83	\$1,806,806.02	(\$1,532,981.21)	\$1,631,375.64	\$4,707.69
May-2025	\$1,631,375.64	\$1,736,556.69	(\$1,492,110.06)	\$1,875,822.27	\$4,891.98
June-2025	\$1,875,822.27	\$1,457,693.40	(\$2,266,531.64)	\$1,066,984.03	\$3,465.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,594,263.10</b>	<b>\$21,328,608.41</b>	<b>(\$21,855,887.48)</b>	<b>\$1,066,984.03</b>	<b>\$58,202.23</b>

Bank Accounts	Peoples United Cash Management	Peoples United Municipal NOW	Peoples United Municipal Savings	TD Bank General Fund	Checks/Debits
07/01/2024	\$37,625.85	\$68,000.00	\$2,133.83	\$1,684,143.24	\$(197,639.82)
06/30/2025	\$-00	\$-00	\$-00	\$1,610,908.20	\$(543,924.17)