

My name is David Holzapfel. I taught at the Marlboro Elementary School, Windham Central Supervisory Union, from 1989 until 2015. A resident of Marlboro I also served on the school board from 2016 until 2020.

During my tenure on the school board, the Pupil Weighting Study came into sharp focus. The conclusions of the study were clear: towns such as Marlboro—smaller, poorer, rural— have been economically mistreated for decades. I don't cast blame on the present legislature for the failure of oversight. We are a citizen government, we are citizen school board members, we are the citizens of our towns. Legislative negligence of Pupil Weighting has been a failure of omission; it slipped through the cracks.

Until now.

During my 26 years as a 5th and 6th grade teacher I can say that students at the Marlboro School have had rich educational opportunities due entirely to inspired leadership, endlessly creative teachers and a supportive community. However, the school's infrastructure has suffered. One example: many were the early springs when I had 5 gallon garbage cans in my classroom to collect the meltwater from the icy roof above, when water-soaked acoustic tiles fell from the ceiling. No one ever got hurt but the disruption was evident. With frugal intent and focus on educational programming, the school board has been obliged to take a band-aid approach to infrastructure.

The UVM/Rutgers study has presented us with the facts and figures of the economic inequality along with a roadmap toward resolution. The Task Force is charged with solving a problem it didn't create. Various categorical aid schemes are not really viable long-term solutions to this long-term malfeasance. Failure to act now to relieve those who have borne the brunt of this burden will be an act of commission, a choice to perpetuate the injustice.