

December 2011

---

***A letter to our elected representatives regarding our schools, our children and our future***

Dear Elected Leader,

The 2012-13 school year promises to be the fourth year of a funding crisis that has severely affected New York's schools.

In the Mohonasen Central School District, we lost more than 13 percent of our state funding for the current year (twice the state average). This resulted in the elimination of roughly 34 teaching, administrative and support staff positions — even after concessions from the district's four bargaining units. Projections for next year aren't much better.

District officials are projecting that if nothing changes, another 34 to 47 positions may be eliminated for 2012-13. ***This would significantly impact the quality of education in our district.***

We know that difficult choices are being made in districts across the state. This year in our district, those choices will be about whether or not we can keep things like art, music and library in our elementary schools, and college-level electives in our high school.

These decisions are the direct result of years of flat or declining state aid, a deeply flawed funding formula that penalizes poorer districts like ours, and the newly enacted property tax levy cap.

While we understand the gravity of the current fiscal situation, we are concerned about the disproportionate reductions in state aid for Mohonasen in recent years and the significant number of layoffs that are projected.

Mohonasen has reduced, combined, reconfigured, re-prioritized, achieved concessions and simply done without over the past four years. Our district continues to be among the lowest in the state in terms of per pupil spending. ***Mohonasen is a model of efficiency.*** However, savings and efficiencies are becoming more difficult to identify and more damaging to the academic program. As a result, budget cuts are becoming more damaging to the future of our children.

***While you, and others in Albany talk about a fairer taxing system for all New Yorkers, we feel that we also need a fairer system for funding our public schools. After all, all children in our state deserve access to a quality public education and we are asking for your help in making sure they do.***

We also urge you to seek significant and meaningful mandate relief for our schools. We need your help in reducing costly burdens on our schools and the level of budget cuts Mohonasen — and districts like it — are experiencing.

The Mohonasen school community takes these issues very seriously. We expect our representatives to do the same. ***Please help us minimize the damage of funding cuts and support our need to have solid fiscal footing for years to come.***

Thank you for your support,

Member of the Mohonasen Central School District community