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#### MOHONASEN SCHOOL DISTRICT SEEKS BUDGET FEEDBACK (SCHENECTADY COUNTY, ROTTERDAM)

Posted on: 01/09/09  
Jackie Sher  
email: [news@spotlightnews.com](mailto:news@spotlightnews.com)

The Mohonasen Central School District is looking for feedback from the community regarding next year's school budget.

Following Gov. David Paterson's announcement last month that there will likely be a \$700 million decline in state funding for education, Mohonasen Central School District officials are bracing themselves for a \$1.5 million, or 8 percent, decrease in state aid. To that end, they are asking residents to complete an online survey regarding the budget and budget process.

"We know we're looking at a tough budget year and I think the primary goal of the survey is to reach out to the community and find out what people's priorities are while planning our budget for next year," said Kathleen Spring, Mohonasen Central School District superintendent.

Last year, the district used a budget advisory committee to discuss the budget and get community feedback, but according to Adrienne Leon, Mohonasen Central School District communications coordinator, they would like to receive more input this year.

"People didn't seem to attend the public presentations in the numbers that we wanted, so we tried to figure out ways to get feedback from the community and get people more involved," said Leon of the online survey.

The survey asks questions including, but not limited to, whether or not members of the community will attend budget meetings where they can learn more about what's happening, how the meetings should be run to make them the most informative and effective, and what the priorities are for next year's budget in terms of what will and will not be cut.

"People still want to support a quality education but I think people are stretched financially... I glanced at a couple of responses and that seems to be the tone," said Leon.

Spring also noted that people are listing maintaining core academics as their main priority.

Through planned public meetings, which will be held through the winter and spring, the online survey and other communication efforts, the district plans to present information on the budget process and plan their priorities for the 2009-2010 school year.

"Most of the people **who have** responded have said they plan on attending at least one of our public budget meetings, which is great because the more community input we can get, the better," said Spring.

Spring also noted they have received pages and pages of responses that "run the

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gamut," and that she and her committee will go through the responses and make sure they are answering resident's questions and responding to their concerns as much as possible.

"I think everyone is speculating; we have information from the governor and we're hoping that it's the worst case scenario. We're hoping that there will be some kind of negotiation so that it's not as severe," said Leon of the budget cuts to school aid.

At the first meeting, officials will present the information they have gathered from the survey as well as what they have learned from the state, as well as their current budget goals. They will also solicit input and feedback from people who come to the meeting about what their priorities are.

The survey has been on the school's Web site since Thursday, Dec. 18, and will be available through Friday, Jan. 9. On Monday, Jan. 12, the district will hold its first community budget forum at 6 p.m. in the Farnsworth Technology Center at Mohonasen High School.

For information on future meetings, the budget planning process or to participate in the online survey, visit Mohonasen Central School District's Web site at [www.mohonasen.org](http://www.mohonasen.org).

You can contact [news@spotlightnews.com](mailto:news@spotlightnews.com) with any questions. Also, feel free to post comments below.

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