

5/13/2020

Dear Members of the RTM,

I am writing this letter to you as a taxpayer, teacher and parent of a middle schooler. My husband and I are not alone in having moved to Waterford because of the excellent reputation of the school system. As a parent and teacher I take great pride in the caliber of staff and quality of education Waterford provides its students. As you surely know, Waterford has been recognized for their superior performance on a number of occasions this year by the State Department of Education. Given this, I was extremely disheartened to listen to the RTM debate on the BOE Budget. I am respectfully urging the RTM to reconsider their vote to reduce the BOE proposed budget by \$470,000.

A cut of this magnitude will have a devastating impact on the children of this town. There is no way a \$470,000 deduction can be made without impacting personnel and programs. It is highly likely that these cuts will affect the youngest children the most, where early intervention is so critical. We already have class sizes exceeding 21 in several elementary classrooms and limits on the number of slots available for intervention services. There is no way a cut of this size won't have a negative impact on our children's education and social emotional health.

I also don't understand how a cut of this size can be made during a pandemic, when we don't even know what the fall term is going to look like for our children (or our teachers!). Our children are already suffering with the effects of social isolation, and teachers are working long hours to make sure their students are engaged, connected and stimulated. These children need to be able to come back to school and have their needs met. It is very likely that those educational and social emotional needs are likely to be bigger than when they left, however, if the cut stands, there will be even less money available to meet those needs.

I look forward to hearing your discussion on Thursday and sincerely hope you will reconsider this reduction.

Tammie Hullivan
16 Center Street
Waterford

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