

Letter: Vote In Favor of the 2021-22 Education Budget Increase



To the Editor:

Imagine the heart-wrenching feelings of a wide-eyed second-grader when they walk into the first day of school and find their favorite teacher, the media specialist, no longer working there. Imagine the disappointment of a high school student hoping to pursue a career in engineering, returning to school to find the computer lab resources diminished. Imagine the stress of an anxiety-ridden student when they can't talk to their counselor. All of these instances, and more, occur each year due to school budget cuts in our town.

According to a unique study done by The Century Foundation, an independent, research organization, "The United States is under-funding its K-12 public schools by nearly \$150 billion annually, robbing more than 30 million school children of the resources they need to succeed in the classroom." This study was based upon an extensive financial model, derived by leading education finance expert, Bruce Baker, that calculated the investment needed per school district, compared to funds received. In our town, our education budget for this past school year increased by a mere 1.48%, preventing students from enriching resources, including a media specialist, discrete math classes,

PE paraprofessional, as well as other important assets. In short, funding has not been enough.

Increased school spending leads to better student performance, proven by studies documented in the journal Education Next. "On average, a \$1,000 reduction in per-pupil spending reduces average test scores in math and reading by 3.9 percent of a standard deviation.... A \$1,000 reduction also lowers the college-going rate by about 2.6 percent." We should want the best for our students. This research shows that higher budgets allow for students to achieve more, which will allow them to have more successful lives. The ultimate goal for children.

Those without children may argue the quality of our schools doesn't affect them. However, according to Raleigh Realty, "Economists have estimated that a five percent improvement in test scores in suburban neighborhoods can raise home prices by 2.5 percent," benefiting everyone in our community. So why don't we give our schools the money to perform as well as possible?

The Easton Board of Education, which knowledgeably considers every implication, has proposed a 4.09 percent increase in the education budget. This allows for an additional teacher at Samuel Staples Elementary School, a media center specialist at Helen Keller Middle School, and a director of digital learning for all three districts, among other important benefits. The data proves giving schools the funding they need leads to a better town, for all. Therefore the increase in the budget must be supported.

Please vote in favor of the education budget increase, for the good of our town.

Helena Zima

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