

Hello Sayles Community,

In an attempt to try to keep you informed and to clarify misinformation I thought it would be a good idea to write to you occasionally and bring you up to date on what the Board is doing.

We have recently finished two of our Budget Hearings for the 2018-2019 school year, with a third to take place on Monday, January 29th at 6 PM with an expected presentation to the Board of Finance by February 12th. With the cuts we have had to deal with thus far this year and the possibility of the availability of extra funding for next year being non-existent, the future does not look promising. Most of you are aware that we had to cut \$720,000.00 from our budget this year, a 10% reduction. This from a budget that is already without a World Language course, a Media Specialist and with little or no funding available for Curriculum or Professional Development.

While many will say that all towns and districts were impacted by the shortfall in State Funding, I would encourage you to look at the percentages that these towns had to cut compared to our District. For the most part almost all were half of what we have been asked to cut from our budget, one that had very little meat on the bone to begin with.

It was not my intent to start this new feature as a doom and gloom report, but it is reality check time. We cannot continue down a path that does not support the educational needs of our students and expect them to be prepared to face a future with skills ill prepared to do so. We are indeed at a tipping point, one which requires that we come together as a community in support of our children. As a Board we can only take the information that our Administration gives us in putting our budget together and present this to the Board of Finance and the Town for your consideration. While understanding our fiduciary responsibility to the town our main objective is to be advocates for our children in order to try ensure they have what they need. Ultimately the decision of them receiving or not receiving the funding they require is dependent on you and our ability to show you that need. That is why I encourage you now to come out in participate in these discussions that help shape our children's future, be part of the process and have a better understanding of what it takes to put it together.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel however, we have in place now an Administrative Staff that has already shown many tangible results and with a new Superintendent, with a proven track record now on board, our future can be brighter. How bright will be dependent upon the support and resources we give them as a community.

Michael W. Smith