



Milton Town School District

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To: House Education Committee
From: Amy Rex, MTSD Superintendent

As part of our recent school community visioning process, the MTSD Board of Trustees developed a theory of action that states:

If the MTSD:

- Engages all students in a personalized learning education,
- Ensures there are effective teachers, leaders, and school staff at every level of the organization focused on improving student outcomes,
- Enlists its partners and engages families in a local and global school community approach, and
- **Holds itself accountable through strong performance and sound fiscal management**

Then, every MTSD learner will be challenged and supported to reach their highest potential and be prepared for success as an engaged citizen locally and globally.

The MTSD Board of Trustees and I take our responsibility to provide a high quality education to the families of Milton at a cost that our community can afford very seriously. Even before COVID19, this task was becoming increasingly difficult. As we know, the double-digit increases in healthcare premiums and changes to health benefits under the statewide healthcare contract along with a decrease in the Milton CLA and a decline in our equalized pupil count is packing its own punch.

In January, we began with a level service budget which was a 5.6% increase over our FY20 budget expenditures. We rolled up our sleeves and scoured our budget for savings. Despite some very creative thinking, we still had to reduce programming and 1 FTE. The result of our \$580,000 in reductions was a proposed budget that was still a 3.7% increase over FY20. On March 4, our budget failed.

We immediately re-rolled up our sleeves and began to make the difficult decisions - the decisions that would adversely impact student opportunities. We reduced our workforce by an additional 2.5 FTEs, we carved into athletics and transportation, we nicked and dimed our contracted services, textbooks and technology equipment. We shaved off another \$600,000.

In the end, in order to get to a budget that is 1.8% increase over FY20, we made almost 1.2 million in reductions to a level service budget. On March 30, when the MTSD Board of Trustees approved our new

Great Schools, Strong Community, Successful People

FY21 proposed budget, it was estimated that the tax increase for residents of Milton would be around 5.9%. COVID19 came along and within a few short weeks the reality of the economic impact became horrifically clear. Not only would we now need to wait until June -at the earliest to go out to vote, we knew the economic reality would have set in and a YES vote would be in peril. Public education is the great equalizer. It is the foundation of our democratic society - the foundation of our future. We need a solution that can stabilize our fiscal predicament and allow us to provide a quality education for students in Milton.

A solution for Milton

Foremost, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to the House Education Committee for taking up this incredibly important and dire issue. I appreciate the solutions you have offered and welcoming me here to speak on behalf of my district. To begin, I would like to share a bit of insight on the impact of offering districts like Milton, funding equal to our FY20 education spending or option 1. Simply, this would require us to make additional reductions to the amount of \$1.75 million dollars. My options include:

1. All athletics, co curriculars, field trips, transportation (except for special education), and the world language program
2. 21 teachers; however, contracts have already been issued
3. 45 support staff

Undoubtedly, being authorized the budget that we intend to bring to voters in June, a budget that already has been scoured twice for cost savings, a budget that has already reduced 3.5 positions and important aspects of student programming is the only feasible option for Milton.

Public education is the great equalizer. It is the foundation of our democratic society - the foundation of our future. Milton is doing its due diligence. For the sake of our children - our future, we can not sacrifice anymore.

Amy L Rex