

YOUR NAME
YOUR ADDRESS
YOUR TOWN, STATE, ZIP

DATE

LEGISLATOR'S ADDRESS HERE
STREET
TOWN, STATE, ZIP

Dear (REPRESENTATIVE_____, SENATOR_____, OR GOVERNOR_____),

I recently attended a budget meeting regarding the state of financial affairs for Whitmore Lake Public Schools. To say I am concerned would be a gross understatement. Speaking as a parent of a child in the Whitmore Lake Public School District and as a Professionally Certified Special Education Teacher, I believe excessive cuts in the budget would be detrimental to our children's overall education. More state aid needs to be allocated to our school district in order to provide our students with a proper education. If more state aid is not allocated to our school district more cuts will have to be made, which will have a harmful affect on our students and staff. Moreover, it is imperative our legislators provide stable revenue to all public school districts statewide.

Many cuts have already been made to the district's budget. While the school's staff has done what they can to keep the budget cuts from affecting the students' educational needs, any additional cuts to the school's budget will have a direct impact on the students' education. Steps have been taken to make the school buildings more energy efficient, but it is not enough. Because MI legislators have not balanced a budget and provided the necessary funds to our schools, school employees have had to take furlough days, contribute more to their health care and retirement accounts, decline pay increases, and work overtime without proper compensation. School employees have families to support as well and simply cannot afford these cuts or adjustments to their salaries and benefits. Furthermore, reductions in the curriculum budgets at each building, including the elimination of some elective classes like Art and Computers, have been taken in order to save the district money. How is eliminating elective classes and reducing our curriculum budgets going to enhance our children's education and provide them with the necessary tools to compete with other schools and in a global economy? Furthermore, how is it going to prepare them for standardized tests, as well as assist them in furthering their education post high school, and help them to obtain jobs once they graduate school? Even with all of these reductions listed above, additional cuts must be made if the schools are to remain open.

The Whitmore Lake School District's proposed cuts for the 2010-2011 school year will further hinder the advancement of our students. Some of the proposed cuts would include eliminating middle school sports. Sports are an integral part of our student's education. It boosts morale, gets students involved with their community, fosters athletic skills that the students might take with them to high school and college and can possibly lead to a future in professional athletics. Another proposed cut includes another year of step/salary freezes for school employees and increased health care contributions. Our staff members are valued members of our community. The proposed cuts to their salaries will only force them to contribute less to our towns' revenue. Plus, they deserve to be compensated for the hard work they put into their jobs on a daily basis.

Moreover, the proposed laying off of staff including two teachers, one principal, and two administrative assistants and the closing of one building will only hurt the day to day running of our schools. It can mean larger class size, and less supervision of our students, which in turn, can lead to more behavioral problems and less attention given to the students who need extra assistance. Another proposed cut is the reduction or elimination of school transportation. Many of our Whitmore Lake residents work full time and simply do not have the means to get their child/children to and from school. Reduced or eliminated transportation can lead to student truancy and tardiness. Both instances contribute to poor school performance. All of the above cuts will negatively impact our students and their families.

The Whitmore Lake School District is by far not the only district affected by our budget crisis. The time for Michigan Legislators to act is NOW. We must put our children first. That means balancing a budget and providing stable revenue for all our schools across the state. It means allocating stimulus money to our schools. Additionally, it means raising the necessary money to fund our schools so our children receive a quality education that prepares them for life beyond school. We have a responsibility to our children to give them the necessary skills and knowledge to be productive citizens. We must give them a chance to make their way in this world. They cannot do this without receiving a suitable education.

Thank you for your thoughtful and immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

Parent and Whitmore Lake Resident