

(I We) are here tonight to express our concern over the planned cuts for the Keshequa Middle School. A short time ago our team gave a presentation before the Board showing you how we were using the resources we had been given to meet the unique needs and challenges that our student's face. We did not know that deep cuts were already planned that would take away many parts of our program.

We officially learned of the cuts on February 28th. It goes with out saying how much of a blow this was to our Middle School. If you measure programs by results – we have been successful. Test scores rising, improved student grades, drop is discipline problems, a drop in parent complaints – every thing a new program and our school district could be proud of. Recently our 8th grade team received a Phi Beta Kappa for Innovative Teaching.

We hope you understand the extend which these cuts will impact our students. Your cuts will result in reduction in our AIS classes, an increase of over 50% in our average class sizes, and the doubling of our student load will have put many of our current programs in danger and threaten our student's future success. As to the class sizes, let us remind you that our own Superintendent, when asked about our great success in the number of students earning Regents Diplomas, credited, among other things, the fact that “we enjoy small classes right from elementary on up”

We agree with Mrs. Miner. Small classes are important. And we agree with her when she said “The idea is to get every kid through that we can, look at every child's needs and try to support them for a regular diploma”

That is exactly what we were doing in our Middle School Program, the program that will be cut so heavily in this budget . A program that we felt was financial responsible. We used the resources you gave us to their best advantage to meet the needs of our students.

We know and understand that the Board of Education has an obligation to our tax payers, We also know that in a democracy, elected officials should follow the will of the majority. Have the majority of the taxpayers demanded these cuts? Do the majority of the taxpayers even know the extent of these District wide cuts and how they will impact their children and grandchildren?

Finally, we would like to thank Mrs. Miner for her willingness to listen to our concerns and for working with us on alternate proposals over this past week. Today our team discussed a plan by which we can restore some of our programs, allow a reasonable increase in class size, and create a manageable student load. None of the proposals fully restore our Middle School, but it will save some important aspects of it.

We respectfully ask the Board to reconsider the District wide cuts you have made, especially those in the Middle School. We hope that you will work with Mrs Miner to restore at least some of our Middle School positions so we can continue to prepare all of our students for the challenge of High School.