

Further consolidation will only hurt children; support Bedford tax renewal

I would like to respond to the Mr. Jacobs letter to the editor suggesting that our community not support their schools because, in his opinion, the school system, and apparently the children it serves, doesn't deserve it.

The board did not create the problems. Problems started when funding sources were cut by 20 percent over the last few years. They cut expenditures by \$10 million in that same time by doing things like consolidation, concessions, etc.

Mr. Jacobs feels they should make tough decisions like consolidation.

They consolidated five elementary schools into three. That was not a tough decision?! Ask any former SRE or TRE families how they felt about that.

Mr. Jacobs cited the plight of auto industry, builders and retailers: taxpayers that lost homes, wages, benefits, dreams. He should add the school staff to that list. Those tax-paying community members lost jobs, had wages and benefits reduced, too. Across the board, employees already have taken concessions that Mr. Jacobs is advocating. And he thinks they should priva-

tize. Which tax-paying members of our community do you think should be forced out of their jobs to be replaced by outsider companies whose only goal is to make a profit on our children?

He feels we need to do that to "enable more financial attention to be directed at upgrades in the most important area — education." But then says he feels that an unreasonable percentage of expenses is spent on payroll. Education is a service. You do not get from ABC to $E=mc^2$ without employing teachers.

Yes, Bedford has relied

on the community to help with building and improvements of facilities. That has been the responsibility of communities across the country for hundreds of years. I think Bedford children should be entitled to get a quality education from their public school system and they are entitled to attend buildings that are safe and secure which is the goal of the sinking fund. It is a renewal; your taxes will NOT increase. There is no extension of credit so no interest payments are involved.

**Sandy Kraine
Lambertville**