



January 12, 2010

Dear Parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to give you a little more information about the proposal to reduce one elementary principal in the 2010-2011 budget. It is no secret that Keene citizens and taxpayers are feeling the effects of the economic downturn. With that in mind, the Keene School Board asked the administration to put together as lean a budget as possible without negatively impacting our children's education. As we went through two rounds of budget deliberations, our principals carefully looked at where reductions could be affected and they offered proposals that trimmed money from the operating budget while ensuring that all Keene children would receive a quality education.

One of the cuts proposed by the Keene elementary principals was moving from five elementary principals for our five elementary schools to four elementary principals for our five elementary schools. After a great deal of discussion, all of us concurred that we could implement this with minimal impact on student safety and learning. Our elementary principals expressed confidence in this plan. We presented this along with other budget adjustments to the Finance Committee on Saturday and they voted to approve this reduction.

While a number of nuts and bolts details need to be worked out, the elementary principals and I feel we have the framework to move forward with this plan. Our next step is to gather input from staff and parents to be sure we are not missing anything in our planning. I will be meeting with staff over the next several weeks to get their thoughts and will attend the parent teacher organization meetings at each of the elementary schools to hear ideas, suggestions and concerns. I will meet with parents and staff as we move forward with the planning process to make sure we have a smooth implementation.

I told the Finance Committee Saturday that reducing one elementary principal is a partial solution to a broader problem. As many of you know, we have just seen the results of a comprehensive study that

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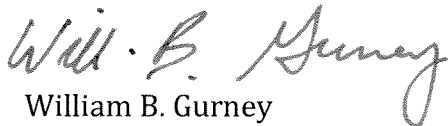
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compared staffing levels and costs in the Keene School District to similar school districts throughout the state. Two important findings of this study were that our costs and staffing were appreciably higher than our comparison schools while our assessment results were not competitive.

This past week, we formed a committee to begin to look at the educational implications of this study and will keep you all apprised of the recommendations this group develops. In addition, the Keene Board will be having a series of conversations with the community to talk about the structure of our schools and to develop a clear blue print for the future.

I look forward to meeting with you and hearing your ideas. With administrators, teachers, and parents working together I know we will be able to make this work seamlessly for our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William B. Gurney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the printed name.

William B. Gurney