

Support the district's budget

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Denville has had more than its share of controversy lately: possible privatization of emergency services, the sudden resignation of a long-time council member, the recall of another, the sewer expansion project and claims that our mayor parked in a handicapped space.

Hopefully, there is one thing we can agree on: the importance of the public schools that make Denville a great place to live and raise a family. On Tuesday, we can make a real difference in the lives of our children and our community by voting for the annual budget for Denville's kindergarten through eight schools. As concerned parents, we attend board of education meetings and send our notes to our friends and neighbors.

Tuesday's vote is for the school budget, not the new middle school. The budget is about the basics: expanded reading programs, new math programs to address flagging test scores and additional teachers for certain grades that are overcrowded. Like any household or business, we need to pay for the increasing costs of energy and transportation, and make the minimum repairs to our property. The tax increase is reasonable. The average annual tax increase is \$86 for a home assessed at \$310,000.

Finally, the quality of our schools and community is at risk. Denville lags behind virtually all other kindergarten through eight districts in Morris County in per-student spending. We need to remain competitive to attract talented teachers and prepare our students for success in a competitive world. School quality has a direct impact on property values.

TINA O. SMITH

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Denville

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