

Ode To The Budget

Thomas M. Kelly, Ph.D.,
Superintendent of Schools,
Valhalla UFSD

The budget has passed. Hooray! Hooray!
But wait, Mr. Futia did not have his way.
With thump and a bump he ran to the journal News,
But - Oh No, Wait - they would print both views.
So off to the North Castle News he ran
With innuendo and personal attacks in hand.
His friend Dan Murphy would write a great piece
Without any need for checking this fleece.
Primerano and company, you deserve an apology,
But not at the expense of Mr. Futia's anthology.
The community was wrong to attack you this way.
With tremendous respect I write to say,
"You deserve an apology on this glorious day."
To Mr. Futia and his friend Dan Murphy,
Please write some more and include me a Slurpy.
Your comments and rhetoric without heed of fact
put our School Budget back on the right track
Our community has grown weary of your attacks
And great furry.
Armed with grace and intellect, each resident has
learned
To check the facts before they get burned.
With a hoot and a hee we delight and shout,
The Budget has passed and the Kids have won Out
With tremendous respect and joy we write,
To thank our Community for results out of sight!

Open Letter . . .

Superintendent Kelly,

I read with great interest your poem on the budget. Unfortunately I am not a poet, nor do I have the spare time that you apparently have to right a poem, so I will respond through this letter.

You stated in your article that Tony Futia ran to me with innuendo and personal attacks in hand. Most of the information that Mr. Futia has provided the paper has been factual information on the budget that he or anyone can obtain from your office.

You also state that School Board candidate Joe Primerano deserved an apology for the attacks levied against him. I agree and that is why I printed the story on the flyer handed out by someone in the District. I ask for your help in finding out who wrote this piece.

You claim that many of the facts that I have written about the budget have been incorrect. I would ask you to specifically cite specific examples of when I have made mistakes in my articles and I would be happy to print a retraction.

You also claim that my story helped put your school budget on the right track. Neither the North Castle News nor myself took a position on the School Budget. My articles simply tried to point out the impact your budget would have on property owners.

Some of the facts in the budget are indisputable. This year the School Board submitted a budget with a 14.95% spending increase and a 19.33% tax increase for North Castle residents in the Valhalla School District for the 2001-2002 budget.

Recently adopted budgets include an 11.7% spending increase, which resulted in a 19.3% tax increase for North Castle residents for the 2000-2001 school year. For the 1999-2000 school year the spending increase was originally 7.3% but was reduced to 5.8%.

I also wish to remind you and our readers that several of your budgets have been rejected by the residents. The budgets for the 2000-2001 and 1999-2000 school year were defeated by the residents when they were first presented.

In covering 8 other school districts for Martinelli Newspapers, I can report to you that the Valhalla School District spending increases have been above the average increase for School Districts in Westchester County.

Other School Districts have also seen a larger increase in enrollment and yet come in with lower budget increases. Can you explain this fact?

I think it is important that the residents of your school district are aware of how much more they are being asked to pay in property taxes as a result of the budgets crafted by you and adopted by the School Board.

I hope that your poem can lead to a dialogue that will enhance the knowledge of the residents of the Valhalla School District.

Sincerely,
Dan Murphy