

Dear Board of Finance/Board of Representatives:

We want to add our voice to the cry in support of the quality of our city's educational system. Quality public schools are vital to our city's future. But somehow as we have in front of us an ill-conceived, poorly thought-out redistricting plan – to shave or add percentage point off an unnecessary criteria set by a city that is already one of the most diverse in the state.

Our world has changed since October 2008. Out of necessity, government bodies have assumed unprecedented roles as they've attempted to deal with this economic crisis. They've been forced to make hard choices as we all seek ways to deal with the crisis. I work within the confines of this day in and day out at work and at home.

I think you, our elected representatives, need to consider stepping into new ground as we move through uncharted territory. **Take the bold move of looking not AT the proposed school budget, but look INTO the proposed school budget.**

The Superintendent has his motivation for shielding the costs of the School Redistricting from public scrutiny. The Board of Education, tired of the public attention given to redistricting, doesn't want to touch the issue again.

**Did you know the Redistricting plan was submitted in August of 2008 and voted on less than 30 days later, with NO ATTEMPT to quantify the associated costs?**

Shouldn't we consider reallocating the funds budgeted for redistricting towards something other than duplicate buses??? Do you know that for the next seven years, there will be 2 elementary school buses stopping in my neighborhood? One will take my neighborhood kids to Northeast. The other will take my children to Davenport. They will move on to middle school at the same time. Stories like this will be happening all over Stamford for the next seven years. This is because the redistricting plan was poorly conceived.

We are seeing cuts to the arts, music, debate, sports. Those cuts have a real and immediate, negative impact on the quality of our children's education. Isn't that what is paramount?? Many children in this city depend on these programs to help them achieve financial steps to higher education. Redistricting, on the other hand, *might* have some future benefit. (note that the current redistricting plan won't even be fully implemented until 2017).

We are in a crisis. Now is the time for you to make hard decisions. Don't look at the surface; look beneath it. **Ask for the real cost of redistricting; ask for the details in the school budget -- The solution is in the details.** Tell Dr. Starr to

postpone this redistricting until we have money for basic education -- don't ask him.

**Thanks,**

**Sheila & Jim Uhl**

10 years residents of Stamford

Tax paying professionals

2 children in public schools

Not one return phone call from the Superintendent