

June 6, 2010

## ***E. Ramapo board members must stop being divisive or resign***

By Bill Thorne

Re "East Ramapo sets June 15 budget revote; cutbacks criticized," Thursday article:

As we get ready to vote on a second proposed East Ramapo school budget on June 15, I find that the issues facing this portion of community are many and are not unique just to our school district. My concern is with how the school board goes about resolving these issues.

The school board's public and private behavior, individually and collectively, is divisive. I find it mindboggling when a school board holds a session and approves a budget and subsequently presents it to the taxpayers for ratification, yet have a member of the very board that approved the budget campaign against its passage.

As taxpayers in a representative democracy, we elect individuals to represent us, and those individuals must set aside their own personal and private feelings and wishes in order to fairly and equitably represent his or her constituents in all matters legally brought to his or her office.

The need to have a mature, responsible, unified and cohesive comprehensive plan to finance the needs of all the students of this district cannot be overemphasized. The openly divisive attitude and behavior of a number of board members has reached a crescendo that is extremely scary. I have heard members of the community making statements that I never imagined I would hear in my lifetime. Reference has been made to taking over the board by force and even to hurting certain members of the board. I'm not in favor of talking, thinking or acting in this manner.

The education and safety of our children is paramount in my mind. That being said, I demand that the members of the board act in a mature and responsible manner, in order that our children can achieve their educational goals. If we are not interested in developing educated, responsible, and clear-thinking young adults, then the future looks bleak.

What we need:

- A clear understanding of the budget needs and issues.
- The members of the board must go out to their constituents and provide them with the facts.
- Each member of the board must stand behind passage of the budget.
- There must be agreement among board members that they each have a right to express a personal opinion, but make sure that when doing so it is made clear to all whether a personal or constituent's position is being taken.

Let's get to the business of advocating for the ways to best provide programs, personnel, resources and funding that will help our children to achieve the best possible education.

The service required for and to our children can only be achieved through the coming together of motivated, mature, caring and focused adults. Let's put the petty, personal, and selfish attitudes and behavior aside and get down to doing the business for which you were elected.

If you cannot or do not wish to do so, then you should resign.