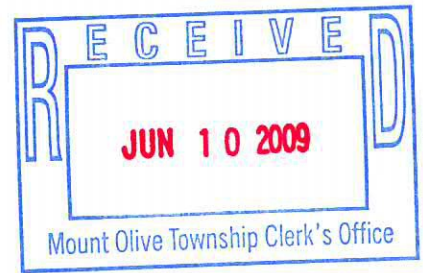


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From: Sherry.Shaw@sanofi-aventis.com [mailto:Sherry.Shaw@sanofi-aventis.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2009 10:07 AM
To: Stachnick, Christie
Subject: Letter regarding Bussing at MOHS/response to board of ed meeting June 8, 2009

Dear Mayor and Town Council,
Attached please find a copy of the letter sent to the board of ed regarding bussing at MOHS and their remarks/comments at last night's meeting. I hope that you will use whatever influence/means you have to ensure the safety of our children.

Regards,
Sherry

<<MOHS bussing issue-ltr.doc>>

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Sherry Shaw
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Flanders, NJ 07836

June 9, 2009
Members of the Board of Education
Superintendent of Mount Olive Township

Cc: Mayor David M. Scapicchio (via email)
Mount Olive Township Council (via email)
Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (via email)
Governor John S. Corzone (via email)



I am writing in response to the Board of Education's Decision to eliminate bussing for my child. I am very concerned and object to the decision and points made at last night's board of education meeting. My daughter will be a junior next year and this decision has a major impact on our situation. Last night, the board tried to make several points and I take issue with them.

1) Regarding safety-

a) "yes we agree that Flanders Drakestown is not a safe road for walking, but it is not our responsibility to provide sidewalks or crossing guards, that is the township's responsibility"

i) The board may not be responsible for providing safe roadways, but this decision makes them directly responsible for forcing children to walk unsafe routes to and from school.

b) "we are only obligated to provide for the safety of the children while they are at the school"

i) Pardon me, but I thought we were a community here and all concerned about the welfare of our children. Clearly, I was mistaken. I think maybe we should be responsible for education expenses but only as they relate to when teachers/administrators are physically on the school premises. Should we be responsible for attendance or paying for days off at conferences/workshops? Also, do I not see in the superintendent's contract reimbursement for expenses to and from school?

2) Regarding transportation-"it is not our responsibility to provide transportation, it is the parents"

a) If that were indeed the case why is transportation provided at all. It is mandated by state law but only at a fixed distance from school, but that indicates to me it is in some part a responsibility of the school board. We pay the same taxes-probably more-than those whose children will receive bussing.

b) We are a working family, as my kids have grown up when they were in aftercare so even though I was paying for bussing through my taxes, I was not to

use it. Now when we need it most, it is being taken away. As a working parent, this is more of an issue for my child in high school.

3) Regarding alternatives:

a) "it is between providing reading writing and arithmetic vs bussing"

i) I do not believe this statement. There is a current surplus in the budget, there are currently provisions for 4% salary increases for administrators. In this time of financial crisis we are all being asked to do more with less-at work and at home. While I understand this is not an easy thing, it is what everyone is dealing with right now. I do believe there are other alternatives than eliminating bussing.

b) In general, with the proposal to let children impacted drive to school or to give priority parking to those with multiple children in the car.

Is the board serious? So now we have inexperienced children driving each other on treacherous roads when wet or during most of the winter. Have they thought about traffic deaths and the category most impacted-usually teens? So there proposal here is again against safety.

c) Also, in the letter the board sent home there was mention of them possibly staying at the school.

i) In high school, our children are starting very early (around 7) by the time they get home from school on the bus they are quite tired. They need some time to unwind and snack before they get started on the burden of homework for the day. At this point, this would mean my daughter would be at school from 7 am to 6 or 6:30 pm when I get home from work. They go home and complete homework. Are our teachers and superintendent going to put in those hours? That would save some budget.

4) Regarding the general issue-"we do not know the magnitude of the issue"

a) Were there not things the board could have done to assess the impact before making a decision? I can think of a few as a quick simple survey to find out if this was an issue. No rather, the board took the approach to make a unilateral decision that puts the safety of our children at risk.

In summary, I left the meeting even more disappointed with our current board. Again, I know we are all faced with tough economic decisions right now, but the \$94,000 the board is looking to save with this move is a drop in the bucket to the cost of even 1 child getting hurt. I feel as though the board represents a group of ungrateful children that feel entitled. They did not get an increase in budget approved so they are taking away the bussing and saying well you did not approve our budget so that is what happens.

This is where I take issue. Again, more and more of us are losing jobs. For those of us lucky enough to keep jobs, salaries and benefits are being frozen or decreased. We are all doing with less right now, but maintaining our responsibilities. I ask the board to accept

as its responsibility the safety of our children in each decision that it makes, and if it is a cut than negatively impacts that, it is a cut that should not be made.

I urge elected officials on the board to reconsider their position. I also urge other elected officials to consider the impact this has on your constituents and help resolve this situation.

Regards,
Sherry Shaw