

Date:

The Honorable _____

Address: _____

Dear _____,

I am writing to express concern regarding the impact of the 2011-12 Executive Budget on NY's schools and communities. The budget reflects a significant reduction of school aid statewide. While the statewide average reduction is less than 3%, for some reason Sachem reduction is in excess of **14 million dollars, or 12%**, far more than our fair share. This cut is not something the Sachem community can tolerate.

This reduction and the proposal to cap school district tax levy increases sends the Sachem School district down a dangerous path. This plan does nothing to solve the State's fiscal problems nor does it seek any revenue. It does not ensure level or reduced property tax increases. In fact, with school district levies capped at 2% or the CPI (whichever is less) and no allowances for increases in mandated costs, tax payers may actually see higher taxes in order to offset these expenses. Furthermore, tax caps erode a community's right to determine its educational investment as any ability to override the 2% could be defeated by 40% of voters.

We acknowledge that we are approaching the 2011-12 budget year faced with unprecedented and continuing economic challenges. Sachem has recently demonstrated remarkable ingenuity and efforts to reduce spending. However, we cannot cut our way to excellence, to progress, or to sustainability. We must work together to sustain NY's public school image as it reflects quality education.

Gov. Cuomo strongly encourages all school districts to use existing reserves to stabilize the proposed tax rate increase. However, Gov. Cuomo does not address the following year revenue deficit due to this one year source of funding. We do not believe this is a realistic solution as it is not sustainable and will lead to further dismantling of our educational program in subsequent years.

We in Sachem have a strong history of proper cash management, acknowledged by all levels of Federal and New York State oversight.

Let our community decide their own fate on local school district finances, we will approve or disprove with our vote.

I ask that you revise the 2011-12 budget and instead:

- **Restore funding to meet our State and individual responsibility to provide increased opportunity, not diminished opportunity, for every child to reach their potential.**
- **Address mandate relief (state and federal) that provides substantive relief.**
- **Do not support any initiative that removes our right to decide what is best for our community. It is our community, our children and our money that is at stake.**

Sincerely,
Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____
