



**Vernon Township School District**  
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*John B. Alfieri, Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools*  
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February 22, 2010

Dear VTSD Community Member:

I write to share some information with you concerning this current year's school budget as well as next year's proposed school budget. As members of our community, the quality of our schools matters to each and every one of us – in fact, many people would agree that the school district's reputation is the largest factor in the value of a home.

Right now, we are in unprecedented times in Vernon, in New Jersey, and as a nation. I do not need to remind you of all that is going on in the world we live – Vernon is no exception. It is our mission to create a balanced budget which does many things, but most of all, it must be fiscally responsible and respectful of those who pay the taxes and directly support our schools. As we look forward to continuous growth and tremendous academic improvement at all levels, funding is a key factor in the success of the existing and new programs we seek to benefit the lives of the students we all serve.

On February 10, 2010, Governor Christie declared a fiscal state of emergency in New Jersey as the state's revenues were coming in significantly less than projected. As a result of this declaration, the Governor reduced the current year's state aid payment to Vernon by **\$341,582**. In essence, on a moment's notice, we were informed that we were going to receive this much less money from the state for this current year. The Governor has proposed a plan whereby we are required to reduce our already minimal funds for emergencies to offset this cut. Thus, we would be left with a dangerously low level to operate when you consider that we are responsible for the health, welfare, safety, and education of thousands of students and hundreds of staff members – as well as eight locations which, like any household could have a situation which required repair or replacement to maintain safety and usefulness. Thus, the unintended consequence would be the total inability to be proactive with regard to our second largest resource, our buildings.

Now, only one week later, we are being told to expect a 15% reduction in the amount of state aid we receive for our next year's budget. For Vernon, this will translate into an approximate cut of 4.5 million dollars. By the middle of March, Vernon could stand to lose 5 million dollars in an operation budget of approximately

70 million. This is the dilemma which is sadly, an almost best case scenario for us should these decisions be made by Trenton.

As a parent of school-aged children, a taxpayer, and a superintendent, I recognize that financial times are very tough and that the situation calls for swift and significant action. However, when a school district is looking at this magnitude of financial impact, the end result could be significant. The very last thing that this superintendent wants to do is cut people or programs, with a reduction of this amount of funding, it would be impossible that the aforementioned not take place.

Please know that the sole purpose of this missive is strictly to provide you, the members of our community, with the most current information regarding our school district's budget. The Board of Education and I take our responsibility as stewards of the community's resources and finances very seriously – we know that you expect nothing less, nor should you. Should you have any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions please call or e-mail ([thebudget@vtsd.com](mailto:thebudget@vtsd.com)). Your input and involvement is an essential ingredient in our success as a learning community – Vernon's learning community.

Sincerely,

John B. Alfieri, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools