

Trenton Times (August 3, 2007)

**Not following the rules cost us plenty**

I am responding to the letter "The Community wants excellent schools" (July 17), in which the writer did not mention that by not following state regulations, Washington Township turned down 27 percent in state aid -- which is equal to approximately \$13.5 million -- because our building didn't meet state standards. Many taxpayers would have reconsidered their vote if they had known this. The issue was not building a new high school, but not following state regulations on new school construction. We must learn from the past or we will repeat the same mistakes in any future proposed new school construction.

The writer claimed that educational experts were consulted. If that was the case, then why did we build an energy-inefficient school with high cathedral ceilings that require larger power outlays to heat in the winter and air- condition in the summer? The "experts" should have recommended a "green" school that has solar energy and recycles power and water. This was done with the Newark Science High School, which was built at the same time as our Robbinsville High School, and it won an international award for efficient energy use and cost savings. The money saving in power alone in an efficient Robbinsville school would have allowed for more special programs or hiring additional teachers.

The writer's criticism of the writer of the letter "New school equals higher taxes" (July 9), for wanting efficient spending of taxpayers' money in our school district is very telling. Efficient spending of our tax dollars is good because it benefits our children, parents, teachers, school district and our taxpayers' wallets.

-DAVID PATTERSON  
Washington Township