

Good Afternoon!

I am Jay Keiser, a member of the Middletown Board of Education and Chair of its Budget Committee.

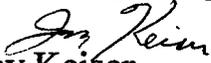
While the Vocational Agricultural Center is used by only a small part of our student body, for the students enrolled in the program, it is a big part of their education and it prepares them for jobs after graduation. I will let others describe the benefits of the program in more detail.

As you probably know, Middletown offers the Vo-Ag education to surrounding towns. Approximately 75% are Middletown students and 25% are students from nearby towns. Middletown is limited by state law the amount of tuition that can be charged to sending towns to \$7,069 while our average student cost is over \$10,000.

While it might make more sense to request an increase to the tuition amount, this is not only complicated to compute, but charging an increase in tuition might discourage other towns from sending tuitions. One of the strengths of the program is that students from different towns have the opportunity to interact.

The proposed bill not only helps toward the tuition deficiency, but also would allow Vo-Ag to do more. This will be especially important at our new Middletown High School and Vo-Ag Center where we expect to have an additional teacher and expand our Animal Science Curriculum.

In closing, I urge you to support the per student funding of \$2,500.


Jay Keiser

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