

Vail Daily letter: Need to help schools

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If we want to keep our kids safe and give them a fighting chance to succeed, doing nothing is not an option.

I cannot imagine a second-grade teacher with only a few years of experience seeing his or her class size balloon from 20 to more than 30 kids. I cannot imagine losing my children's bus stop. I cannot imagine keeping buses on the road that are no longer maintained to safety standards. I cannot imagine continuing to reduce the number of days kids go to school when precisely the opposite needs to happen.

A significant majority of voters recently polled, even the 80 percent percent who do not have kids in the school district, want our schools to attract and retain quality teachers, maintain academic programs and prevent further increases in class size. However, a majority of those polled were unwilling to support a \$6.7 million override, equal to paying \$120/year in taxes on a \$500,000 house to retain these standards for our schools (or one cup of coffee a day).

I respect the economic challenges that our residents and businesses face. However, there is simply too much at stake to do nothing. If we wait a couple of years to vote for a \$6.7 million override, our quality teachers will already be gone, our bus fleet will have crumbled, and programs will have disappeared. It will cost twice as much to bring everything back.

Property values are down. More and more professionals are relocating. Attracting professionals, young families and businesses to our area is already extremely difficult. If we let the quality of our schools erode—and see neighborhood schools close—property values, job creation and economic development will get hit even harder.

I urge you to vote yes on 3B for a mill levy that addresses our schools' absolute greatest needs, including restoring teacher positions and keeping our bus fleet safe, while at the same time respecting the economic challenges that our community faces.

Doing nothing would be a disaster for our kids and our community—that is no exaggeration.

Sam Gale

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