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If you’re sitting here at town hall tonight, it means you want answers. You’re here on your own time because you care about this town—and you want to make sure I care about it as much as you do. You want to make sure I’ll bring real solutions with me to office, not just bandages. Well, I’m not going to waste any of your time. My main focus today is your children. “ Children are our future. ” It’s a phrase we hear often, but it is often used without a full understanding of the implications. “ Children are our future” means that children are our priority.

Right now, we have some of the lowest test scores in the entire county. Not only that, our math and science scores were around 20 points lower than the state average. That is not making children our priority. That is not securing their future or the future of this town. No one wants to move to a town or stay in a town that has, to be frank, a lousy public education system. When I was a child here, our town was actually renowned for its stellar schools, so what changed over the last thirty years?

For one thing, an exorbitantly high percentage of the town’s budget has been allocated to parks, recreation, and beautification. Not to say that money was wasted—we have an extraordinarily gorgeous town—but pristine streets won’t help our students compete at a national level when it comes time to picking a college. On top of that, we have a staff that is rife with teachers who have been offered tenure despite a long track record of under-performing students. During my time as superintendent of schools 10 years ago, I tried to push for a merit-based tenureship.

It didn’t go through, and I’ve been pushing ever since. I think the most valuable change we can make as a town is ensuring that our teaching staff is filled with individuals who strive for perfection rather than settling for what’s merely acceptable. And what better way to motivate our schools than to give them a more appropriate budget? More money invested in our schools means a lower student-to-teacher ratio, which means student will be getting the attention they need and will have a better chance of fulfilling their true potential.

The Office of the Mayor should be held by an individual who can actually bring solutions that will change the town for the better. This town needs a drastic new approach before it’s too late. If we do things the way that they’ve always been done, then things will remain the way that they’ve always been. And that, at this point, means a continued decline in the quality of public education. Not meeting state standards is gross negligence and completely unacceptable.

Don’t let it get any worse. I will not let this town go another year at the bottom of the totem pole. If you will elect me as your public servant, will serve this town and the needs of its people. Those needs will change over time, but right now, as of today, the top priority is education, knowledge—the most precious and valuable resource a person can have. Vote Mahoney this Tuesday, and you’ll be voting a promising new future for this town and its youngest residents.