

# Let's do what's right for our kids, our city

To the Editor:

I walked the halls of Thompson – old Rogers, then – as did my father before me, Class of '26. And my four children survived Thompson Junior High School on their way to the new Rogers, down in the Fifth Ward somewhere.

Yes, I guess I qualify as an old Newporter. I don't have any kids in school anymore, I don't like more taxes, so I should find some excuse to vote "no" – right?

Wrong. There are some things more important than money – like kids and education and what's going to happen to families with young children in Newport. Like what we leave behind us when we move on.

I don't think kids today need the "latest and greatest" with all the bells and whistles. I don't even think a school building is the most important part of education; it ranks somewhere below motivated kids, supportive parents, enthusiastic teachers and probably a few other things.

But the building and the environment it offers can make a big differ-

ence. A clean, safe, attractive building, equipped for teaching in the computer age, can stimulate and encourage both students and teachers. It can help produce the kind of kids who thrive in high school and do well as adults.

A depressing relic like Thompson tends to do just the opposite. It also sends a message to newcomers in our city. Whether we like it or not, the message is: "This is what we think of our kids."

As others have pointed out, this isn't a perfect plan. But the next one – if we shoot this one down and the School Committee can summon up enough energy to try again – won't be perfect, either. The naysayers will always be able to find things to quibble about.

I think the committee has done it right this time, and I'm going to vote for the Thompson bond issue. I hope you will, too. Let's give our kids – and ourselves – a decent middle school at last.

**Roland Chase**  
Newport