

Greetings Board Members,

I would like to thank you for listening to the people and students of Palmyra-Eagle. I have been watching the votes over the past 2 referendum votes in April and November. It is obvious to me that The Village and Town of Eagle no longer wish to be part of Palmyra-Eagle district. Which is fine, I have no complaints about seeing it go back to the Palmyra Panthers if need be.

I have also been doing some research and find that rural towns are more likely to disappear/fade away when there is no school in the area. I mean, who would move to Palmyra if you had to bus your kindergartener 45 minutes to school. How do the smaller districts do it? And why has Palmyra-Eagle operated as a complete district for so long without help? That time has come to an end with this referendum.

I would like the board to look into keeping a 4k-12th in Palmyra, in the current Middle/High School and depending on enrollment, adding the Elementary school in. To do this we will have to get rid of the district office and move everything into the main office. The admin should consist of Superintendent, Building Principal, Guidance/Curriculum and Pupil services. These 4 people would make up the district and may have to pull double duty if needed. We would need to share all other services like Food Service, business manager, etc. I am sure one of the surrounding districts would gladly offer theirs if we pay half of the salary. We could also utilize some of the college courses at UW Whitewater or do some co-op classes with surrounding districts.

If need be, share athletics like Football with other districts, like we do with soccer (with East Troy) already. It is very possible to accomplish this.....BUT it would mean getting rid of Eagle because, having lived in Eagle before, most, NOT all, will not give up their fight to be part of Mukwonago. I would rather let Mukwonago have Eagle and any Eagle folks who wish to be part of the new smaller Palmyra district would have the opportunity to OE into Palmyra.

As I said, I do believe it is possible to have a district in Palmyra, and that is what the majority of Jefferson county voters seem to want. So I encourage you to give the loyal students and faculty of Palmyra a second chance to have what they want and deserve, a small rural school with great student to teacher ratio and the ability to succeed at many extracurricular activities. After all, that IS the reason why my wife and I CHOSE Palmyra-Eagle to educate our children and wish to continue to do so!

Thank you

David Carpenter

N2939 County Road Z

Dousman, WI 53118

262-443-7967

Palmyra-Eagle School District resident

Would like to still be in this district

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Greg Laabs <scotnova@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2019 6:12 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: School closing

To DPI it's with deep concern that we need the closing of the PEASD. It's unfortunate that it's come to this point but I have been in this district for twenty years sent four children through the school district. All my children received a great education at Eagle Elementary School but when they got into the middle school my daughters received a good education but my boys were just pushed through. If in 2009 we could have been able to choose I feel that my sons would have received a better education at Mukwonago high school. I was on the Committee to help with the new high school that opened up in 2004 with the statement from the school board that it would be paid for complete in twenty years. Since my one son graduate in 2012 the school has gone downhill with poor quality administration wasting money for things not needed to help the children succeed but they would spend money on silly thing like putting a sixty inch tv in the weight room then buy laptops for all children from middle school to high school that extra money could have went towards repairs. Then instead of closing a school that twice as old as eagle elementary they would rather stick mine in to a very old school. And then on a final thought is that all most three quarters of all the employees that work for the district are all related and have been there so long to keep it the family. So in closing the best bet would be to either close the district or send the children from Eagle back to WAUKESHA country schools such as Mukwonago or Kettle Morine school district we're there education will improve.

Greg Laabs
135 e main st
Eagle Wisconsin 53119
262-312-4440

Sent from my iPhone

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Natalie Steinke <nsteinke19@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2019 8:53 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI

I would like to start off saying how disappointed I am in my community for failing us and failing our children! and also showing how they do not care about these children! I have had 2 children graduate from Palmyra and was hoping my youngest would be able to as well and now what? I live 2 blocks from the schools in which my daughter can walk to school and now what? To be bused to who know's where and on a bus for a ridiculous amount of time commuting to and from where ever you decide they will go to? I am just wondering if anyone is really thinking about these children instead of worrying about their taxes! Did anyone think of the impact closing the schools will have on if anyone wants to sell their home? People are not going to buy homes where there are no schools. I am hoping you can find a way to make this right for our children so they do not have to suffer the consequences because selfish people did not want their taxes to be raised and to save these childrens schools and jobs of their teachers!

Sincerely disappointed,

Natalie Steinke
409 Taft Street
Palmyra, WI 53156
262-844-2731

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Michael Sampson <msampson@swarmmevents.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2019 3:05 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Cc: smfischer14@gmail.com
Subject: Palmyra Eagle SD - Concerned Alum

PE School Board,

You have the opportunity to save a community and let the PE school district continue to grow minds and lives.

When I was 10 my single mother moved to Tremain in Dousman. We moved from Genesee Depot and Magee Elementary where I was a terror on the playground and classroom due to an abusive stepfather at home. Eagle Elementary became my fresh start in life. I entered 4th grade and I didnt know it at the time but even at that early age your school district helped shape my life. I received additional school care through a speech pathologist so I could pronounce the letter R and also support through the guidance counselor for children that had gone through divorce. As my mom turned her life around with a new stepfather, I got a brand new start with new friends, athletics, music and great classrooms.

In 6th grade we were introduced to a brand new set of students from a town over. I remember going skating in Mukwonago while being forced to socialize and become friends with this group of strangers from Palmyra. This social setting and conjoining of two schools made us be social, open and accepting of others helping us grow at an early stage compared to other school districts. My class was the first class to enjoy tackle football in 8th grade at PE middle school. The early learning of teamwork and trust started there which led my 2002 class to PE's first rock valley conference football championship in 2001.

The education that I received at Palmyra-Eagle High School put me on the career path that I have enjoyed so far. The smaller class sizes and amazing support from teachers is something that my UW-Whitewater college peers did not get from their high schools. I ran track for 4 years at UW-Whitewater becoming an all-American 3 times. Former PE high school teachers kept in touch and continued to support and push me. I have tried every year to give back through the PE golf outing and am willing to give back more and lobby some of my successful classmates to do the same.

From UW-Whitewater I went to Los Angeles for 3 years getting the opportunity to work the phones for successful talent agents at William Morris Endeavor often saving Harvard grads with their phone skills. They took a chance on a student from Palmyra-Eagle High School. I was a producer for "Sport Science" before the economy tanked bringing me back to Wisconsin. Currently I am a full-time entrepreneur and believe my education within the PE school district has helped me achieve great things for Milwaukee and Wisconsin. I have opened 2 successful restaurants, 1 arcade bar, 2 coworking spaces, a creative agency and a half million dollar in sales event planning company. Not bad for 36 and finishing 7th in my high school class of 79 students.

The teachers and community of small towns like Palmyra and Eagle are what made me the man I am today and the type of place I will be looking to move soon when I start a family.

Michael Sampson
PE Class of 2002

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Brad Peterson <bpeterson@mcd.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2019 4:35 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Dissolution

Brad Peterson
462 Dahl Dr.
Deforest, WI 53532
608.438.4472

Greetings. My three children (7th grade, 5th grade and second) attend Palmyra-Eagle Schools. I am a former school board member in Belleville. It's a travesty that this measure was considered and shocking that it was approved.

A school district is a small town's identity. Home valuations and local businesses depend on families. Who wants an even longer bus ride to a school district that they have no familiarity?

Please keep this district, or Palmyra on its own, as it's vital not just to the children and their families but for businesses and community.

Kindly,

Brad Peterson
Marketing and Sales Coordinator
608.268.3724

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Aaron Zimmerman <zimmysevenfive@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2019 4:53 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Palmyra Eagle dissolution

Dear members of the school district advisory board,

Thank you for your time and commitment in helping our district resolve this problem. Thank you also for your consideration of my comments expressed in this letter. I am a graduate of Palmyra-Eagle High School and attended from 5K through graduation. My wife, brother, sister, aunts, uncles and grandpa are all Palmyra-Eagle Alumni. I currently have four children attending Palmyra-Eagle, three in Palmyra Elementary and one in Palmyra-Eagle High School. I live three miles from the school and commute to Waukesha for work. I have stayed in Palmyra all these years with the intention of my children attending and graduating Palmyra-Eagle as many in their family before them already have.

I'm writing today with the hope that you and your team will be able to arrive at a solution that will allow Palmyra-Eagle schools to continue operations in some capacity. There must be other small districts in Wisconsin that could be used as a model for how Palmyra-Eagle could be financially and physically structured in order to maintain operations. Is it possible to find a comparable sized district such as this and come up with a plan to keep Palmyra-Eagle operational? If an increase in taxes is needed to keep the school open after changes have been proposed is it possible to describe these changes and the needed funds to the community? Additional short term funding from the state government to allow the district enough time to restructure, make changes and resume operations on a more financially sustainable plan would seem reasonable. I realize that things must change as the district faces too little state funding and fewer students due to school choice and simply fewer children in the district population. While these conditions cause financial stress to the district I don't believe the solution should be an all or nothing approach. A solution must lie somewhere between the extremes of no change and completely shutting down operations. This compromised solution is the one that must be found and implemented in our district. From the dedicated and caring teachers and staff to the buildings, sports fields and wonderful small town school atmosphere there are many great assets already in place in the Palmyra-Eagle schools and they should continue to be used. This district has provided and can continue to provide an excellent public school education for the community now and into the future.

It is too bad that there are members of the community who voted Yes to the dissolution. I suspect they do not or have not had any children attending the Palmyra-Eagle school system. The impact of a vote in favor of dissolution is much smaller in their households than the households of those who have or have had children enrolled in Palmyra-Eagle. If some of these Yes in favor of the dissolution voting people have elected to send their children to other districts that is their school choice. If they wish to pay taxes in another district they should live in that district. There is no mystery as to the school district in which you live when purchasing or building a new home. To school choice your children out and then try to sink the school in the district in which you live through voting yes to dissolution is despicable. It would cause the same effect in their households at this point if we held a vote that reversed school choice and they were forced to send their children to school in the district in which they live. I could only imagine they would not be pleased. We are not pleased with their attempt at shutting down our school and forcing us to send our children elsewhere. They are sending their children to the school of their choosing and can continue to fund the schools in the districts in which they live regardless of where they send their own children. I can only think their mentality is selfish; "I send my kids to the good school. Who cares about Palmyra-Eagle?" I think they would change their thinking in a big hurry if the shoe was on the other foot and the forced end of school choice was near.

Perhaps in the future the financial climate will be better and Palmyra-Eagle can find themselves in easier times. We can reflect back on 2019/2020; the hard decisions made and how the district was nearly lost. We are counting on you and your team to help us arrive at a compromise that allows the Palmyra or Palmyra-Eagle schools to continue operations now and into the future.

Sincerely,
Aaron Zimmerman
W2422 Piper Rd.
Whitewater, WI 53190 Town of Palmyra resident
262-364-6173 November 7, 2019

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: thchewie <thchewie@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2019 10:43 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: For dissolving PEASD

Our names are Joseph and Sherrie Erbs. We live at S71 W34713 Township Road X Eagle WI 53119 We are for dissolving Palmyra Eagle school district just like the over 70% of Eagle residents in district have voted to do. We prefer Mukwonago Area school district, it is closer and offers more opportunities for our two children. They are also more fiscally responsible and more transparent than PEASD. While you state more involvement is needed by people like us most feel our votes tell the story while others here nothing of this living in the town of Eagle as we receive little to no communication from PEASD about anything. Thank you

Sent from my U.S.Cellular© Smartphone

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Lynn <lpascoe@wi.rr.com>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 6:37 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Reorg No 2020-02

To whom it may concern,
I am writing to vote in favor of the dissolution of the Palmyra Eagle school district.

My husband and I have lived in Eagle for almost 20 years. We have watched the school district ask for money over and over and it has reached the point that they tried to tax most of us out of our own homes to keep the schools open. The school board should be looked at as to how they have spent tax payers money and still not have the budget to run schools efficiently. Most of us know that if our income changes, our spending habits need to change. A great example is the high school putting in a new gym floor this year for a school that the board has voted to have dissolved. They have also spent approximately \$15,000 to have the "advisory referendum" vote this week that was not binding and has opened the hate/bullying once again. Was that a good use of almost \$45,000 dollars??

My husband and I along with some of our neighborhood are getting to be of retirement age - please do not let the school situation tax us out of our homes! They have stated that if the district stays open, they will have more referendums in the coming years. Please DO NOT let them continue to hold us hostage to their reckless spending!! Having our home as part of the Mukwonago school district helps with our home resale value along with a huge bonus of having a school district that clearly knows how to give children a high quality education along with keeping taxes down.

If Palmyra is so in favor of keeping the schools open, let them continue the Palmyra School District without Eagle. I am not sure that would work for them and the tax payers but good luck.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion.

Lynn Pascoe
205 Field Drive
Eagle, WI. 53119
262-470-2028

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Renee Cookstrom <rcookstrom@peasd.org>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 8:28 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Letter Of Appreciation
Attachments: PESD Letter of Appreciation.docx

Good Morning,

This letter was sent to me from the Blood Center that NHS works with to host blood drives for students and community members throughout the year. They have requested that it be sent to the SDBAB.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,
Renee

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Renee Cookstrom
7-12 School Counselor
NHS Advisor
Palmyra-Eagle Middle/High School
262-495-7101 ex. 2205



November 5, 2019

Dear Partners in Saving Lives,

On behalf of everyone at Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin, the more than 56 hospitals we serve throughout Wisconsin and the patients at the end of every generous blood donation given through the years by the kind people of the Palmyra-Eagle School District, we thank you for your many years of dedication to our mission. Your tremendous support to ensure a safe, adequate blood supply for our community is a priceless gift that is the embodiment of your community's giving spirit. Because of the generosity of donors in the Palmyra-Eagle School District, we are able to provide blood for those in need during surgeries, the treatment of cancer, traumas and many other medical situations.

It has been a privilege to work with the Palmyra-Eagle School District, as well as the American Legion who hosts blood drives in the school's community room. Since 2003, the School District blood drives have collected 2,796 units of blood – with the potential to touch more than 8,300 lives. When you also consider the American Legion blood drives taking place under the same roof, the impact to patient lives grows to more than 9,300.

We would be unable to serve these hospitals and patients without partnerships such as the one we proudly have with the Palmyra-Eagle School District and sincerely thank the efforts of the student coordinators, faculty advisors and community members who have made this partnership possible through the years.

Sincerely,

Tara Blaesing

Regional Manager, Donor Recruitment

Versiti Blood Center of Wisconsin

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Tony Bartolotta <tony4pyro@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 8:44 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Dissolve PEASD

Hello,

My name is Tony Bartolotta and I live at 824 Leeds Drive in Eagle, WI. I am writing today in support of the dissolution of the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District.

First of all, my family has lived in this school district for over 18 years - first in Palmyra and for the last three years in Eagle. So to say that we are some of the more "experienced" people in this debate over whether to dissolve the district or not would be an understatement. My kids have spent their entire academic careers in this school district. My oldest daughter was one of the valedictorians two years ago, as well as a state qualifying athlete for cross country three times. Contrary to what many people say, we did not originally choose to live in Palmyra for the schools. I would even say that we moved to Palmyra DESPITE what we had heard about PEASD. Palmyra was a very affordable place to buy a first home, and that was why we chose to live there.

I did not have any problems with this district for many, many years, when my kids were younger. Once they got to middle school age is when we started to see the dysfunctional culture of this school district. As we got to know more families in the area, it was very apparent that there were many of them who had grown up here, went to PEASD themselves, and now had their children attending. This core group of locals operates like a click. They control everything - the sports, the different fundraising clubs, the school board, etc. I always felt like if you did not grow up here and go to school here yourself, then you did not matter as much as someone who did. I have really never seen anything like this anywhere else. The level of favoritism and nepotism to the families in the "click" is unprecedented and I really don't think you would find it to this extreme at any other school district in our state. I truly believe this is what led the school district to be in the financial situation they are in now. They were unwilling to make the cuts needed as enrollment was declining, to be able to sustain themselves. God forbid the school board president or the other board members who have close relatives or spouses working for the district decide to cut the unnecessary positions, and put their loved one out of a job.

Last year, the school board dropped the bomb on the taxpayers that they need a referendum passed to be able to stay open, or they were going to file for dissolution. Why they waited for only one chance at this, all the while making NO major cuts to try to save money (like closing a building, laying off staff, etc) is beyond me. The level of taxation they wanted would have put us as one of the highest taxed school districts in the state of Wisconsin, just to MAINTAIN what we have. What we have is in the school board president's own words "a bare bones district", which cannot offer many of the levels of programming that you see in school districts just down the road like Whitewater and Mukwonago. I was part of the group that fought hard against this referendum, because I could not understand where the finances had gone so bad, why it was costing our district so much more than other districts to educate our children, and why we should pay a higher price for the same product when we can get a BETTER product just down the road. I also feared for our property values drastically dropping, due to the high tax bill that each property would be stuck with indefinitely. For me, the situation was all about the numbers. I am a CPA, so I spent many nights calculating scenarios of what potentially could happen if our school dissolved. It did not take long to realize that financially, it would clearly benefit us to be absorbed by Mukwonago.

As the debate raged on for this issue, my opposition to the school became more about the people, rather than the numbers. Because of my outspoken attitude about why the referendum should not pass, we had people stop talking to us, and I even had a tire slashed on my son's car. I can't prove that it was a district supporter that did it, but considering a lot of the people who were in our opposition group had their tires slashed all around the same time frame, I think it's a pretty safe assumption as to who did it. I was very angry after that because now they were messing with the safety of my children. As a result, I have backed off considerably on my public opposition to this school district, and choose to email instead of coming to a meeting. The supporters of the PEASD (for the most part) use levels of intimidation that some would call bullying to try to gain the upper hand in this issue - ridiculous actions like slashing tires, destroying property, and driving by your house swearing at you while your young children are in the yard with you. I believe it is solely because they do not want to lose control of "their" district.

Recently, a public records request was processed to obtain some of the emails between the school board members during the past year regarding this dissolution debate. Our school board had put out a slideshow presentation to present the "facts" of what was going on, which was presented at two public meetings before the original referendum vote. I

remember watching the presentation on the schools website several times before it was presented at the first public meeting. I took issue with a lot of what was in the presentation because, as I saw it, they were not flat out lies, but very misleading information about the possibilities of what could happen if the referendum failed. They were basically trying to scare everyone into thinking your kid might be reassigned to Lake Mills school district, your taxes would be higher than ever, and they would bulldoze PEASD to the ground. Yes, Our school board president said things to that effect in front of gyms full of people. So back to the open records request, I urge you to read thru those emails. Our board president admits that he was using "muddy facts" in his presentations, but everyone was supposed to stand behind them as the cold, hard truth. He and a few other board members were exposed as liars. One board member resigned shortly after they voted to dissolve because she did not want to be associated with the lying that was taking place in front of gyms full of people (again, refer to the emails). This behavior by our school board, it's president, and our district superintendent is despicable. Just for that deception alone, they deserve to have the blood on their hands of this district dissolving. I don't appreciate being lied to by elected people who are supposed to be representing me. They deserve every bit of turmoil this is causing. Ideally, there would be an investigation into the finances and decisions made over the years to expose what is really going on, but I think that is beyond what the DPI board is here to do.

As a result of the uncertain future of our school district, and the fact that we actually live closer to Mukwonago than Palmyra, we decide to open enroll our 8th grade daughter to Mukwonago this school year. It has kept her out of the daily drama about this uncertain future at the school, and in the end was a very wise decision by my wife and I. Our daughter LOVES Park View Middle School and if she had the choice between the two schools, she said she would rather go to Park View than Palmyra-Eagle. Actually today, she is starting a robotics class at Park View - something she never would have done at PEASD, and she is very excited about it.

What is the ultimate solution for this school district? Obviously that lies with the DPI board assigned to make these decisions. I urge you to look at the votes for the binding and the non-binding referendums. They both clearly show that those of us in Eagle would much rather be reassigned to Mukwonago Area School District, for so many reasons beyond the ones I described above. My email could have been pages and pages, but I sympathize with those of you who have to pour through all of this and make the decision. I just wanted to express my feelings on it, and this is a great, SAFE place to do it.

Thank you for your hard work on this tension filled issue in our area. I trust you will make the decisions based on what the majority of the voters and residents want. Please look at the FACTS, and not the pouring out of emotional testimonies you will see and read as to why the district should stay open. The district supporters are very loud in their support, but in the end, if the district does not have the financial means to stay open, no level of sobbing is going to change that. Plus, the financial situation was self inflicted over years of mismanagement, bullying, nepotism, and possible corruption behind closed doors. It is time for it to end. Enough is enough!

Tony Bartolotta
824 Leeds Drive
Eagle, WI 53119
(262) 844-8436

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Chad Kraemer <chadkraemer@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 1:37 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Palmyra-Eagle Hearing

11/8/19
Reorg No: 2020-02

Chadwick Kraemer
s80w36101 Oak Ridge Dr
Eagle, WI 53119

Resident of the Palmyra-Eagle School District

Registering in Favor of dissolution

Would choose to attend the Mukwonago School district.

To whom it may concern:

I have 3 children that initially attended Eagle Elementary (4K, 5K and 1st grade). My wife and I were meeting with one of the child's teacher and school principle on a weekly basis to address some concerns with his academics. After the school tested him for learning disabilities 2 or 3 times and the result being negative, we were told that the Palmyra-Eagle school district did not have the resources to assist our child. We went on to open enroll at Eagleville elementary school (also in the town of Eagle but part of the Mukwonago district) where all 3 of my son's performed above average academically (including my son that struggled previously). I now have 2 boys in the Mukwonago high school and 1 in Parkview middle school where they continue to grow academically, socially and athletically.

I believe voting to keep Palmyra-Eagle district vs. allowing the schools to be absorbed by neighboring districts would be fiscally irresponsible of me. Thus, I have voted against the referendum and voted for the dissolution (Along with the majority of other Eagle residents).

Thank you in advance
Chad Kraemer
608.513.8852

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: michael morateck <mmorateck@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 09, 2019 8:37 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: PEASD Dissolution

To Whom this may concern, I am writing this letter to push for a solution that would not not to dissolve the PEASD in a manner that would require the current student body to have to leave the local community for their primary education. This will result in a decrease in current local student quality of life, education and community. Myself, wife and three children along with our parents have lived in the PEASD for most of our life and have all attended and graduated from the PEASD. My wife and I have post high school degrees and all three of my children also have college degrees and great careers. The most significant benefit of having participated in the local school system has been the development of quality of character it has produced in the generations of graduates it produces. This directly contributes to a society of quality individuals who have a deep sense of community and caring for each other and a strong sense of the greater good. This is a direct result of smaller class sizes, personal teacher student interaction and more extra curricular opportunities resulting in a more well rounded individual. These opportunities are much more limited in a large school system. The quality student adults that continue to come from the PEASD is evidence that dissolving the school system in whole is not in the best interests of the students and the local community. I am hopeful that a solution to the current financial challenges to the PEASD can be reached without totally deconstructing the school system and moving the local students that want to stay in the community out to other schools. I do understand that changes need to be made to rectify the financials of the district and would urge the board to look at district realignments that may change the relationship of the school system possibly with neighboring districts where the solution would allow a large portion of local students to remain at some of the existing school facilities in the community.

The welfare of the students and the local community would benefit the most from this type of a compromise solution to fix the current financial issues. Please take this into account in the boards decision making process. On behalf of my family I thank the board for pursuing this complicated and hard work and am looking forward to a resolution that is able to best address the needs of the many without sacrificing the current excellent quality of life for all.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Dani Hajewski <painter_dani@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 09, 2019 9:03 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: In favor of dissolution - Mukwonago

Hello.

My name is Dani Hajewski. I live at S69W39784 County Road N in the town of Eagle, WI. I've lived in the area my whole life and I attended PEASD from kindergarten - 12th grade. I was Class of 2003. If open enrollment was not an option, I would be homeschooling my four children. We absolutely love Mukwonago School District and what they're doing at Eagleville.

Our choice to open enroll was not taken lightly, and honestly I would be speaking to you about this if I did not fear harassment, property damage, or hurtful words from neighbors I have known my whole life - even former teachers who I considered friends. This has all been very hard and I would like to see this dissolution business done, and done fairly, so we can move on with our lives.

In April we voted "no" to the referendum and on November 5th we voted "yes" to dissolution. I know that you have heard PEASD supporters tell you that they want to keep their choice and their school should not close. But the truth is that their choice is taxpayer funded and I personally know families who would have been taxed off their property if the April referendum had passed. That wasn't okay with them, or with me.

We approve of what Mukwonago and Whitewater School Districts have proposed - an East, West Consolidation. PEASD has been operating unsustainably for years, and they no longer have the funds to keep Eagle Elementary open. We value high quality, public education options in our rural community and want to see Eagle Elementary responsibly managed. Thank you so much for your time! I hope that you hear more voices than mine in favor of moving forward. We are the majority, but speaking out is not easy.

Dani Hajewski

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Weibel, Mark <MWeibel@chasecorp.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 09, 2019 11:21 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: AFFIRM Dissolution

Mark Weibel
S80W35678 Oak Ridge Dr
Eagle WI 53119
262.893.0919

DPI

I'm a 1991 Graduate of Palmyra-Eagle , I moved back to Eagle in 2013 to the home I grew up in. A few things come to mind going back to my days at PEHS is the amount of kids in high school that couldn't read and the disrespect towards kids from Eagle, moving into our home in the summer was a blessing as we were able to meet our neighbors and the story remained the same 25 years later and the majority of family's in our 33 home subdivision school choice, so the decision was easy for my wife and I to decide to school choice to Mukwonago .

I guess if I were you, my thoughts always go back to one thing in this process. Think like a business . Apple , Exxon/Mobile, Amazon to Wal-Mart , the biggest companies in the world would close or have to be spun off if they lost 40% of their customes (in this case students) .

I know it's hard to be away from your families during this time, but you are creating a brighter future for 1000's of kids in the future and present by letting Whitewater and Mukwonago teach our community .

Thank you for your time,

Mark T. Weibel Jr.
National Sales Manager
262.893.0919
mweibel@chasecorp.com

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Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Christina Lathrop <christinalathrop11@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 09, 2019 3:27 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Against dissolution

To the board members and DPI,

A lot of people say that it is a hard job for board members to sit on a panel to make the final decision to close a school or not but it is truly the opposite. There is not a any good reason for a school to close simply because of lack of funds or problems. The snowball effects that can be created to not only 1 community but we are talking about 2 communities Palmyra and Eagle will be devastating and forever lasting. There are many solutions to this current problem that both communities are faced with that really need to be considered and spent more time on discussing versus hearing testimonies to close or not. While the communities may have a voice it doesn't mean that it will really matter. There will be people that are unhappy or happy with whatever the decision may be in the end.

I agree with a lot of facts from people that want the school district to dissolve. I have had my share of problems with the school district as it relates to my children's education. I am one of those parents that had pulled my special education child out of 5th grade to homeschool her for 2 years. After the first year my oldest daughter wanted to homeschool too. She stopped going to Palmyra Eagle high school after the 9th grade. She completed her education through the homeschool program and graduated a year ahead. She then immediately enrolled into college at the age of 17 and now will be completing her Associate Degree in Arts/Animation next semester on the Dean's list and high honors at the age of 19. My youngest special needs child is now in 10th grade. I did enroll her back into Palmyra-Eagle middle school at the 8th grade mainly for the socialization not so much for the education that our school provides. I still feel that the kids are being pushed through the grades well below average regardless of the A's that are on each kids report card. Those grades are more to make the school look good instead of truly reflecting the children's educational performance and ability. But regardless of my feeling and experiences my child and every other child in Palmyra and Eagle deserve to have a public school in their community to go to. It would be completely wrong to make a decision to close a school

While there are lots of problems to be identified within the school district it goes to show that more time and resource needs to go into coming up with a solution to the problems instead of simply closing the doors completely to the school district. It is very rare for a school district to dissolve especially when it involves more than just 1 community or county. New school administration or combining school classes by eliminating the Elementary school in Eagle to just one building instead of 2 or combining it all into one school building utilizing the Palmyra High School building as 1 are just a few off the top ideas that should be considered. If the school district does close then my child will have to be placed on a bus for more than an hour ride to get to a different school district. The distance from schools and school districts make it impractical to close or consolidate. What schools will be available to determine which out of district school my child will go to? Will the other school districts have the space and resources to accommodate all the extra kids? Transportation? Offer more choice to pick own public school location and options.

The point of my writing and making my voice heard is to oppose the idea of closing the Palmyra-Eagle school district since there needs to be more focus on correcting some of the problems that exist aside from money being the primary ruling factor.

Sincerely,
Christina Lathrop
115 Mill Rd
Palmyra, WI 53156
262-643-6261

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Kelsey McKenzie <kelsey_mckenzie@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 2:55 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Dissolution

Hello all,

I would like to take time to express my thoughts on why I believe the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District should dissolve. I believe that the district should be split according to the proposed East-West Consolidation. I am a resident in the Town of Eagle.

Emotions aside, I think that the decision for dissolution has to come from a financial head-space. At the end of the day, the district has run out of money. Despite what the minority of residents want, the decision really comes down to what the district can afford. At the end of the 2019-2020 school year we are told there will not be enough money to continue operating day to day, not to mention continuing to pay the \$15 million in debt we have. We all want a lot of things, but we are not spoiled children and cannot get everything we want if we cannot afford it. To expect residents to pay \$11.5 million for a small district comprised of ~600 students is insanity. Although some would like to think otherwise, the operations of a school district are just like any other business. And when business is slow (declining enrollment, increased open enrollment) cuts must be made. Sometimes many cuts can be made and it still is not enough to remain viable. In this case, consolidation is the next best option. I believe this is the case with the PEASD. The great news is that we have 2 great school districts that surround the small Palmyra-Eagle area, and they are not only able but willing to take on our district's students in the East-West Consolidation plan. We have 2 healthy school districts that surround us and despite struggling with the same issues as many other districts in the state (declining enrollment, decreased state funding), they have remained viable and prospering. Our children can continue to be educated, and likely educated better than PEASD due to the extra opportunities that Mukwonago and Whitewater can offer that PEASD is unable to.

Through reviewing recent news articles I can recognize that funding issues are becoming a problem state-wide for multiple school districts. However, what I see from other districts is constructive conversations that are occurring NOW to address financial issues that they can foresee in the next 3-5 years. PEASD did not make its residents aware of their financial circumstance until Fall 2018 when they thrust the referendum on us right before the fall election was set. It was at this time that we were told the district has run out of funds- we were given an ultimatum which is unfair to us as taxpayers and residents. I recently sat in on Mukwonago School District board meeting and was pleased to hear conversations occurring such as setting aside funds for future maintenance repairs. This is something PEASD did not do; part of the proposed referendum money was set to go towards repairing the roof on the high school/middle school buildings which had been deferred maintenance. I know that if other districts are able to foresee future financial problems, PEASD is able to do the same and it is irresponsible to not do this.

When the board recognized that shortfalls in the budget would come, there should have been additional cuts made to administration that could have impacted this outcome. Instead, they made cuts that impact the most important people- teachers and students- such as cutting summer school and making teachers benefit packages worse. Many parents, students, and teachers state that they like the intimate environment that a rural school provides. Unfortunately, with that rural community comes decreased enrollment numbers and fewer property taxes. As a result, there needs to be fewer administration (no need for vice principal AND principal) staff as well. Those are luxuries that a smaller school cannot afford, and frankly does not need for a student body of 600 students. The other frustration is the fact that our small district is operating 3 schools at far less capacity that it can hold. This leads to increased overhead costs, just another area that cost savings could have been recognized.

This whole process has pit 2 communities against each other, when instead we should be upset that the PEASD board members. They could have informed parents, students, and community members years ago when they could foresee budgeting shortfalls. Had they done that, we could have made an effort as a community to make impactful changes to

affect the budget, done fundraising efforts, and lobbied for funding legislation at that time. Now, the district is too far gone. Regardless of cuts that could be made at this time, it has been made clear that no cuts would make a significant enough impact to keep the district viable. The circumstance that PEASD is in now should serve as an opportunity for other communities and districts to take note that schools must operate on a budget, just like every business and household in America. There should be no "bail-out" to keep a district viable, when we would be in the same position again in just a few years.

I believe it is unfair for the financial mishandlings of the district to be put on taxpayer's shoulders in the form of a huge referendum. For myself alone, the referendum would have cost me an additional \$1000/year in property taxes (I already pay \$3000 out of my total \$4000 in taxes to the school district alone in 2018). Some residents say "Why should we have to give up our schools? You can afford an additional \$1000/year." How is it fair to ask taxpayers to pay a significantly higher tax bill for a problem we did not create and knew nothing about? Other critics of dissolution state that open enrollment to other districts is the culprit of PEASD's financial woes. Open enrollment is legal throughout the state yet no other district deals with a staggeringly high open enrollment rate like PEASD does. PEASD simply does not provide the same opportunities and level of excellence as, for example, Mukwonago district. Residents have recognized that and, as a result, open enroll to Mukwonago district. PE staff, students, and parents will argue that PEASD is "a 5 star rated district" but the only school that is 5 star is Eagle Elementary. The other schools lack the excellence seen in surrounding districts as you review the DPI report cards. Others argue that teachers, doctors, and other great students have come out of the PEASD and that should speak to the district's excellence in education. However, successful students come out of all districts around the state, around the country. If PEASD closes, the great students that attend the schools will still receive a quality education and go on to become successful doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc.

I appreciate the opportunity that this dissolution committee has provided for residents to be able to offer their input on the dissolution of the district. I can appreciate that this is a very difficult decision for all of those involved. If the financial impact was not so great on the community, I do not think anyone would vote for the district to dissolve. No one wants students to have to start over at a new school. However, this is a financial decision first and foremost and with the financial state that PEASD is in I do not see how any other option aside from dissolution is viable.

Thank you for your time,
Kelsey McKenzie
S103W36449 County Road LO
Eagle, WI 53119
262-309-3236

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Tammy Urban <urhantam69@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 6:53 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI

Hello,

It baffles me that I have to write this letter to you. It saddens me and shakes me to my core. I feel as if I am trapped in a nightmare and I cannot wake up. Life as my family knows it changed in April.

My family is fighting for our school district. We are fighting for the education that my daughter deserves. In the school that she deserves. We love our district and will do what ever it takes to keep the district up and running.

We do not take this lightly. My 15 year old daughter is a Sophomore in Palmyra-Eagle High School. She works hard with her teachers and the special education department. She is learning disabled in math. She also gets assistance with writing/English and chemistry.

She has a great relationship with her teachers. She often gets one on one time with them. Which is causing her to excel and get good grades. She is so comfortable going to school every morning. She is relaxed and enjoys spending time with her teachers. She has been on the honor roll every quarter since the beginning of 7th grade.

The teachers in the Palmyra-Eagle School District are step above the rest. They care for their students inside and outside of the classroom. They are personally invested in their students. Not only do they know the student, they also know the family. Many of the parents are graduates from Palmyra-Eagle High School. My husband graduated from there in 1990.

Earlier this year PEASD suffered two major losses. Our wonderful middle school science teacher passed away from cancer. Two days later a 2018 graduate died in a car accident. Our community was devastated. The teachers rallied behind the students and our families as we all mourned. A memorial service was held at the high school for the former student. Over 400 people attended the service. Proving what a wonderful tightknit district we are.

Unfortunately there are some people that live in another part of our district. In a entirely different town. This town does not have the history that Palmyra does. Palmyra is rich full of its ancestors. With a school that has been there way before any of us were even a twinkle in our parents eye. A school that has taught generation upon generation of Palmyra citizens. Some of our own teachers have graduated from this fine school.

It really saddens and maddens me that people from Eagle just want to shut down our district. How they bad mouth the school, the teachers, the education, and other families. They are out right spreading lies to get people to join their cause. Their behavior has caused a terrible rift in our community.

I am confident that you will see how important this district is to our children. The children is what we/you need to think about. An overwhelming amount of students want to remain in the Palmyra-Eagle School System. My daughter does not want to leave. She does not want to be forced out of a school that she loves. A school that is helping her blossom and excel in school and life. She is scared and mad at the thought of being forced into a new school. A school where she will have no friends. I see how this is effecting her personally and emotionally. I don't think that she will do well if the district dissolves.

I beg you, I plead with you. Please come up with some sort of arrangement that will allow my daughter to graduate from the school she belongs in and deserves to be a part of. The lives of many students are in your hands. Please do what is right for these kids and keep them in mind. Our schools deserve to remain open.

A concerned mother,

Tammy Urban
N2639 County Road Z
Lot B5
Dousman, WI. 53118
262-470-3984

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: David and Jenny johnson <djjohnson2003@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 09, 2019 3:39 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: The dissolution of our school

Hi!

First I just want to say thank you for taking the time to read this. I have thought about writing or speaking up many times during this process and it comes with a great deal of emotion and just the sheer fact that none of this should be happening and I don't want to debate with the people who want it to dissolve. The votes have been made, but if there is any chance of saving our school this is worth a shot.

My husband and I both graduated from PEASD he was the class of 98 and I the class of 00. Throughout our time there we had support, growth and acceptance. We obtained the knowledge that we needed to both go on and have successful careers and 2 amazing children. So after high school and as we were looking to where we wanted to live we both knew that without a doubt we would live within the district and there was no doubt in our minds where we wanted our children to go.

Sure we had some friends that didn't want their kids to go here and chose to move because in one way or another they felt that they were let down. We would have conversations about how while I was taking Chemistry in High school to advance my education my friends were taking food science to obtain an easy A- well that is not on the school it is on the student. We have discussed sports and that going to a larger school may give you a better opportunity, and to that we have said if you are good enough they will find you no matter how small of a town you are in. It again is not on the school but the athlete to put forth the hard work and determination that it takes to be great. At least at PEASD kids are able to play sports and learn the skills, responsibility and dedication it takes to be apart of something and they are just not told they are not good enough to play.

In our school everyone really is a family, everyone knows everyone and all of the kids are known by their first name or a nickname that a teacher has passed down to them. This really hit home for me recently as my high school volleyball coach and math teacher Ms. Fischer still works for PEASD and my daughter recently had parents night for volleyball. Ms. Fischer was the one doing the announcing and it was amazing to me to hear a teacher that I respected greatly through the years be able to call my daughters name and ours for recognition. When I first starting taking my kids to school I can remember seeing teachers for the first time in 15 years and they still knew my name.

There is a comfort in knowing where my kids are going everyday and that they are watched and cared for by every educator there. I understand the emotional standpoint of all of this and I am sure you are getting letter after letter stating the same things.

The bottom line on all of this for my husband and myself is following rules- something that was instilled in us throughout our time at PEASD and in life and the same rules and structure that we continue to pass to our kids. Basically- if you want your kids to go to PEASD you live within the district, if you want your kids to go to Mukwonago you live in that district. It really is that simple, no one should be able to come in to where I live and tell me that the choice I made for my family was wrong when they are growing and thriving within this school and community. They are both involved in multiple sports, they are both in accelerated classes and have been able to do great things within the community. A few years ago the newspaper did an article on my daughter and her friends because they wanted to do a fundraiser for the Humane society, they made items and sold them at lunch. All proceeds went to the Humane Society, and without the support of the principle and teachers it could not have happened.

I am not saying that things could not have maybe been done better over the years, and to be honest I didn't go to school board meetings, I elected people to take care of things to the best of their ability, I also do not blame them now in this time. I know that they have done what they can. I do however blame the people who have chosen to open enroll out of district as it costs our district an insane amount of money when they could move to that community if that is what they want so badly. I also blame the lack of funding for schools not mention a rural school in the heart of the Kettle Moraine Forrest that is land locked.

I voted yes to increase my taxes, I voted no for dissolution. I want this school for my kids that is why I have stayed here. No one should be able to take that away because they like their house but not the school. We make choices everyday has human beings and have to way the good with the bad, we played by the rules and are still getting burned, I know life is not fair, but this is honestly ridiculous that we have to fight so hard for something that should have never been threatened in the first place.

Thank you again for taking the time to read this. I hope and pray daily that there is a way to save the district!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Johnson
W240 Mill Rd
Palmyra, WI 53156
262-442-2588

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Teri Kelly <tkelly@peasd.org>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 9:34 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Fwd: Hearing letter

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Marline Frehner** <jlfmjf@charter.net>
Date: Fri, Nov 8, 2019 at 9:27 AM
Subject: Fwd: Hearing letter
To: <tkelly@peasd.org>

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Marline Frehner <jlfmjf@charter.net>
Date: November 6, 2019 at 9:22:00 PM CST
To: Smfisher14@gmail.com
Subject: **Hearing letter**

Sent from my iP

TO: DPI Dissolution Committee
Re: Possible dissolution of Palmyra Eagle School District

We moved to Palmyra in 1964 when my husband began teaching and coaching in the Palmyra School District. I started teaching in this district the following year. Collectively, we taught here for 69 1/2 years, and Jim coached for 35 years, before retiring several years ago. During those years, the Rome-Sullivan area was a part of the district and left to join Jefferson. Later, Eagle joined our district at a time when Mukwonago had no interest in keeping them in their district.

It was our choice to live in the district we taught in and to become active in the community. While acknowledging that Palmyra was and still may be socioeconomically disadvantaged, we find that this community considers its schools, and churches, to be at the center of their loyalties. A loss of their local schools will have a negative impact on every aspect of the community. The results of the advisory referendum demonstrates that the Palmyra and Sullivan sections of the district are willing to do what it takes to keep their schools.

Our three sons each graduated from this small school district. They were active, and successful, in sports, musical productions, and clubs while benefitting from a fine basic education. They have gone on to be a Doctoral candidate School Superintendent in Vienna, Illinois; a middle school math teacher and highly successful cross country coach in Poynette, WI; and a District Director of the SE Wisconsin Sheet Metal Apprenticeship Program in Waukesha, WI, responsible for the training and schooling of 140+ men and women. These men and hundreds of

other graduates of PEASD demonstrate the quality of the education being delivered in this district.

Those people who are actively trying to dissolve our district often compare the district's effectiveness using the yearly state test scores. They fail to acknowledge that those tests are single tests given on a given day. They also cannot ascertain if a district teaches to a test, or to the curricular standards as in PEASD. It make a profound difference as does the administration of those tests.

Other issues they use are open enrollment numbers and lack of curriculum offerings at PEASD and PEHS. Yes, neighboring schools offer more classes that attract some students. And we have lost a large number of those students. BUT the students that have CHOSEN to remain in this school district do so knowing they can receive a valuable basic education with smaller class sizes and individual support; a name, not a number. It must also be noted that UW WHITEWATER sends student teachers to our district and has publicly noted the effective special education programs we have here to those in training.

We ask you to carefully consider your decision. We ask you to put those hundreds of our students who choose to be here first.

Thank you.

Jim & Marlene Frehner
Palmyra, WI

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Teri Kelly <tkelly@peasd.org>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 9:34 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Fwd: DPI Hearing Letter for PEASD

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Marline Frehner** <jlfmjf@charter.net>
Date: Fri, Nov 8, 2019 at 9:25 AM
Subject: Fwd: DPI Hearing Letter for PEASD
To: <tkelly@peasd.org>

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Greg Frehner <gfhrener@viennagradeschool.com>
Date: November 7, 2019 at 2:15:45 PM CST
To: Marline Frehner <jlfmjf@charter.net>
Cc: Smfisher14@gmail.com
Subject: DPI Hearing Letter for PEASD

Trying to do my part...this was sent to Sue Fisher earlier today:

PLEASE PASS THIS ALONG TO THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTION
(DPI HEARING ON 11/7/19)..

State of Wisconsin Department of Instruction:

I am emphatically and respectfully voicing my strong personal and professional recommendation to NOT dissolve the Palmyra-Eagle School District. The absolute need to support the existence of a rural public school district goes far beyond the classroom and school building walls. The prosperity of our rural communities are directly dependent upon the prosperity of our public school system(s). As a school district superintendent in rural Southern Illinois, I choose to embrace the challenges of our rural school districts role and importance for the sustainability of our locality and region. The financial challenges of ensuring that all students are provided comprehensive educational and extracurricular opportunities is ever-present, every day. This is certainly no different for the Palmyra-Eagle School District.

We cannot undervalue the importance of the broader role and responsibility that a rural public school district has for its local communities, and larger geographical regions. At the heart of the matter is the profound and life-changing educational experiences that smaller learning communities can provide for students...our future leaders! The growing research behind the importance of establishing stronger relational connections with students is a proven outcome of the rural school experience for students. Ralph Matire continues to prove that (Center for Tax

and Budget Accountability in Illinois), developing larger income earners is crucial towards sustainable economic growth at the local, regional, national, and global levels. The Palmyra-Eagle School District, as a smaller learning community and the "hub" of several rural Southern Eastern Wisconsin communities is a crucial component of the areas financial survival...let alone growth! From the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools (and relevant to rural public schools across our Nation):

Rural school districts are as diverse as the communities they serve and the students they educate. Their unique histories, cultures, and landscapes result in community-based schools that defy categorization. Still, there are common themes:

Rural schools are community hubs and bring people together.

- *Rural schools encourage student participation and ownership.*
- *Rural schools serve as cultural centers for the arts and music.*

Augmenting their community roles, a small school can play an integral role in addressing a rural community's most pressing issues. For instance, students, teachers, and school leaders can be involved in planning and working toward sustainable local economies that embrace the best characteristics of place and people. Through school-based entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and meaningful collaboration, public education can become the economic linchpin of savvy rural development.

In addition to their contributions to the common good, rural and small schools provide students with measureable benefits. "The Hobbit Effect," authored and published in 2006 by educational researcher, Lorna Jimerson, summarizes a wide range of findings that support the strengths of rural and small schools. For example, Jimerson reports when socio-economic factors are taken into account, children in smaller schools are academically more successful, have higher graduation rates, take more advanced courses, and participate in extra-curricular activities to a higher degree. Overall, Jimerson's extensive review of research found ten "research-based reasons" why small schools work:

- *There is greater participation in extra-curricular activities, and that is linked to academic success.*
- *Small schools are safer.*
- *Kids feel they belong.*
- *Small class size allows more individualized instruction.*
- *Good teaching methods are easier to implement.*
- *Teachers feel better about their work.*
- *Mixed-ability classes avoid condemning some students to low expectations.*
- *Multiage classrooms promote personalized learning and encourage positive social interactions.*
- *Smaller districts mean less bureaucracy.*
- *More grades in one school alleviate many problems of transitions to new schools*

While my personal and professional journey has planted me in rural Southern Illinois since 1999, I am steadfast in my conviction that my experiences as a member of the PEASD Family during my time as a student and extra-curricular participant, set the foundation for all of my personal and professional growth. I am writing this nearly in tears because of the current prospect that my

wonderful experiences may no longer be afforded to future students...future PEASD Family Members. I am nearly a 50 year old father, husband, son, brother and professional educator who should easily be detached from a potentially catastrophic decision that is some six and a half hours away from where my journey has taken me. My emotional attachment to "MY" Palmyra-Eagle School District remains strong because of the values, opportunities and "caretaking" that PEASD and the Palmyra-Eagle community afforded me during the most important developmental years of my life.

Yes, things change and all of us need to have a better growth mindset...unlearning what we have always known and viewing the world outside of the existing bubble that we are in. Within that same schematic and/or perspective, however, dissolving a rural public school district is NOT the answer based on the obvious and known socio-economic and social-emotional trauma that will be incurred by students and families now, and for the community at large, in the future.

Please focus the time, effort, and resources on a solution that redacts the dissolution of the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District. The negative effects of dissolution are much, much broader than closing school buildings, as you know. I am certain that the Wisconsin Department of Education fully and completely understands the importance of the process that will inevitably determine the comprehensive well being of the communities that PEASD has served faithfully and to the best of its financial ability. I am forever grateful and proud to be a member of the PEASD Family...we owe it to future generations to find a solution that does not take away the centerpiece of the rural communities that it serves.

Professionally and Respectfully,

Greg Frehner - Vienna District #55 Superintendent & SIJHSAA Vice President/Board of Control
618-658-8286 VGS
618-771-2249 Cell
grehner@viennagradeschool.com
www.viennagradeschool.com
<https://www.facebook.com/viennagradeschool/>

VIENNA GRADE SCHOOL - HOME OF THE RAMS - RAM PRIDE!

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Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Martens, Lynn <MartensLM15@uwv.edu>
Sent: Friday, November 08, 2019 8:55 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Cc: lmartens5@gmail.com
Subject: Martens Letter to DPI Nov 6 2019

School District Boundry Appeal Board;

I am writing this letter to express my concern with the possible dissolution of the Palmyra-Eagle School District. I personally have been a part of the district for 23 years when my oldest of four started Kindergarten back in 1996. However, my husband's family history at Palmyra goes farther back than that as my husband, his mother, and grandparents, his siblings, and his sister's husband and family all went to Palmyra. This is generations of Panthers, and while I am down to my last child (of four) attending this school, who is in the Class of 2021, it makes me sick to think she will have to spend her senior year at a school she doesn't feel a part of or choose to be at. My children all thrived at PEASD and are now great additions to society.

When the school board voted to dissolve the district after the operational referendum failed, it came as a total shock. How could they just end a hundred-year-old district with just a simple yes or no vote with no warning? The two communities were put in a difficult all or nothing ultimatum, and the school board was not even open to discussion or suggestions regarding what could be done to keep the district alive. One school board member was even shot down when she requested further discussions about possible solutions to keep the district running before voting. Are the school board members even qualified to make such a rash decision without further exploring the options? It makes me wonder if they thought about what not having a school district in the community would mean for the people who live there, and what will happen to Palmyra and Eagle and the business within the two communities when people move away because of closing the schools? I understand that some may have been discouraged because of the \$11.7 million the school board was asking for, but I believe that it's because they had no idea the school was in such financial trouble, and if they were more aware of our school's situation, they may have responded with less shock.

While many citizens of the district are thinking of ways to keep the school open, many others found this as an opportunity to take full advantage. A portion of Eagle already chooses to open enroll into another district, so voting to close down the district only serves to their benefit; they don't care about the rest of the district who want to have the choice to remain in Palmyra-Eagle. This situation has caused a divide between the two communities and has affected the children. How is it fair for the remaining families to be forced to go to other districts that they don't want to go without trying other solutions to keep the school open?

Palmyra, Eagle and the other small sections of townships that make up the Palmyra-Eagle School District are small communities and part of a school district that is wide-spread across agricultural land and the Kettle Moraine State Forest, and while this adds to the community's charm, it also makes it hard for new families to build new homes in the district, which doesn't help enrollment numbers. This is a similar situation for many other rural school districts around the state who are finding themselves moving towards the same situation. Shrinking enrollment numbers and a drop in state funding is stressing out small school budgets, forcing them to turn to referendum as a way to fill the funding gap, which is putting many rural schools at risk of closing if the community can't pay the high taxes that can come with a referendum. What's going to happen to all the rural school districts in the state over the next several years if the community can't make up the funding deficits? Closing Palmyra-Eagle would just be the start of a dissolution epidemic across the state.

Something needs to be done by the state to support their rural schools and the children who depend on them, which according to DPI's website, makes up about 44 percent of the state's public school students. Also according to DPI's website, rural Wisconsin and agriculture are a vital part of our state's economy so why is more not being done to support the students who live there?

PEASD means a great deal to our small community and the opportunities it represents to the children who attend them. Small class sizes, one-on-one attention, multiple sport options for athletes who in a larger school might not have a chance to be on a team let alone play on multiple Varsity sports, and the feeling of being a part of a close-knit family are just some of those special opportunities that these children won't have going to a larger school and a school they don't feel a part of. Thousands of alumni and their families have experienced what PEASD has to offer and have gone on to do great things and many are now sending their own children to Palmyra-Eagle because of what it has to offer. Dissolving the district and forcing our children to go to schools they don't want to go to and don't have the same opportunities is not in the best interest of our community and our children.

In DPI's words:

"rural communities are home to families and children, and the local school is often the social center of the community. However, many rural communities struggle with economic, land use, and other policies that threaten their stability and their ability to educate their children. Yet, as a result of technological and scientific advances in agriculture, agribusiness, and other areas of work, education is increasingly important for today's youth." <https://dpi.wi.gov/rural>.

So please help us keep our district alive. With the right solution and people to support it, I know our district could be great again. We just need the opportunity to try.

Thank you for your time and effort in this process,

Best regards,

Lynn Martens

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: melissa sautbine <melsaut@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2019 7:16 AM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Written testimony for Palmyra School

To: School District Boundary Appeal
Board

11/06/2019

Regarding: Palmyra Eagle School Dissolution

I am the proud parent of four current students in the Palmyra Eagle School District. Three are enrolled at Palmyra Elementary and one in the High School. I, myself am a graduate from Palmyra Eagle High School as is my husband.

The pros to having a small community school cannot be measured much like the importance of arts programs. We know the programs are important to have but there is no way to measure how significant they are until they are removed. Like the art programs build the right side of the brain, the small community atmosphere helps build the character of a child. The atmosphere, I believe, creates children who are more accountable for their actions, more likely to help others, and more compassionate towards others. This comes from the small town, everyone knows everyone atmosphere that cannot be found in large expansive communities. With a smaller population you know the people of the community; who's struggling, who's had a great achievement, who's looking for opportunities. The community gathers together to help those who need assistance, celebrate achievements, and help reach goals, not just a few but the majority of the community. Our students are the pride of the community.

Forcing my children from their small community school into a most likely much larger school would be devastating to them. It's more than just a bigger class, it's the relationships between students and teachers that can't be as strong in large class sizes. The teachers know many aspects of the kids' lives, from their favorite things to what scares them, and use these to help connect to the child. The child who is used to one on one work will suffer without it and the child who is so shy they can barely speak in a small class will completely withdraw in a large class atmosphere.

In addition to the larger class sizes, they will need to deal with the potential for a longer bus ride. We live three miles from school, they are on the bus for an hour each morning to get there. This community may have small numbers, but it is largely farm and state forest making routes long.

A new school will also add time it takes to get to the children's events. This is an added strain if our children go to Whitewater due to our jobs taking us in the opposite direction. Additional travel time would put a strain on our abilities to support our children in their after-school activities.

Many have said that Palmyra should be happy going to a bigger district with more opportunities for our children. The graduates in my class alone, without all the so-called opportunities of larger schools, have done quite well with their small town educations. Out of my graduating class alone there are nurses, computer specialists managing networks at hospitals, supply chain management team leader for a large corporation, a lawyer who owns his own firm in Nevada, and an owner of a production studio in California, and that's just a small example of the 113 in the class. A small-town school doesn't equal small opportunities, it's the opposite. A child has more opportunities, maybe not in classes offered, but in help getting where they want to go. More one on one time to help them achieve their goals and get them the resources they need. It can be compared to a handmade specialty product (small town school) versus a mass produced product (large school).

The break of the district between Palmyra and Eagle is not a new fight. For as long as I have been in this community, first as an Eagle student then as Palmyra resident, the fight has been going strong. There has never been a time where the two communities were happy partners. Even west side Eagle was viewed differently from east side Eagle, farm kids vs village kids, when I was a student over 30 years ago.

After the vote tallies involving our school district, I feel removing Eagle from the school district is in the best interest for all parties involved. With open enrollment, an Eagle student who wishes to continue in the small community based school can still enroll in Palmyra. If enough students would like to attend perhaps a bussing option could still be offered as well.

The school board has made some very poor decisions on how to run our district. Financial responsibility came second to keeping up with neighboring school districts. Many who chose to open enroll out of the Palmyra Eagle district never step foot inside the school and have no idea what actually occurs there. They were never going to go to the small community school and trying to change our school to compete with a much larger school was a poor decision. Eagle elementary should have been closed years ago. We have two elementary schools running at half capacity. The decision to close one of the elementary schools would have been hard emotionally but would have been the financially responsible thing to do. Looking back 20 years, the Palmyra Elementary had classes of each grade first through sixth along with four classes of seventh and eighth in one building with 25 kids in each class. Now each elementary has about one of each grade level 4K through sixth. The enrollment in the High School is about half of what it was years ago, yet we have more extracurricular activities than ever before, again trying to offer what other larger schools offer.

I believe there is a way to keep the Palmyra Schools. Removing Eagle from the district and consolidating schools so we could still be a small community school. My hope would be to keep as many of the current classes offered as possible, keeping the education well rounded, making cuts elsewhere first. Cutting back on after school activities and even consolidating to one building would be better than shutting our doors completely.

I'm asking you to keep our Palmyra schools. To help preserve our way of life for my children and future generations who understand the importance of small community schools.

Thank you,

Melissa Zimmerman

Parent of 4 PEASD Children

W2422 Piper Road

Whitewater, WI 53190

Town of Palmyra Resident

(262) 470-2978

Sullivan, Diane M. DPI

From: Ryan Hajewski <rhajewski@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 10, 2019 11:44 PM
To: Palmyra-Eagle.comments, DPI
Subject: Ryan Hajewski/In Favor of Dissolution/Please send Eagle to Mukwonago

Ryan Hajewski
S69 W39784 County Road N
Eagle, WI 53119

November 10, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ryan Hajewski and I live in the Palmyra-Eagle School District that is currently going through the process of dissolution. I am writing to ask you to please, per the recommendation of the Palmyra-Eagle School District Board and the recommendation of the voters of the district(per the Advisory Referendum that took place November 5, 2019), continue with the dissolution process to its end. I would prefer that the children living in Eagle be sent to the Mukwonago Area School District along with any assets that may be connected with the territory transfer that would need to occur.

I come to this conclusion hard, as I am a graduate of Palmyra-Eagle Schools. My wife, Danielle, also was a graduate of the district. Many of my friends went to school there. Some are currently working there. I know this will affect and devastate many people. These people are my friends, yet I still hold to the hard belief that the district should be dissolved.

My reasons include:

1. We don't have a large amount of business growth in our district, so any funding increase needs hit the community much harder than what it would in larger districts with some business base.
2. The demographics of our communities have not shown a need for the infrastructure the district has built for itself and attempted to maintain since 2003.
3. Because of how close and interconnected lives certain staff have with other staff and children, sometimes bullying is tolerated to a degree that it shouldn't.
4. The desire of parents currently living in the Village and Town of Eagle to send their kids to Mukwonago Schools and the rate of Open Enrollment currently into those schools.
5. The need for the children and staff to have a stable work environment in the schools they attend.
6. The services that Mukwonago can offer struggling students, which are not offered at Palmyra-Eagle Schools(for example, Summer School).
7. The programs/extracurricular activities that assist in enriching children's lives which are offered at Mukwonago. Especially in the performing arts.

Due to a number of these situations, my wife and I decided to Open Enroll our children into Eagleville after a year or two of homeschooling our oldest. We spent several years prior to that looking at our educational options. Once we made the decision, we were more than well-pleased. The attention and positive atmosphere at the school has been wonderful. My kids are excited to go to school everyday.

We want to extend this style of attention to all areas of our community. We believe uniting Eagle under the Mukwonago School District will bring back together the family members of Eagle all under one district, its historic home. To me, this is the only sensible way forward for our community. We have voted twice at the ballot box, but for years with our feet. Please grant freedom of our community to enjoy the path we have advocated for.

Thanks,

Ryan Hajewski
(262-955-3260)