

TO: Palmyra-Eagle SDBAB

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Robin Webber, Village of Eagle Resident and 1990 graduate of Palmyra-Eagle High School.

My husband is a 1985 graduate of PE.

My daughter is a 2019 graduate of PE.

My son - as he says - will hopefully be a 2021 graduate of PE.

My parents chose to move to Eagle for the PE district, they are both from small schools in the UP. My dad graduated with about 150 students while my mom was in a class of 26. The schools are 10 miles apart. They wanted the small town & small schools for their kids.

My husband, daughter & I are very proud graduates of PEASD. My husband obtained his BS in Business & is now a self-employed painter. My daughter is a freshman at Carroll University with a goal to become a physician assistant. I obtained my BS in Chemical Engineering & Masters in Engineering Management & now work as a new product development project manager.

When it came time to raise our children, there was no question PE was it for us, for all the many reasons you have heard from the students, parents & teachers. I cannot begin to spout the accolades & appreciation we have for the many, many PE teachers & employees who have influenced our children in such a positive way. They have had so many opportunities and a great start to be service focused people of the future.

Given the predicted shortfall in funding – expenses vs. income – you saw in the school board presentation that the referendum was the only effort made to bring money into the district. You also saw there are no more cuts feasible. In today's atmosphere, a referendum anywhere is very hard to pass. Those of us passionate about our school district and public education in general were sent on a fool's errand of asking for more money from local residents through taxes. Knowing today's political climate, we should have instead spent our time & energy working to fund our school from alternative sources. Then, once the School Board voted to dissolve, it was too late to ask for funding, we had no time, and no fundraising campaigns were going to be approved by the school board.

My children being involved in sports though the years has granted me the opportunity to see what many other small schools are doing to fund their schools & programs. All you need to do is walk onto the Pardeeville football field to see how they get it done. It is like jumping back into the 70's with billboard after billboard advertising local & corporate sponsors. We do not have that at PE...we have not asked...we have not given local and outside entities a chance to support our school.

Being a parent of both a boy & a girl with different interests, I have had the chance of being on many school support organizations through the years. We have many parents & community members who are willing to step up & fundraise for whatever is needed. The homerun club raised almost \$20K to send 16 girls to Florida for a week to play softball. The Spanish club sent a dozen students to Peru. Every club I have been a part of has met

the challenge for what was asked. All a coach needs to do is indicates what they want for the program and a club will work to get it for them. HOWEVER – they need to ask.

The school board has made the assumption if the district cuts sports, band or other programs, we will lose more kids to OE. As a member of these clubs, I can tell you if the school district cuts programs, we will still have sports, band, etc. These clubs will do what is necessary to raise funding to maintain programs.

We WERE NEVER ASKED!

The Quarterback Club was never asked to fund the coaches, busses, field maintenance, refs, etc. Our Athletic Booster Club was never asked to cover the costs of being a part of the Trialways Conference and funding the Athletic Directors Position. We have boys & girls basketball clubs that have never been asked to step up their fundraising game & pay for everything associated with basketball. The Band Boosters were never asked to fundraise to cover the cost of the Band Director position. The Elementary PTO's have never been asked to support the Librarian position. I can go on & on....but...I can tell you, if needed we have so many parents, teachers, community members, grandparents, etc. who have a passion for our kids and our school district and will do what it takes to continue our programs, to keep our school alive.

About 10 yrs. ago, we had the opposite problem with EES busting at the seams, being over crowded. At the time the Superintendent, who was also our HS Principle due to a budget shortfall, pulled together about eight different committees all with a different focus to solve a problem. This was a great way to get community involvement and come up with solutions that all could live with. Community members & us parents HAVE NOT BEEN ASKED to help brainstorm and develop solutions to the current funding issue. Our ideas for possible solutions are pushed aside and not given the time of day by the school board. We don't even have a Parent Teacher Organization at the High School Level, we don't have a PE Sustainability Club for example...if needed...we can form these clubs & we can push to save our district – we can do this!

Other small schools around us have combined positions to reduce costs – band/choir combined positions – superintendent/elementary principle combined positions – by just looking up their websites you can see the creative ways the districts have reduced costs. We need to do that at PE.

I don't believe the school board took the sale of EES (or any other property) into the future financial calculations. There have been developments trying for years to construct a 3-story retirement community in Eagle and have been turned down due to resident complaints. The EES location would be a dream spot for those developers, situated away from houses, and includes nature trails & pond access. A great place for a retirement community. EAGLE HAS VOTED – THEY DO NOT WANT TO SUPPORT A LOCAL SCHOOL. We need to do what we can do to save the district & hard decisions such as the sale of the property need to be made.

Between the Clubs we have to fundraise (and will form in the near future) and with creative cuts including the sale of property, I believe this would give us the funds needed until a sustained funding plan can be created. We need time to pull together a larger effort of multiple committees with a goal to divide & conquer in order to

sustain PE into the future. We have so many ideas to decrease spending and increase funding but we NEED the school board and superintendent to be engaged in these efforts.

Please don't dissolve our school!

We need less than \$400K to complete funding of next school year. If 16 softball teammates can raise \$20,000 for a Florida trip, imagine what our entire district will be able to pull together to keep our schools. Through fundraising and with some cuts as described by others, in the next 6 months we can get a head start on a sustainable funding and budget program to cover the \$2.5M gap in future years.

Please vote no to the dissolution, if dissolved we will never be able to recover or bring PE back. Please do not let the district be destroyed without an effort to keep it funded. These kids and our community deserve a chance.

Thank you,

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Please find attached the School Support Funding presentation pulled together for the 12/5/19 SDBAB meeting.

PE Support - Funding

All it takes is a GOAL!

We just need to ask!

Our district does have the ability to raise funds as needed.

Here's a snap-shot of some of the clubs that support PE Activities Over the years:

PE School Supporting Organization	Typical Money Raised Per Year*	Fundraising Events
Quarterback Club	\$20,000	Raffle, Events, Food Sales, Shirts
PE Athletic Booster Club	\$12,000	Golf Outing, Holiday Bazaar, Conc. (\$16,000 currently in accounts)
Eagle Elementary PTO	\$9,000	Events, Raffles, Amazon (\$16,000 currently in accounts)
Lady Panther Hoops Club	\$8,000	Letters, Events, Food Sale, Apparel
FFA Alumni	\$7,000	Donations, Dues, Events, Raffles
Project Graduation	\$6,000	Business Donations, Conc., Raffles
Panther Baseball Boosters	\$4,000	On-line fundraiser, Food Sale, Shirts
PEHS Band Boosters	\$4,000	Scrip Sale, Food Sales
Lady Panther Homerun Club	\$3,000	Concessions, Letters, Events, Shirts
Panther Boys Hoops Club	\$3,000	Dance, Food Sale, Events
TOTAL TYPICAL PER YEAR:	\$76,000	

**prior to vote to dissolve the District.*

PE Support - Funding

Our students achieve great things!

There IS money out there for our education. There are groups both local & outside of our community with a goal to support education. We need to tap into these resources to save our district!

Here's a snap shot of what our graduates have achieved:

PE Graduation Scholarships	2 Year Average
<i>Locally Funded Scholarships</i>	<i>\$70,000</i>
Total PE Scholarships	\$670,000

- Every Senior who applied for scholarships in the last 2 years received at least one.
- \$2.5 Million awarded to graduates over the last 5 years.

PE Support - Funding

When we have a Goal in mind - we can achieve it! Our district does have the ability to raise funds as needed.

Businesses & PE Community are willing to donate funds when needed.

Here's some recent fundraising activities with a significant goal or purpose that was achieved:

Donations Received From	\$ Money Raised/Donated	Purpose
Standard Process	\$1,250,000	PE Sports Complex, SB, BB, Soccer Fields, Concession Stand, Restrooms
Alumni & Business Letters, +	\$20,000	PEHS Gym Floor Repair
Lady Panther Homerun Club	\$20,000	Florida Varsity Softball Trip
PE Golf Boosters	\$5,000	South Carolina Golf Trip
Lions Club, Generac, +	\$3,000	PE SB and BB Dugout Roofs

PE Support – Funding 2020 & Beyond

- PEASD needs less than \$400,000 to complete funding for next school year (at the current spend rates).
- If the softball team can raise \$20,000 for a trip to Florida, imagine what our entire district & community will be able to do, to save the district!
- Through fundraising and with some cuts as described, in the next 6 months we can get a head start on sustainable funding and budget to cover the funding gap in future years.
- This can't be done in a vacuum, we NEED the help & ideas from all community members.
- Please vote no to the dissolution. Once we have the no vote, our School Board will have no choice but to allow us to fundraise and band together with a common goal.
- If dissolved we will never be able to recover or bring PE back. Please don't let the district be destroyed without an effort to keep it funded.
- These kids and our community deserve a chance.

PE Panther Pledge Program

- Assist PEASD in providing educational needs and financial assistance to benefit students of PEASD
- Expands financial support beyond local voter base
- Gives supporters control, greater flexibility, and community pride
- Voluntary donations submitted to 501c(3) organizations:
 - Palmyra Community Foundation “PEASD Student & Family Fund”
 - PEASD

Palmyra-Eagle Panther Pledge Form

YES! I want to support youth education within Palmyra-Eagle Area School District!

I understand my gift will be used to help provide educational needs and financial assistance to benefit the students within the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District. I pledge to offer my financial support as follows:

I pledge (*circle one*): One-Time Donation 2-Year Donation or 3-Year Donation as follows:

___ **Purple (\$100 - \$500)** ___ **Corporate (\$5,000 +)**
 ___ **Silver (\$501 - \$1,000)**
___ **Gold (Over \$1,000)** ___ **Other (goods or services)**_____

My tax-exempt donation is enclosed and made payable to:

Palmyra Community Foundation / PEASD Student & Family Fund (for distribution via grants as approved by the Palmyra Community Foundation Board of Directors.)

The Palmyra Community Foundation is tax exempt under section 501c(3) and can receive and accept donations of cash or property for educational, cultural, charitable, or community development purposes for the benefit and improvement of the Palmyra area. Tax ID 311607501 <https://palmyracommunityfoundation.com/>

OR

Submit your donation directly to Palmyra-Eagle School District for use at discretion of PEASD:

Amount Donated: _____ **Date:** _____

Donor Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City / State: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please submit payment and completed pledge form to:

The Palmyra Community Foundation
/ PEASD Student & Family Fund
c/o First Citizens State Bank
PO Box 159
Palmyra, WI 53156

OR

Palmyra-Eagle School District
123 Burr Oak Street
Palmyra, WI 53156

Like most of us, I volunteer and support my community in a variety of ways. Currently I serve as a board member for 3 organizations: a Publicity Chair for a competitive Youth Gymnastics team at UW Whitewater; as Vice President of WI Horse Council Dist 4 – a group covering 12 counties including Jefferson, Waukesha, and Walworth; and as President of Southern Kettle Moraine Horse Trail Association- which is one of the largest equestrian groups in SE Wisconsin. As 30% of all households in WI have horse enthusiasts and the industry contributes \$2.2 billion to our State, these positions represent a significant community impact – (if you think this room is full of people with differences of opinion, try standing in a room full of horse people that are used to getting 1200 lb animals to do things their way 😊)

It is with that experience I feel confident in what is being presented tonight. The majority of my work is done in and around the Southern Kettle Moraine Forest, within boundaries of Palmyra Eagle School District – I do a lot of PR, organize work groups, fundraise, secure grants, and coordinate efforts between many different local, regional, and national organizations. My experience with local businesses and residents has found great support when given a common goal, a personal connection to the cause, and appreciation and understanding of the diversity within the community and the benefits of embracing that diversity. Some of our best changes and projects came as ideas presented and implemented by children – students in this room, Boy Scouts, 4H kids- so I have learned the value of listening to what children have to say and know they and their families can be great drivers for needed change!

In 2003 we passed a referendum with 1,016 votes and in doing so our community agreed to accept that debt in exchange for the opportunity to invest in the education of our youth and the future of our communities. This year has shown the support of our district has grown – 1,473 residents voted “YES” to April referendum and supporters even swore in writing in front of a Notary of their district support. You have received letters of support from business owners, Presidents of the Village of Palmyra & Chamber of Commerce, local church, public library, food pantries, and more. I believe we have enough support – but clearly asking for funding by referendum from people with no desired connection to the schools doesn’t work.

“Do what you can, with what you’ve got, where you are” – written Theodore Roosevelt’s autobiography

Because of our small size, we can do more with less. We can be successful by focusing our efforts on seeking support from those who want to have that connection and have already committed their support in some form. I introduce the “Palmyra-Eagle Panther Pledge” program (rough draft). This program would be designed to help supplement student needs and compliment any other district funding and plans in 2020 and beyond.

Residents, businesses, friends and family – Instead of a property tax hike, supporters would be asked to pledge a tax-deductible donation. This allows us to expand beyond our district voters to include friends and family far and wide, businesses, organized groups, and even families that OE into our district. This gives people the power to decide what level of support they can afford, the power to choose when they donate, and even how their donation should be used – in turn building trust with a new school board, offering greater local control, and encouraging a more personal connection to the district. Community pride and morale is boosted as pledges could be publicly acknowledged through media, newsletters, signs, etc. Donations also serve as an ongoing marketing campaign for the district and is also good PR for businesses and community in general. The program could also include donations of goods and services.

Pledges can be submitted either directly to PEASD or submit to the new – “PEASD Student & Family Fund” account already set up under the existing Palmyra Community Foundation. This is a 501c(3) organization that can “accept donations of cash or property for the educational, cultural, charitable or community development

purposes for the benefit and improvement of the Palmyra area” and funds are distributed via grants approved by the Palmyra Community Foundation Board of Directors -which is independent of the school district board.

<https://palmyracommunityfoundation.com/>

(Programs similar to this such as the “100 Extraordinary Women” program

<https://100extraordinarywomen.com/about/> have allowed Watertown Public Library to raise \$170,000 for improvements by efforts of 170 women; the Performing Arts Center was built in 2017 at Westby Area High School through 140 pledges which raised more \$750,000; Marshfield Athletic Complex secured over \$6 million in pledges through efforts of just 137 donors.)

Another benefit of pledge program is many companies offer matching funds donations, which can double individual donations made. Just tapping into 1500 local supporters for \$200 / year - less than \$17 a month- could easily provide additional \$300,000 per year with the opportunity to double that with matching donors and additional corporate pledges.

PEASD and our entire community has been blessed with great support from our local businesses. I am excited to announce that as of January, Palmyra will soon be home to yet another incredible business owner – Chris Winkler - who believes strongly in both community support and investing in local education. Through my connections as President of SKMHTA, I have developed a relationship with this person and can vouch for his character, business success, and commitment to youth and giving back to his community. His donations to the Oak Creek School District have been substantial over the last 15 years – including gifting countryside transportation to their Robotics team, supporting baseball and football teams, and donation of resources to Milwaukee County Zoo. His community support is grounding in financial donations and contributing resources to community organizations.

I want to share part of his written testimony –“The threat of dissolving the school district threatens the very foundation of why we want to live in Palmyra. I understand the reality of what the district faces and the hard choices the board must confront. I own a business. I can count...I can help by giving. I want to help the current financial situation the district faces. ... I will make a pledge to donate money to the district in the form of a “challenge” grant to inspire others in the community to help our schools stay open. Moreover, I pledge to contribute meaningful annual support to the boosters and school district for the maintenance of programs and capital needs to make sure our kids have top notch schools and programs. I’m hoping this spurs others to consider helping so the entire community is engaged in saving the school district.”

By combining innovative cost saving measures, income generating programs, and the pledged financial support from residents and business owners like Mr. Winkler, our district will have greater stability, even stronger community involvement and allow opportunity for growth- without dissolution or funding by referendum.

Speech by: Tara LeRoy
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