

November 25, 2019

To: School District Boundary Appeals Board
Re: **Palmyra-Eagle Area School District Dissolution**

Dear Boundary Appeals Board Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony into the process of your consideration regarding the dissolution of the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District. This testimony is made on behalf of the Board of Education of the School District of Fort Atkinson as the elected representatives of District residents.

We would like to begin by sharing our thoughts and concerns for the residents of the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District, especially its most vulnerable population, its kids. This surely must be a very trying time for all involved and affected by this decision. We thank you for your careful consideration of this important decision and for serving in your capacity to make such a difficult decision that impacts so many people. We encourage you to continue to keep the children at the center of the decision and conversation, as we are sure you have to this point in the process.

As we considered the impact to our school district as a bordering district to the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District, we wanted to share our thoughts on a couple of items you are required to consider by state statute. The first of which is the geographical and topographical characteristics of the area, including travel time. The school facilities in the School District of Fort Atkinson are the furthest west of any of the surrounding district's facilities. In looking at the small portion of our district that adjoins Palmyra-Eagle, if that contiguous property were apportioned to the School District of Fort Atkinson, the travel time one-way, without stops, would be approximately 15-20 minutes. This is approximately twice as long as travel time to the facilities in Palmyra, which likely would be apportioned to the Whitewater School District given their proximity. It is also nearly twice as long as travel time to Sullivan Elementary in the Jefferson School District.


A second consideration we would like to discuss is the fiscal effects of a proposed reorganization. The School District of Fort Atkinson has operated under an operational referendum to exceed the revenue limits since 2006. We will again be seeking an operational referendum at the April, 2020 election as our current operational referendum expires on June 30, 2020. Should this referendum not succeed, the Board of Education will need to consider next steps, which could possibly include budget reductions in the millions of dollars.

Also regarding fiscal effects, given the information we have, it appears that in the territory closest to our district border there would be less than ten currently enrolled students that could be apportioned into the School District of Fort Atkinson. Given all of the complexities of working through an apportionment of territory, assets, liabilities, supplies, staff, etc.; we believe the small number of students gained would not be balanced with the District's fiscal involvement and time commitment in the apportionment process.

As a result of the items listed above, we are respectfully requesting that the School District of Fort Atkinson not be included in the apportionment process for the Palmyra-Eagle Area School District should the School District Boundary Appeals Board affirm dissolution. Should you have any questions regarding this request, please feel free to contact Dr. Robert Abbott, Interim District Administrator, at 920.563.7807 or via email at abbotr@fortschools.org.

Respectfully Submitted,


Mr. Mark Chaney
Board of Education President


Dr. Robert Abbott
Interim Superintendent