



On Monday, the Richfield Joint School District No. 1 School Board adopted the resolution and order to consolidate with the Friess Lake School District. The Friess Lake School District School Board passed the same resolution at their July board meeting last week.

This decision has been made after careful consideration and much input. Both boards feel that the community's students will be better served if the Friess Lake and Richfield School Districts join forces as a unified system.

In making this decision, it is fitting that on the evening of our board meeting we found letters, notes and news-clippings from the 1860s regarding the status of the district and how the community could work together to support the interests and opportunities of the students. Precisely 150 years later, we find that our community still wants and values what is best for our students, though surely, a move of this magnitude could not have been predicted back then.

Mr. Engstrom stated it best when he said, "It is, ultimately, the end of our run as an independent school district... Both districts have long, proud traditions of excellence, and have enjoyed tremendous community support for generations."

We will work tirelessly to ensure that we create new traditions of excellence that support the community.

Important details to note regarding a consolidated school district include:

- District Name: Holy Hill Area School District
- Apportionment: One, one-year term per original district (this means that a minimum of one person from both Friess Lake and Richfield will be guaranteed a position on the school board for one year)
- Board Size: Seven members (five at large, one-apportioned seat per original district; again this means at minimum one person will be elected from the Friess Lake School boundaries and the Richfield School Boundaries, the other five board members can reside in either original school district)
- Referendum: No mention of referendum is made in the resolution. This means that a referendum would be held only by petition.
- Annual Meeting: Held October 22, 2018, at Friess Lake.

Though consolidation will mean significant changes for the 2018/19 school year, you should not expect an interruption in services this year. Careful planning and consideration has been implemented for the upcoming school year, and "business" will carry on as usual. As we continue to prepare for the upcoming school year, we will also begin making and sharing preliminary plans for a new, consolidated school district, remembering that by working together we are creating a new strength in our unity.