



April 2017

Questions Submitted Online

Until a decision is made, and building usage determined, will spending on buildings (outside of necessary maintenance) be halted? The answer for both districts is yes. For the Richfield Joint School District, this is not entirely due to the consolidation study, but also due to summer school being moved to Plat.

What happens if the consolidation aid changes with the biennium budget? What happens to our aid? When do we get 'locked in?' Knowing that changes may occur, the districts took a conservative approach to calculating consolidation incentive aid. Depending on the decisions that are made at the state level, aid amounts could fluctuate. The aid is available right now, and while there is no guarantee of aid, no consolidated districts have been negatively impacted by changes to the state budget.

How much money will be saved in this consolidation effort? Where will the savings be seen, taxes, or put back into the school systems? While efficiencies would be attained through consolidation, the districts are researching consolidation in order to preserve and enhance student programs, activities, and academic opportunities; these do not come without a cost. Incentive aid and efficiencies through reduction of duplicative programs, better utilization of facilities, and transportation are three areas where savings are anticipated.

Where will we be able to find the results of the report that was presented tonight[1/30/17]? The report will be posted on our websites, as well as the village website, however, we are waiting for Robert W. Baird to receive the updated information from the state prior to posting the report.

The financials will be important to understand and building usage plans. Aside from the financial aspects, it is smart to consolidate. Thank you for your comment. We understand that the financial aspects of a consolidation impact all of our residents, and are working to make this information readily available, while also communicating about the increased opportunities for our students and the unification of our community.

If this happens, why doesn't it start next year? The short answer is: the state outlines the timeline to which districts must adhere. The long(er) answer is that once districts determine that consolidation is in the best interest of students, families and the community at large, there is much work to be done. This includes making decisions about where students will go to school, assigning staff, forming collegiality and collaborative opportunities for staff, aligning compensation and retirement packages, assuring curriculum alignment, rewriting policy and handbooks for the new district, determining a new board of education, identifying and/or hiring leadership, to name a few. Each of these require time and attention in order to be completed with fidelity.





If the consolidation would be approved, will Friess Lake's use of iPads in the classroom be implemented District wide? Or will parents have a choice between a traditional classroom setting and a digital setting like parents in the Hartland school district? The Friess Lake School District and Richfield Joint School District recognize that there are technology differences between the two districts. Creating and developing a technology plan for a consolidated school district would be worked through during the 2017/18 school year.

When is the next meeting. What is the specific benefit for Friess Lake considering we will be paying more taxes. Particularly in light of the declining enrollment that both districts are facing, both districts will reap the benefits of a consolidation. First and foremost, educational opportunities for students will be enhanced. This may include expansion of music to orchestra; addition of extracurricular activities, sports, and clubs such as forensics; more specialist teachers with increased full-time possibilities to create more ownership, stability and consistency in content areas; increased course offerings. Beyond direct student impact, teaching staff will benefit from increased collaboration opportunities, which will return benefits to classroom instruction. Additionally, through efficiencies, more funding will be directly funneled to student and staff programming.

Meetings tomorrow, 3/24 at Friess lk school at 8:05am and 10:30am. Thank your for your response!

This goes way beyond just opportunities for students, As a Friess lake district tax payer I don't want our mill rate going up 80%. I hope this goes for a vote to each district and if majority approve each district then that's okay, it should not be for others to decide. The mill rate for Friess Lake will be going up: 26% between 2017/18 and 2018/19. However, the mill rate is nearly identical to 2015/16, and will continue to decline in either scenario. (11% after year one of consolidation, approximately 6% in year two of consolidation, and again decrease by 2% after three years of consolidated status.)

With Richfield schools very old buildings and money not approved for new facilities, what benefit is it for Friess lake district residents? Plat is the oldest building of the three, and the recommendation is that this building close. Consolidating the Friess Lake and Richfield Joint 1 School Districts will increase student numbers, creating more stability and having the capability of offering approximately three sections per grade level, increasing specialist and course offerings, and increasing extracurricular opportunities. Additional benefits are listed above. Incentive aid is available to consolidating districts. Over the first five years, Robert W. Baird has projected this incentive aid to be approximately one million dollars. This money can be applied in a manner that the joint board and administration recommends.

How specifically will expanded school voucher program affect each district if we consolidate and not consolidate? The districts may be better positioned to deal with this outside threat as a





larger consolidated district rather than on our own as much smaller entities. As larger district, the impact of students leaving is lessened due to a larger base. Additionally, as a consolidated district, more opportunities will be available, which may encourage families to enroll in our schools.

Why has whole grade sharing not being explored first? The districts briefly discussed this, but it was determined that this was not a viable long-term solution. Whole grade sharing can be a good solution when a single class or grade level has a lower population. In our situation, both districts are facing declining enrollment. Given our geographic placement, we also felt that whole grade sharing may lead to competition between the districts. As the single community of Richfield, our goal is not to compete with each other, but to raise community and student camaraderie and spirit.

Herman School dist, Neosho School dist and Rubicon School dist did not have the same huge disparity in tax mill rate! Referendum please! Please see the answer above regarding the tax mill rate. While the districts are not opposed to a referendum, we do want residents to be aware that the cost of holding a referendum will be entirely at the districts' expense given this would be the only item on the ballot. After receiving estimates from the Village of Richfield, Town of Erin and Washington County, we estimate these costs to be \$30,000- \$40,000 or approximately \$15,000 - \$20,000 for each district.

If a referendum is sought by the public, a petition must be filed that includes "signatures of at least 10 percent of the electors who reside in any affected school district" and it must be filed with the clerk of the school district with the highest equalized valuation of the affected school districts. In this case that would be the Richfield Joint 1 District clerk. This information is correct.

To submit your own question(s), please visit: <https://todaysmeet.com/ConsolidationStudy> or head to either district homepage or the village homepage. We appreciate your feedback, questions, and ideas!

