

# Superintendents to meet about cooperation after consolidation voted down

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November 28 2016 6:21 AM



**WOOD RIVER** - Superintendents and board of education presidents representing **East Alton School District #13**, **East Alton Wood River High School District #14** and **Wood River/Hartford School District #15** will hold an informal meeting to discuss how the districts can work better together following the push for consolidation being defeated by a mere nine votes.

The informal meeting will not be open to the public, but **Wood River/Hartford Superintendent Patrick Anderson** said the meeting will be to discuss how the three districts can better cooperate for the betterment of the public, parents and, most importantly, the students. One of the more ambitious goals Anderson has for the meeting will be synchronizing the districts' calendars for the 2017-18 school year.

"This was a pretty contentious race," Anderson said. "The public and parents were very concerned about our efforts to collaborate. After the vote, I received a directive from my board to actively pursue ways we can collaborate more effectively between districts. After I was given the directive, I very quickly took to talking to **John** and **Virgil**."

Anderson said the goal of a shared calendar was "very attainable."



Pearson confirmed he would attend the informal meeting. His board of education passed a mandate in favor of consolidation. The other two school districts' boards passed mandates against the push for consolidation. **Amy Harding**, who serves on the **Wood River/Hartford Board of Education**, recently resigned from her appointed seat on the **East Alton Wood River Board of Education** due to her differing stance from the rest of the board on the issue of consolidation. Pearson said the East Alton Wood River High School District would continue as it was following the vote.

"Our board continues to serve as the board of education for the East Alton Wood River High School District," he said. "We will still do our level-headed best to help our students achieve. That is our only reaction. I cannot speak on behalf of the board based on their feelings, but we will continue on. This school district has been around since 1919, and we will go on and continue."

Anderson said his district would like to address the concerns of many members of the public voiced during the consolidation vote. He said another aspect of the informal meeting would be to create a formal collaboration project for curriculum development and alignment, a concern voiced by many on the pro-consolidation side.

Currently, the three school districts operate on slightly different curriculum, which parents and staff of the East Alton Wood River High School District said caused a problem for incoming freshmen who may have had entirely different learning experiences at the feeder districts of East Alton and Wood River/Hartford. Opponents of consolidation said consolidated curriculum would not be necessary if each district adhered to the Illinois State Learning Standards, which set a benchmark for students' education.

Pro-consolidation group **Citizens for a Better Education** and anti-consolidation group, **Save Our Schools**, will also be involved in future policy discussions, Anderson said.

"I know both groups were very concerned about our districts, and they put a lot of effort into what is wrong and right about our districts," he said. "We're trying to incorporate those needs and wants as well. I think it is a great way to ease a lot of the concerns people have with the school districts. When it's all said and done, this collaboration and working together can only benefit our students."