



Consolidated Calendar: Three school districts work together for collaboration

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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WOOD RIVER - Three superintendents and their board presidents met on Dec. 7 to discuss ways they could better collaborate following an effort to consolidate them being defeated a month previous.

East Alton Superintendent Virgil Moore, Wood River/Hartford Superintendent Patrick Anderson and East Alton Wood River High School Superintendent John Pearson met with each other and each of their board presidents to find solutions for community concerns following that vote. At the meeting, Anderson said the main concerns were creating a consolidated calendar between the three districts for the 2017-18 school year and start working towards a consolidated curriculum between the two elementary schools - a feat Pearson said has not been done during his tenure. The calendar, however, may already be created successfully.

"It was a great dialogue," Anderson said. "I didn't realize before we had a very close calendar already, but we've never been 100 percent the same. We were able to hash out a unified calendar that is exactly the same for the 2017-18 school year. It took quite a bit of work. We talked a lot, and everybody added to the discussion. We knew it was best for the community and the kids."

The work toward establishing a consolidated curriculum progressed greatly through that meeting as well, both Pearson and Anderson said. The formal process to align the curriculum between the elementary schools is set to begin Thursday, Dec. 15. Anderson said the districts have more in common than they do differences. They already both meet the **Illinois State Learning Standards**.

Pearson did not believe matching a common set of state standards amounted to having similar curriculum. He said such meetings were required to see how much time is spent on each topic, how those topics are taught and which materials are used to teach it.

Pearson said curriculum articulation between the districts will have more to do with how subjects are taught than what is taught.

"When you talk about curriculum, it's a lot more than having it aligned with **Common Core**," Pearson said. "It's about how much time is spent on subjects, teaching and instructive methods and what materials are used in that instruction such as textbooks and videos. We are going to coordinate that better."

During those curriculum articulation meetings, Pearson said teachers will come together based on their subject areas to meet with the districts' curriculum directors. Eventually in the process, the elementary school teachers will be joined by teachers from the high school to discuss the expectations and scope of the freshman and sophomore curriculum.

Both inter-district teacher discussions and a unified calendar have been part of the districts's past relationships, Pearson said. He said it was good to see the community was concerned about reviving such plans and initiatives.

"We used to have coordinated calendars," he said. "It's nice to get back to that."

Anderson said he spoke with the members of both **Save Our Schools** and **Citizens for a Better Education**, which were opposing groups supporting each side of the consolidation vote. He brought concerns from everyone to the Dec. 7 meeting. He said it was important to him as well as his board, who gave him the directive to do so.

Another such meeting between the superintendents and their board presidents will take place sometime in mid-March, Pearson said. That meeting will not be open to the public.