

Letter To The Editor: Edwardsville School District 7 Should Maintain Midway and Hamel As Separate Schools

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District 7 is considering consolidating Midway and Hamel elementary schools at Hamel, potentially serving K-2 students across more than 50 square miles.

Students would face unreasonable bus rides. Recent research found that students with rides greater than 45 minutes had worse attendance and outcomes. With current (long) ride times in the northern schools, we must expect even more unfair ride times.

D7 also hasn't made a compelling case for closure, including not breaking down how it plans to realize projected savings of \$320-400K/year. As most school spending is on people, is D7 proposing laying off a number of teachers and staff? If not, where do the savings come from? The public deserves a full accounting of projected savings. Further, repairing Midway (\$5M) is much cheaper than building an addition at Hamel (\$15M). Finally, D7 hasn't shared enrollment projections and student outcome data for both schools; these data should be considered.

I also worry about property values. Families want nearby schools. Midway and Hamel have anchored our communities for more than 50 years. Nearly 130 residents showed up at the November 30 meeting at Midway to oppose the closure.

Invest in our students by improving the existing Midway and Hamel sites.

Mark Allison

Moro resident and Edwardsville alum

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