

Ms. Shelbi Pool,

Thank you for reaching out with clarifying questions on our potential merger. Through open dialogue I am convinced we will better understand each other. The whole MSA BOD was unable to discuss these questions together. However in order to keep the dialogue going, allow me to respond as an individual as I was uniquely named. I have also reached out to Board Member Bartle and included her comments below as another individual response.

Thank you for the opportunity for clarification. I will share our response with our MSA board, and would appreciate it if you could share our individual clarifying responses with your community as needed.

Thank you,
Dan Ellingson and Jennifer Bartle

Building Comments from Board Member Ellingson:

First of all, allow me to apologize if my comments at our MSA December 2022 BOD meeting caused harm for WLA members. It was not my intention for my statement to hurt anyone. As an individual BOD member, I did make comments to our MSA community regarding WLA's facilities/buildings. My intention at that time was to describe how MSA had arrived at that state of discussion in our expansion efforts. MSA has been exploring various expansion options now for some time to bring our fantastic middle and high school experience to even more students. As many know, MSA is currently at maximum capacity, and is in need of more space to support our mission and vision going forward. My understanding is the initial merger idea was sparked as a solution for a facility constraint with MSA and for WLA to provide an optional path for middle/high school student progression. While those original ideas are still there, there is so much more that a merger can offer our combined communities. We now have had an opportunity to meet more with WLA administration teams, teachers, and members of the WLA community. I can only speak individually, but I have been very impressed with the love and pride WLA community members have for their school. By "school" I am referring to everything (students, staff, building, community, etc.). We have since learned how a merger could provide our students with an even stronger financial foundation, and through merger synergies we could explore additional programming offerings together that to date have not been achievable. In addition, we have only started to think of the exciting possibilities students may benefit from with PK-12 offerings together. We are both trying our best to serve our communities as best we can. It seems that we have an opportunity which should be explored to determine if we can cooperate together more than compete with each other.

District 622 Comments from Board Member Bartle:

I stated my concern for 622 only because of the busing situation and the fact that 622 is an entirely different school district that I don't know a lot about. The City of Woodbury has a very jagged border through the middle of the north end of town that separates the city into three distinct school districts, 833, 622 and Stillwater. We have known several families that moved to Woodbury and bought a home and enrolled their children in a school within the borders of an 833 charter or private and then found themselves in the predicament that they cannot get bussing to school because they live in another

school district, say Stillwater, or 622. Although it is state law for local school districts to provide bussing for all students within their borders, this stops at the school border. The city of Woodbury has three of these borders. My concern was that kids currently living in 833 and utilizing bussing services would somehow be left out, I believe the majority of kids currently at MSA live within the 833 borders. It is my understanding that MSA Administration has recently been working on addressing these concerns with the 833 Administration.