

Waterford, Va.
March 29, 1947

Mr. O.L. Emerick, Supt.
Loudoun County Schools,
Leesburg, Va.

Dear Mr. Emerick,

We want to thank you for the reply to our recent letter, part of which has been the basis for school discussions at the meetings of our Citizens Association. There are still many questions to be answered and we hope that you will find time to give us the information asked for from time to time.

I am listing a few questions which we hope you will answer promptly as the next meeting of our Association will be held on the evening of April 8th.

1. Have the consolidations so far effectuated, resulted in decreasing the number of students per teacher?
2. Have these consolidations resulted in an increase of space available per pupil ?
3. Have the students in the consolidated schools been enabled as a result of the consolidation to have greater access to and to make fuller use of recreational facilities?
4. Have the other facilities available to the students improved in quality with the consolidation? If so, what specific improvements are there?
5. Has consolidation resulted in making money available to raise teachers' salaries?
6. Has consolidation resulted in an increased proportion of teachers who meet the State standards of qualification?
7. Has any study been made to ascertain whether any benefits which may have resulted from consolidation overbalance the effect of the increased travel required of the students with its resulting physical drain and reduction of time which can be spent at the school and in using such recreational facilities as are available?
8. Has any study been made to determine whether the students are actually better trained in the consolidated schools than they were formerly?
9. Has the county or the State established any standards and tests by which the quality of the training given the students can be judged?

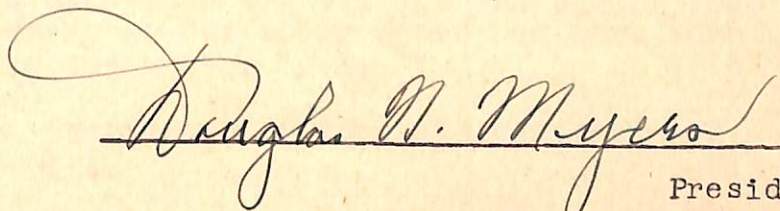
Now as to the statements in the County papers ~~XXXXX~~ recently published I see that the School Board does not understand why we so excited about the Waterford School, as no move has been made to abandon that school, and the statement that you do not know where the statement originated that there was any move to molest this school in any way.

Now the fact is that Mr. Ford informed me in person that Mr. Hickman had on several occasions attempted at least to have the Board vote to transport the graduates of the Waterford School to Lovettsville, Va. and your statements that it had been customary for the grade children to go the same way as the older children makes it very clear in our minds that if you did take the graduates of our school to Lovettsville that you would at the same time take grade children between here and Lovettsville which would in itself close our school.

Are you willing to tell us that this will not be done; that is that if the graduates of our school are taken to Lovettsville that the grade children will not go also, and if so, will not have the effect of closing our school.

Please be definite in your reply to the above, and we hope that we are not taking too much of your time.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Douglas W. Myers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D". It is positioned above a horizontal line.

President

Waterford Community Citizens Association

April 2, 1947

Mr. Douglas N. Myers, President
Waterford Community Citizens Association
Waterford, Virginia

Dear Mr. Myers:

Your letter of March 29, 1947 in which you ask a number of questions is acknowledged.

Your questions seem to implicate consolidation when it is not certain that consolidation is a factor.

I am answering your questions in their numerical order.

1. Consolidation has increased and equalized the number of children per teacher. The minimum ^{and} average are more, the maximum is less.
2. Consolidation has decreased the average per square foot per pupil in class-rooms but other space has more than offset this. Also see answer to 1.
3. Consolidation has provided more adequate recreational facilities for pupils.
4. Consolidation has improved instruction very definitely, has brought about improvement in per cent of attendance on enrollment and has made it possible to improve physical facilities, such as provision for indoor toilets, more adequately safeguarded water supply and provision for furnace heat, and has made high schools available to many 7th grade graduates who formerly could not have reached high school.
5. Consolidation seems to have saved 25 teachers since 1926-27. At the average of \$1439 in 1945-46 the 25 teachers would have cost \$35,975. This compares with an increase in cost of transportation since 1926-27 of \$32,152. But in 1945-46 transportation was furnished for hundreds of pupils who lived in areas that were several miles from any school and provided their own transportation or did not go to school.

Douglas N. Myers

April 2, 1947

6. I think consolidation has resulted in an increased proportion of teachers who meet the state standards of qualifications but the figures seem to say it has not. The effect of consolidation can't be measured in this instance with any degree of accuracy. In 1926-27 we were 8 years away from World War I. The minimum requirement for a certificate was one year in college. In 1945-46 we were just completing World War II. The minimum requirement for a certificate was 4 years in college. Also in 1945-46 we were in the midst of the greatest excess demand over supply for goods and services ever known. Since 1926-27 there had opened up many new avenues of employment for women.
7. I know of no definite study to answer this question as to comparative value of benefits from consolidation set off against the physical drain and time consumed in travel.
8. During the time we had many small schools we made numerous tests to compare the abilities of pupils in one-room and two-room schools with those in larger schools. We invariably found that the pupils in smaller schools made lower scores. We also found a very low per cent of pupils in one-room and two-room schools were finishing the 7th grade as compared with the situation in our larger schools. (about 40%) That covers elementary grades. In case of high schools we knew at the time we had quite small schools that on the average the smaller schools made poorer scores than those in larger schools. In standard tests given last year and this year two separate tests used indicate higher scores in the larger high schools. We know also that in consolidated high schools, students are offered a greater variety of subjects so that they may study that which is more nearly adapted to their needs and surely, in this instance, these pupils are better trained.
9. We have recently given in the 11th grades of all high schools and in the 4th and 7th grades standard achievement and intelligence tests. These were state tests and the results are reported to the State office. They were given last year, also, I doubt very much, however, if these figures give any proof about consolidation because in fact all high schools are now consolidated schools.

Douglas N. Myers

April 2, 1947

Please note the table below which is taken from the official county record for the years indicated.

	<u>1926-27</u>	<u>1945-46</u>
One-room schools	35	1
Two-room schools	5	1
Three-room schools	2	2
Enrollment - (all grades 1-11)	3501	3248
Average daily attendance (all grades 1-11)	2583	2611
Number of teachers employed (all grades 1-11)	134	109
High school pupils enrolled	508	752
High schools	11	4
High school teachers	33	35

I am entirely unable to recall that any one has ever made a definite proposal to our school board to take the high school pupils from the Waterford area to Lovettsville in recent years. I mentioned that at a board meeting as a possible means of equating the enrollment if 4 high schools are retained.

In my letter of February 24, I stated that there is a "tendency for grade children to go in the same direction" as high school children from an elementary school center. I did not use the word customary. In fact our board usually resisted the tendency for grade children to go along with high school pupils to the point of prohibiting it. However, it should be born in mind that graduates of the Waterford school now go in one direction to high school and if they should go to Lovettsville they would still go in one direction only and theoretically these would be no greater tendency to take elementary children from the area than now.

I am not in a position to state what might or might not be done about taking children from the Waterford school center in the event of a change in high school attendance center. The decisions are made by the county school board. However, no one has made any suggestion about taking children from the Waterford elementary school to some other elementary school and I feel sure that the members of the school board would oppose such a plan. I am opposed to taking a school of this size out of a definite community such as Waterford. I do not think we could justify such a step.

My own thoughts on consolidation run this way.

Douglas N. Myers

April 2, 1947

The retention of our former 35 one-room, 5 two-room and 11 high schools up to this time would have put us in a class very specifically labeled as "archaic". For bringing children together in groups sufficiently large to justify adequate building facilities and equipment and an efficient instructional program, there is a preponderance of argument if we favor improving the schools.

The one-room school of 7 grades was proven to be an inefficient teaching unit. So was the two-room school. The three-teacher school presents an administrative problem that is difficult, that of dividing 3 grades among seven teachers. We think the minimum elementary school should be a 4-teacher unit but in the case of Waterford it should be made a 4-room school in preference to its discontinuance. Closing one and two -room schools to offer these children better advantages at larger centers, or at central points, or at community centers has been our program of elementary school consolidation.

Our high school consolidation has been one of widening horizons. We have changed from a restricted program of high school academic courses of a college preparatory pattern designed primarily for less than 25 per cent of our pupils to an elective offering that might be suited to the needs of all pupils of high school age. We have given much thought to the advantage of having more than one group of the same class so that they could be divided somewhat according to ability. The broad offering and divided class both require more pupils than we yet have in any school if we are to secure maximum benefits, although we have already made progress in both directions through high school consolidation up to this time. Some classes have been divided at Leesburg and Lincoln and new courses have been made available to all high school pupils that were not possible with our 11 high schools.

We have the opportunity now to do some constructive thinking in reference to the program to be provided for our high school pupils in future years in this county. When I read in a reliable publication that this nation spends per person - \$17.00 on education, \$15.00 on cosmetics, \$19.00 on tobacco, and \$51.00 on liquor, I am not obsessed with fear that the schools will cost too much.

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Douglas N. Myers

April 2, 1947

Please be assured that I shall be glad to furnish any information I can. I am also glad to make known my own views on school matters. But when I think of the rapid pace at which our environment changes in this inventive and scientific age and compare our feeble efforts to look ahead and determine how we shall train young people to live in a world still cloaked with the mystery of future changes, I confess I become very humble.

Very sincerely yours,

O. L. Emerick
Division Superintendent

OLE:lc

Waterford, Va.

February 14, 1947

Mr. Oscar L. Emerick, Supt.
Loudoun County Schools,
Leesburg, Va.

Dear Mr. Emerick,

A large group of people from Waterford and community attended a called meeting of the Parent-Teachers Association of the Waterford School on the night of February 12th. to discuss school matters pertaining to the County and state, as well as problems dealing with our own grade school.

It developed at this meeting that the Parent-teachers Association was not fully qualified to deal with the problems involved, so we immediately organized what is to be known as the Waterford Community Citizens Association.

I am sure that you can realize that much unpleasant friction can often be avoided through efforts at better understanding. We have access to the report of Langsford, setting forth the broad general ideas behind consolidation for the state; but we need information about the aims in our own county on the subject. I wonder if you could or would give us information about some of the comments we hear every day, but about which facts are not really known.

What portion of salary of Loudouns teachers is paid by the state? Does the state pay a set sum, or pay on a per-centage basis? Will the state increase the amount it pays if the county increases salaries? Are any statistics available to prove or disprove the often-heard comment,

"most of Loudouns high school graduates who go to college either fail their first years work or find it very difficult because they are poorly prepared"?

Is it true that our county schools now have only one major aim, to educate merely to the extent that might be useful to tenant farmers?

What is the approved teacher-pupil ratio in Loudoun?

Just what is the basic aim of Loudouns public school system?

Is it possible to obtain a course of study in which goals of scholastic achievement are set up for each grade and for high school work?

Has any effort ever been made to present to the public a clear, definite picture of what consolidation, properly promoted, would be in Loudoun? We have been hearing about it now for nearly twenty years, and still have only a vague idea of what it is supposed to mean. Its merits so far certainly do not justify it in this county- or do they?

In connection with the Waterford groups interest, I hope you will definitely answer some of the questions about our local school. We feel we have a right to know what is planned by your board about our school for next year, and for the next ten years for that matter. Remembering the insidious "feeding" process that took our high school, thereby killing something very vital to the life of our community, we are suspicious and resentful to learn the same "feeding" is now being considered by you or your board in connection with all we have left, our grade school. Those of our community who are most concerned, feel we have the right to ask that the plans for the future,

which you stated at our recent conference with you in your office last month, (the board is about to make) should be made known to us as they arise, and that we be allowed a voice in those plans.

The Waterford Community Citizens Association is to meet again within a few weeks to consider all items of interest concerning our local school. Since I as presiding officer have to present these items, I should consider it a favor if you will be kind enough to answer for me this long list of questions that have already been raised.

Appreciating a prompt reply, I am,

Yours very sincerely,



Douglas M. Myers

President

Waterford Community Citizens Association

February 19, 1947

Mr. Douglas N. Myers, President
Waterford Community Citizens Association
Waterford, Virginia

Dear Mr. Myers:

I have your letter in reference to some problems that affect the Waterford School. I might state in the beginning that in general the school authorities in Loudoun County have been very much on the spot in a sort of squeeze between the broad views of the state educational authorities and the specific views of patrons involved when the question of closing a particular school has arisen. On February 28, 1940 after public hearing on the question of school consolidation, the school board adopted a resolution providing for the closing of certain schools and listed other schools as permanent schools. These include the 4 high schools as they now exist, namely, Aldie, Lincoln, Leesburg and Lovettsville and the following elementary schools: Aldie, Arcola, Ashburn, Bluemont, Hamilton, Hillboro, Leesburg, Lincoln, Lovettsville, Lucketts, Middleburg, Purcellville, Round Hill, Sunny Ridge, Unison-Bloomfield and Waterford. Since that time the Sunny Ridge school's enrollment dropped to such a low figure that it was deemed advisable to close the school and extend a bus route to care for the children. Also the Unison-Bloomfield school building burned and the building was not rebuilt but the children taken to 4 different schools.

We are now looking forward to provision for 5 grades in our high schools beginning September 1949 and it becomes absolutely necessary that the school board make plans for housing the children. In the meantime we have received a report from the State Department of Education outlining their policy in reference to the size of elementary schools and of high schools and of the curriculum therein. I am sending to you a copy of this report. So far as I am able to determine

Douglas N. Myers

February 19, 1947

this report shows pretty clearly that where we already have an elementary school located in a definite community and where there is a reasonable certainty that it would justify itself as a 4 teacher school there should be no thought of discontinuing the school. In other words, I do not see any reason for raising any question before our school board as to the advisability of discontinuing elementary school work in any of the present centers which of course, includes Waterford. When the Ashburn school burned, we decided not to continue high school work there. Our original plan in inclosing the high school department had been to bring the Sterling children to that point to occupy the building space that would be abandoned. When it became necessary to provide them entire space for all of the children at Sterling and Ashburn and in view of the fact that Sterling is a definite community the board decided, I think wisely, to build a 4 room school at Sterling where we expect to have about 120 children next year. This illustrates the trend of our thinking.

Our perplexing problem in any future consolidation seems to be that of high schools and the questions are : Shall we have 4 white high schools, two, or only one? We have to consider what the people in the county think, the initial cost, the over-all cost on a long time basis, the quantity and quality of the work that will be done and finally, the disadvantage of long hauls for school children and particularly how early the grade children must arrive in the remote elementary schools in order that the high school busses reach their destination on time. I have already suggested to the school board and I feel there should be a public hearing on the matter of high school facilities to be arranged in Loudoun County beginning September 1949.

Now you have asked a number of questions and I am undertaking to answer them as best I can.

This year the salaries of the instructional employees amount to \$292,860. We are receiving from the state to pay for transportation and the salaries of teachers \$185,728. and pay \$56,240 for transportation so that you can see we shall pay \$163,372. actually for salaries of teachers out of local funds.

Douglas N. Myers

February 19, 1947

The appropriations are made by the state on the basis of average daily attendance out of a lump sum which the General Assembly makes available plus small amounts for special work such as, agriculture, home economics and industrial arts. The state does not increase the appropriations when we make more available.

I have no figures to verify your suggestion as to the difficulty our students have in their first year at college. I have general knowledge just as you have. I do know that a large proportion of first year college students from most schools have much difficulty and I conclude that the fault is with both the colleges and high schools. It can't be fixed at any one place. Our high school principals usually follow the careers of these pupils pretty closely. It is not true that the major aim in Loudoun County is to educate to the extent that the outcome might be useful only to tenant farmers. The basic aim of the schools of Loudoun County is to provide an education that meets the needs of the pupils. That education should be very different, particularly in the later years, for those who would become professional workers, etc., as compared to the education for those who would become tenant farmers.

Some time ago the school board set up a teacher-pupil ratio in the grades of not over 35 pupils per teacher. The state suggested that the total instructional personnel in high schools be about 1 for each 20 pupils. For the most part we are following the state suggestion in the high schools and the pupil-teacher ratio in the grades is ordinarily about 30.

A great deal of effort has been made in this county to explain the advantages of consolidation to our people. This applies to the closing of one-room schools, several two-room schools and 7 high schools. I think unquestionably, the consolidation that has been effected in this county justifies itself and that as time goes on this will be recognized more and more.

I do not know where the suggestion arises that we are planning to feed some pupils away from the Waterford Elementary School to some other point in the county.

Douglas N. Myers

February 19, 1947

I note that you want a voice in the plans for the school in the future. We are of course, glad to have you participate. It is not at all clear to me in what detail you would wish to participate in these plans and I think it would be well that you enlarge upon that somewhat. The present plans for next year do not anticipate any changes of a basic nature in the arrangements for the school and I know of no plan for the future to make any basic change unless it is to carry out what is my hope that we can have a four-teacher school with some facilities for serving lunches provided, the auditorium connected to the central heating plant and the play ground owned by the school board instead of merely used by permission.

Waterford, Va.
February 22, 1947

Mr. O. L. Emerick, Supt.
Loudoun County Schools,
Leesburg, Virginia.

Dear Mr. Emerick,

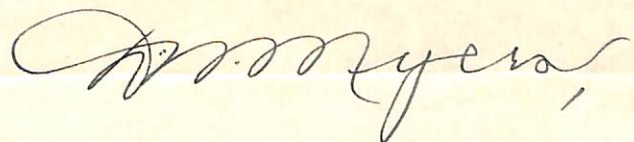
I received your reply to my recent letter, together with other papers for which I thank you. I haven't had time to digest all that these papers contain, but hope to in the near future.

One very important thing I notice was not directly answered and that is: Where do you or the school board plan to take our graduates from the Waterford grade school next year. My argument is this, if you decide to take the graduates from the Waterford school to Lovettsville it will very soon wreck this school for it is not reasonable to say that you will take only the graduates and not pick up grade children between here and Lovettsville that are now attending this school.

Please answer this one question in detail, as the whole argument at present hinges on it.

Assuring you of our cooperation in all that is reasonable, and assuring you of my own personal support, I am,

Yours very truly,



President,
Waterford Community Citizens Association

February 24, 1947

Mr. Douglas N. Myers

Waterford, Va.

Dear Mr. Myers:

I have your letter asking for a more specific statement relating to the plan for high school attendance by the graduates of the Waterford elementary school next year. There has been no suggestion made to do anything different in this respect next year from the present arrangement. The graduates of the Waterford elementary school can be expected to continue to go to the Leesburg school next year as heretofore.

You are entirely correct in your statement that when high school pupils go from an elementary school center there is a tendency for grade children to go in the same direction. The tendency arises from the desire of parents to have their elementary children go in the bus along with the high school children and the board sometimes yields to the wishes of the parents against its own plan in the matter.

I do not believe we shall want to consider any fundamental change in the arrangements for high school pupils in this county except such as would become effective in September, 1949. There is not yet any specific proposal before the school board in respect to changes in high school organization but we should be at work on the problem soon and I hope a public hearing will be held this spring.

C O P Y

April 4, 1947

Mr. D. N. Myers, President
Waterford Community Citizens Association
Waterford, Virginia

Dear Mr. Myers:

In reply to your letter regarding the future of the Waterford School, I want to go on record as saying that I think the Waterford Community Citizens Association is an organization that can work for many fine improvements in Waterford. My first experience with this group, however, is that it is proceeding in the matter of the school problem on the basis of assumed facts rather than on the basis of known facts. In fact, there is no problem at all. Not a single major community in Loudoun County is in danger of losing its elementary school, and that includes Waterford.

The school in this community has been and still is an important asset to the community. It will continue to be unless its usefulness is undermined by ill-advised and unconfirmed rumors or unless it is turned over to that type of self-centered citizenry whose sole object is operating it as a dance hall or "drink-fest". My sincere hope is that the citizens of this town will always refuse to allow the use of school premises for purposes that tend to undermine and destroy character rather than build cultural appreciations.

Your statement regarding the "better type of citizen" is true, as far as many communities are concerned, but it seems to me that an influx of people whose primary interests are centered only on the "social assets" without regard for religion or morality is not a desirable influx. My definition of the "better type of citizen" is that he is one who is actively concerned that all of the social agencies of his community function to the best of their ability to make the place where he lives a well-rounded and coordinated social unit where he and his family may live and grow in an educational and social environment characteristic of democratic living. This means that the home, the school, the church, cultural activities, work, etc., will each have its proper place in the scheme of things. While this may be called by some "idealism", and while it may sound like such, it is really a practical program for community success and attractiveness. It prevents citizens from becoming lopsided.

I believe you are taking the wrong approach in casting aspersions on the integrity of the superintendent of schools in the third paragraph of your letter, unless you have factual proof for such assertions. Does it sound logical to you for a school board to be willing to make as many improvements to our school and be negotiating to purchase additional property for it if plans called for its removal? Do you actually believe that with school conditions as crowded as they are in many communities that any elementary school in this county can be closed? In five more years the beginning school population will be nearly tripled! And if there are 50 people in the Waterford community who are so desperately concerned now about the preservation of the Waterford School, where have they been keeping themselves these past several years when the P.T.A. has been having its regular meetings?

Has your executive committee studied the many educational reports that have been made? Have you read the findings of the Denny Commission and are you well-versed on the current study and subsequent recommendations that will be made to Governor Tuck regarding the school situation in Virginia by the Moses Commission? All of these things will affect the Waterford School and every other school in the state. Are you acquainted with the fact that Loudoun County is one of the top counties in the matter of teachers salaries?

If I had before me a signed official statement from the school board that the Waterford School would be closed, then I think I would consider it an official act. In the absence of such a statement, I am willing to rely on the good faith of the superintendent of schools when he says that there is no plan under consideration to close any elementary school in Loudoun County. Mr. Emerick is more familiar with the school situation here than any other person and he is considered one of the outstanding division superintendents by state officials. His opinions and suggestions are highly regarded in state educational circles, and he, on the other hand, is guided and directed in his policies by the recommendations of the State Board of Education. My conversations with him in the past two weeks confirm my sincere convictions that he does not intend to alter the elementary school set-up in this county.

Further, government bureaus do not have the information you need for Loudoun County. Members of your organization should visit the schools in this county and see for themselves what is going on. My suggestions to your group would be as follows:

1. Know the facts before making public statements. Verify these for accuracy.
2. Work in cooperation with the County School Board and the Division Superintendent in bringing about for Waterford and for the County a constructive broadening school program that will anticipate our future needs.
3. Dismiss idle rumors and spend less time on resolutions. Visits to schools and frank friendly discussions with the Division Superintendent will help to clear up many misunderstandings and clear the atmosphere of conclusions based on prejudicial thinking.

You are already familiar with my long-standing interest in the educational welfare of Loudoun County. Without giving the impression of boasting, let me call your attention to the fact that I have made careful and accurate studies of the whole educational program in Virginia as well as of Loudoun County, and am in contact with current movements and policies as they are being formulated. You are trying to fight a problem that does not exist and I cannot see what there is to be gained by insisting that a threat to close the school here exists when there is no such threat. There is no person in your organization qualified to claim the existence of such a situation until he has thoroughly examined all of the facts in the case and has proof beyond a shadow of a doubt. The truth and accuracy of the statements in which your organization professes belief, need to be considerably strengthened by the true facts — or better — to be discarded in favor of the true facts. I express my thanks for the opportunity to give my views.

Sincerely yours,

Stanley E. Emerick

SEE/wg

Mr. Emerick:

I meant to send this along with the letter I mailed to you. Thought you would like to see my reply.

S.E. Emrich