



PRAIRIE GROVE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 46

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To: Board of Education
From: Dr. Bute, Superintendent
Date: October 2025
RE: McHenry County Mutual Aid Agreement (McAid)

Background

Over the last couple of years, the Regional Office of Education and the county-wide superintendent's organization have been reviewing and discussing responses to large-scale crises. We came to the conclusion that should a large-scale crisis occur at or near one of the schools in the county, then the resources of any one school or district may be too thin to appropriately support all of the students and staff that are impacted by the crisis.

We agreed to discuss a county-wide mutual aid agreement similar to those agreements that are entered into by fire departments when they leave one jurisdiction and provide assistance in a neighboring jurisdiction. Entering a mutual aid agreement provides several key benefits, especially in contexts like emergency response, healthcare, utilities, or even cybersecurity. Here are some of the reasons why the ROE and school district are proposing such an agreement:

1. Resource Sharing in Times of Need
 - a. No single school or district has unlimited resources.
 - b. When one group is overwhelmed (e.g., during a disaster or large-scale event), others can provide support—personnel, equipment, supplies, etc.
 - c. Emergency readiness is expensive.
 - d. Sharing resources reduces the need for each party to own and maintain a full inventory of costly assets that may be rarely used.
2. Faster Response to Emergencies
 - a. Speed saves lives and prevents damage.
 - b. Nearby partners can respond more quickly than state or federal entities, especially in the critical early hours of an incident.
 - c. Trust and familiarity improve cooperation.
 - d. Regular collaboration and planning enhance interoperability and reduce confusion during actual events.
3. Legal and Liability Protections
 - a. Crossing jurisdictions can create legal grey areas.
 - b. Formal agreements clarify roles, responsibilities, cost recovery, and liability, reducing legal risks for all parties.

- c. Many industries or governments require mutual aid plans.
- d. Having agreements in place can help comply with state, federal, or industry regulations (e.g., FEMA).

Recommendation

A mutual aid agreement is about building resilience—it's a proactive strategy to ensure that help is available when it's needed most. It promotes collaboration, efficiency, and safety across agencies or organizations. It is recommended to be approved as presented.