Palmyra-Macedon Central School District
Transition to the Future: Public Information Document
October 29, 2026

The Board of Education is considering recommendations for a long-term sustainability plan designed to protect the Pal-Mac educational experience for years to come.

Thank you to those who have provided feedback. All form submissions have been shared with the Board of Education in their entirety. Much of the feedback submitted related to Recommendation C. Should the Board approve the transition recommendations, the provided feedback will assist in the transition planning stages.

This document is intended to address themes from the feedback, provide further information, provide essential context regarding financial and historical realities, and outline the phases of transition planning.

How We Got Here

For generations, the Palmyra-Macedon Central School District has operated with a commitment to delivering high-quality educational opportunities for every learner while serving as a responsible steward of public resources. A combination of fiscal pressures and steady demographic shifts has brought the District to a critical crossroads. Understanding how Pal-Mac arrived at this moment, and why significant changes are recommended, involves examining the divergence between state aid allocations, local operating costs, and student enrollment trends.

For many years, the District's budgets remained stable. New York State's Foundation Aid increases combined with relatively low inflation meant that revenue streams were adequate to support operational growth. However, several distinct structural dynamics were aligning to create a compounding financial deficit.

First is a steady demographic decline. Pal-Mac's K–12 enrollment has now dropped to its lowest levels since the early 1950s. While lower student numbers might suggest lower costs, many of a school district's fixed operational expenses required to maintain a fixed square footage of facilities, core support, technology, and infrastructure remain essentially unchanged regardless of whether a building houses 450 or 350 students.

Second are inflation and rising expenses which are not unique to Pal-Mac. For instance, like many schools in the region, the district's health insurance premiums have increased by 9% or more annually in each of the past 6 years. Furthermore, cumulative state statutory minimum wage increases of 78% over the past decade pushed up operational costs across all service classifications. The increase in the Consumer Price Index has averaged +4.5% annually over the past 5 years.

Third is that New York State Aid increases have not kept pace with those rising costs. More than half of Pal-Mac's annual operating revenue comes directly from New York State school aid,

primarily Foundation Aid. In recent years, however, state aid allocations have completely decoupled from actual operating inflation. Over the three-year period spanning the 2024-2025 through 2026-2027 school years, Pal-Mac's New York State Foundation Aid allocation saw increases averaging only +1.3% annually.

In stark contrast, New York State's own State Operating Funds Budget increases averaged 8.8% annually over that same three-year period. The State Aid shortfall for schools has come despite school leadership's legislative outreach, and despite the Pal-Mac community's letter-writing advocacy efforts. New York State's adopted budgets have included even less Foundation Aid than the legislature's one-house budget bill proposals. The District's Foundation Aid has not been a priority in New York State's budget, and there are no indications to expect that to change.

On April 7, 2026 the Board of Education directed the Superintendent to study the District's long-term sustainability and identify options to address projected structural budget deficits. Inclusive of prior years of planning, board presentations, board reports, stakeholder feedback, the District subsequently undertook a review of its educational programs, organizational structures, facilities, enrollment trends, and opportunities for long-term sustainability, resulting in the development of a sustainability plan.

On September 8, 2026, the Superintendent presented to the Board of Education the report entitled *Strategic Options Plan for Long-Term Fiscal Sustainability*, framing the challenge and identifying options which prioritize the preservation of the District's core educational mission and provide a framework for sustainable, long-term fiscal health.

On September 11, 2026, a copy of *Planning Today for a Strong Pal-Mac Tomorrow* was mailed to each Pal-Mac household outlining the plan, describing the timeline, and describing how to learn more.

On October 6, 2026, the Superintendent presented to the Board of Education the report entitled *Transition to the Future: Report and Recommendations to the Board of Education*, outlining nine recommendations intended to preserve educational opportunities, strengthen organizational effectiveness, and support the District's long-term sustainability.

Campus consolidation has been part of the District's long-term planning for nearly two decades, namely:

- In 2007, the Superintendent conducted entry plan interviews and heard from many at Pal-Mac who advocated for review of possible consolidation of schools to be housed on one main campus.
- The 2013 Facility Improvement Committee recommended that the District investigate the viability of long-term consolidation of all Pal-Mac facilities onto a single campus in order to provide maximum opportunity for our students and maximum efficiency for our taxpayers. The Board of Education issued a press release in August 2013 regarding the Committee's recommendations.

- In 2014 the Board of Education surveyed the community regarding campus consolidation and appointed a Campus Consolidation & Facility Improvement Committee to conduct a year-long, in-depth study of potential campus consolidation.
- The 2014-2015 Campus Consolidation Committee recommended that the District consider partial consolidation onto two campuses or full consolidation onto one campus - particularly if the District could acquire additional contiguous real property.
- In 2015-2016, following deliberations in executive session, the Board made above-market value purchase offers to owners of land that would allow access from Hyde Parkway campus to Yellow Mills Road or to Stafford Road. Neither owner was interested in selling and it was determined that acquisition of adjacent real property that would allow most direct access to Yellow Mills Road or Stafford Road would not be an option for the foreseeable future.
- In 2016, the Board reported to the community that, in the absence of additional real property, full consolidation onto a single campus was not feasible based on the circumstances at that time, that the district would focus on the need for facility improvements at existing buildings in the short term, and that partial consolidation was still an option in the near future.
- In 2017, the Superintendent again conducted interviews and people expressed positive support for campus consolidation.
- Between 2014-2023, the topic of campus consolidation repeatedly appeared in annual Reports to the Community, State of the School addresses, and in Board of Education meeting agendas.
- In 2023 the Board of Education adopted the Blueprint for Action Plan 2023-2030, which had been based on community and stakeholder input, and which identified as priorities a comprehensive educational program, an engaging student experience, and offering students increased opportunities for success.

The Transition to the Future recommendations are designed to maintain and advance a superior learning model, to foster long-term fiscal sustainability, and to enhance organizational flexibility and readiness.

These recommendations are intentionally structured proactively to avoid the harsh alternatives of eliminating student programs, increasing taxes significantly, or both.

By taking deliberate action from a position of strength today, Palmyra-Macedon ensures that it continues to shape its own destiny, protecting the Red Raider educational experience for generations to come.

Recommendation A: Keep Tax Levy Increases Within Tax Levy Limits

Recommendation A reaffirms the District's commitment to responsible financial stewardship and re-establishes a historically guiding principle for future decisions rather than proposing a new operational initiative. It does not recommend freezing the tax levy or eliminating the Board's annual discretion in establishing a proposed budget. Rather, it recognizes that significant tax increases should not be the primary strategy for addressing long-term sustainability. Pal-Mac

has a responsibility to taxpayers while maintaining the educational opportunities that our community expects and students deserve.

Recommendation B: Preserve Core Student Programs
This recommendation is central to the entire sustainability plan, which prioritizes the preservation of the District's core educational mission. The primary goal is to preserve and strengthen the educational opportunities available to Pal-Mac students.

This recommendation rejects the assumption that financial challenges must first be resolved by eliminating electives, increasing class sizes, reducing student support services, or limiting extracurricular opportunities. Using those tools as the primary measure often results in negative outcomes for students and communities.

This does not mean that every program or practice will remain unchanged. Educational programs should continually evolve to meet student needs. It does mean that preserving meaningful student opportunities should remain a priority in the District's decision-making.

Recommendation C: Transition to a Three-Building Instructional Model
The proposed transition to a three-building instructional model involves three distinct phases:
Phase 1: Establishing the Direction. The Board considers whether organizing students into three instructional buildings is in the best long-term educational interests of the District.
Phase 2: Planning for Implementation. Once the Board establishes direction, the Superintendent will direct District staff in the development of a plan to oversee the implementation of this instructional configuration, including the educational, operational, personnel, facilities, and logistical planning necessary for such transition, consistent with applicable laws, regulations, collective bargaining agreements, and Board policies. In addition, a team of students, parents, and staff will review feedback and assist in planning the transition.
Phase 3: Determine use of the West Street property.

Much of the feedback submitted relates to Phase 2 and will be preserved for consideration during implementation planning rather than attempting to answer them prematurely.

<u>Theme: Why a three-building model?</u>
The recommendation to transition to three instructional buildings is grounded primarily in how we can best organize educational opportunities for students through geographic, developmental, and professional proximity.

The idea of partial or full campus consolidation has been an ongoing theme at Pal-Mac since at least 2007. The 2013 Facility Improvement Committee recommended that the District investigate the viability of long-term consolidation of all Pal-Mac facilities onto a single campus in order to provide maximum opportunity for our students and maximum efficiency for our taxpayers. The 2014-2015 Campus Consolidation Committee recommended that the District

consider partial consolidation onto two campuses or full consolidation onto one campus. In 2016 the Board decided not to pursue full single-campus consolidation in the immediate future. As described in a September 2016 *Finger Lakes Times* article, "...the board has not ruled out a 'partial consolidation' in the near future. Partial consolidation, said the superintendent, 'refers to possibilities such as utilizing existing buildings in different ways or for different purposes and/or utilizing an existing building to house a larger grade-level span.'"

Enrollment declines have now made partial consolidation feasible, as previously recommended.

Currently, Pal-Mac operates four instructional buildings. Three of those buildings are located in close proximity on the Hyde Parkway and Canandaigua Street campuses, while the fourth is located at 4 West Street in Macedon.

The recommended configuration would be:

- Primary School, 120 Canandaigua Street: Grades PK-2
- Intermediate School, 163 Hyde Parkway: Grades 3-6
- High School, 151 Hyde Parkway: Grades 7-12

This arrangement offers several educational and operational advantages. Bringing the instructional program for 10 grade levels together on a common campus creates possibilities including but not limited to greater opportunities for collaboration among educators, shared resources, more efficient scheduling, student interventions, enrichment, sharing of substitute services, and access to specialized facilities.

Proximity is a significant advantage. Rather than maintaining four separate instructional operations, we can organize our schools in a way that supports greater flexibility, coordination and maximizes the use of the three facilities, personnel and resources.

This configuration offers meaningful educational and organizational advantages to best organize the school around geographic, professional, and developmental proximity to serve students now and into the future.

<u>Theme: Centrality and Unity</u>
When the Palmyra-Macedon Central School District was formed in 1950, it was not a merger of two school districts, Palmyra and Macedon. It was a centralization of 15 small school districts in the towns of Farmington, Macedon, Manchester, Palmyra, and Walworth. The Hyde Parkway campus happens to be uniquely situated in 3 municipalities - overlapping the borders of the Town of Palmyra, the Village of Palmyra, and the Town of Macedon. Recommendation C would house 10 grade levels at the Hyde Parkway campus.

<u>Theme: Facility Capacities</u>
Even with grades 3-12 all on the Hyde Parkway campus, that campus would still have fewer students in 2027-2028 than were on the Hyde Parkway campus from 1970-1988 and from

1995-2010. Ongoing residential development has had a negligible impact on student enrollment. If actual enrollments were 10-15% greater than projected, then enrollment on the Hyde Parkway campus would be similar to that of the late 1990s on that campus.

Theme: Why now?

Declining enrollment has now made consolidation possible, even without acquiring additional real property or constructing building additions. The 2014-2015 Campus Consolidation & Facility Improvement Committee recommended that the Board consider consolidation to 1 or 2 campuses. Now, more than a decade later, it has become a practical reality.

The timeline for study was critical in order to meet the tight demands of New York State for school budgeting and allowing some study recommendations to be implemented for the 2027-2028 budget plan.

A significant portion of district personnel are expected to become eligible for retirement over the next 4 years - including a third of faculty and about half of administrators. Consolidating into 3 buildings now allows the district the opportunity to reshape its workforce organically over time. Faculty retirement letters are typically submitted beginning in December and January for the following school year. Establishing the consolidation direction now allows for the necessary time to plan ahead. Early clarity ensures that school leaders can evaluate each incoming retirement or departure with the new three-building structure, maximizing opportunities to absorb positions in the coming years. Operating three instructional buildings instead of four gives the District the capability to adjust staffing smoothly when specific positions are vacated, without compromising student support.

The recommendation to implement the three-building instructional model effective July 1, 2027, reflects an opportunity to move forward thoughtfully and with a clear direction. Prolonged uncertainty can have unintended consequences for staff, students, families, and organizational culture. The Board's decision does not conclude the planning process. It initiates the next phase of that process.

Theme: Staffing, attrition, and preserving our workforce

The recommendation emphasizes managing staffing adjustments thoughtfully and relying on attrition whenever practical. Attrition refers to staffing changes that occur through retirements, resignations, and other naturally occurring vacancies. The intention is to continue to align staffing with enrollment and educational needs. The three-building model creates opportunities to better coordinate staffing in building operations and administrative responsibilities.

The recommendation does not establish specific staffing reductions or individual personnel assignments.Those decisions require additional planning and must consider student needs, certification requirements, collective bargaining agreements, and other applicable obligations. Our employees are among the District's greatest assets. The goal is to maintain a strong workforce while creating an organizational structure that is sustainable for the future.

Staff layoffs involve implications for both the individuals and the District. Employees face the loss of income and professional community, while the District incurs unemployment costs. The three-building instructional model provides the greatest likelihood that students are least affected and staffing reductions are made through naturally-occurring vacancies rather than through layoffs of existing employees.

Theme: Financial questions regarding the transition

There are potential long-term efficiencies associated with operating three instructional buildings in close proximity, including more coordinated staffing, scheduling, building operations, and resource utilization. Those opportunities are real considerations, but the exact financial implications will depend on decisions made during implementation over the course of years.

It would be premature to assign precise financial values to individual components of the transition. Doing so would require assumptions about future staffing, facility use, scheduling, and other operational matters that have not yet been finalized; it would also divert staff time and energy away from our primary mission of educating students.

The financial purpose is not about the certainty of savings in any one particular year. If the Board verifies the vision and direction now, then 2027-2028 budget planning can begin with that in mind. And, every time there's a resignation or retirement over the next few years, the district will have more options regarding staffing and possible reductions through attrition.

Theme: Logistical Details

Specific operational details regarding the transition to a three-building model, such as instructional spaces, student experience, staffing & personnel, transportation, traffic patterns, daily operations, transition activities and school schedules will rely on confidence in the professional judgment of district staff as they are resolved during the upcoming implementation planning phase. Should the Board approve this recommendation, the Superintendent would lead District staff in plan development and communication.

Recommendation D: Consider a Policy for Tuition-Based Enrollment

Recommendation D does not propose that Pal-Mac immediately begin accepting tuition-paying students. It recommends that the Board Policy Committee, in consultation with legal counsel, consider whether such a policy would be appropriate at that time.

The recommendation recognizes that Pal-Mac offers educational programs and opportunities that may be attractive to families residing outside the District. A carefully designed policy could allow limited nonresident enrollment when existing class sizes, staffing, and program capacity permit. The primary objective would be to generate additional revenue without creating significant new expenditures or diminishing opportunities for resident students.

Recommendation E: Comprehensive Review of Special Education and Student Support Services

Special education and student support services are related and should be examined together within the comprehensive review. Support services are what are coined “related services” within the special education realm. These services include psychological services, speech therapy, music therapy, vision services, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

Special education encompasses the teachers, assistants, aides, programs, and placements provided to students with disabilities in accordance with applicable laws and individualized educational needs.

Pal-Mac has a strong history of providing innovative and supportive programs. This recommendation is not intended to suggest otherwise. However, the existence of longstanding practices does not eliminate the value of periodically examining their effectiveness.

The review would consider the ongoing relevance and impact of current services including existing consortium, student outcomes, staffing arrangements, program delivery, and opportunities for improvement. It would also examine alignment of current programs and whether certain services might be provided more effectively within the District or through external partnerships. The review would include technical assistance and support from Special Education Quality Assurance Western Regional Unit to obtain positive results for students with disabilities.

The review should be informed by research, longitudinal student data, professional expertise, and appropriate regional resources. Findings and any proposed changes would be presented for consideration through appropriate District processes.

Recommendation F: Review Every Course and Program for Student Value

Pal-Mac has an established practice of reviewing its courses, programs, schedules, and instructional opportunities. School leaders regularly examine student participation, educational effectiveness, and opportunities for improvement. Recommendation F is intended to build upon that work rather than create an entirely new or duplicative process. The recommendation encourages us to consider how programs are organized and delivered, particularly as we plan for the future. For example, changes to scheduling, grade-level organization, or regional partnerships may create opportunities that are not possible under our current structure.

A course with limited enrollment may remain extraordinarily valuable. The question is whether we are delivering that opportunity in the most effective way. This work should continue as part of our regular instructional leadership and planning responsibilities.

Recommendation F reaffirms the District's commitment to instructional oversight and re-establishes a guiding principle for future decisions rather than proposing a new operational initiative.

Recommendation G: Continue to Align Staffing With Enrollment and Student Needs
The District regularly evaluates staffing through annual budget development, enrollment projections, retirements, resignations, succession planning, and changing student needs. Recommendation G reinforces that responsibility while emphasizing a longer-term perspective. The three-building model creates opportunities to rethink how personnel and responsibilities are organized across the District. Staffing alignment is an ongoing responsibility.

The District should not automatically replace every vacant position exactly as it existed previously. Instead, the District should ask what organizational structure will best serve students moving forward. At times, that may mean combining responsibilities or redesigning a position. At other times, it may mean adding or maintaining staffing to meet emerging student needs.

Recommendation H: Participate Fully in the Wayne-Finger Lakes Regional Optimization Study
The study provides an opportunity for participating school districts to explore how educational programs and services might be organized more effectively across district boundaries.

This work is grounded in a recognition that many districts are experiencing similar challenges involving enrollment, staffing, educational opportunities, and long-term sustainability. The purpose is to examine how school districts can work together to expand or preserve opportunities for students.

Potential areas of exploration include shared instructional programs, specialized courses, distance learning, shared personnel, expanded BOCES partnerships, and coordinated regional scheduling. Pal-Mac already has a strong history of using regional partnerships to expand opportunities for students. The regional study offers an opportunity to build upon that history.

The possibility of formal district reorganization or merger is a potential long-term consideration. It is not a current recommendation to merge Pal-Mac with another district.

It is not recommended to delay Pal-Mac's own sustainability decisions while awaiting the results of regional planning. The two efforts are complementary, not dependent upon one another.

Recommendation I: Develop a Long-Term Plan for 4 West Street in Partnership With the Town of Macedon
Recommendation C concerns where and how we organize student instruction. Recommendation I concerns the future use of a valuable community asset at 4 West Street. These are related recommendations, but they are not the same decision. The recommendation is not to close the West Street building, abandon the property, or immediately sell it. Rather, it is to transition our regular instructional programs into a more coordinated three-building model while exploring new possibilities for the West Street property.

For more than a century, the building has served the Pal-Mac community. Taxpayers have invested in that property over approximately 102 years. It is appropriate to ask how that investment might continue benefiting the community in new ways.

The Town of Macedon is a natural potential partner. Macedon Recreation already makes substantial use of the building. There is opportunity to explore a more comprehensive partnership that could be beneficial to the community. This could include expanded recreational opportunities, community education, youth and family programming, municipal services, and other services that benefit residents of all ages. The building could also potentially accommodate BOCES programs, other educational services, or appropriate community organizations through leasing or shared-use arrangements.

If approved by the Board the Superintendent would be directed to explore opportunities for the continued educational, recreational, municipal, and community use of the District-owned property located at 4 West Street in Macedon, New York. Such exploration would include a study committee to be appointed by the Board of Education, consideration of potential partnerships with the Town of Macedon, including Macedon Recreation, BOCES, and other appropriate public or community organizations, as well as possible shared-use, leasing, and alternative programming arrangements.

This is not a commitment to any one particular arrangement. It is a recommendation to explore what might be possible.

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These recommendations are designed to help the District:

- Protect our core educational Mission, Vision, and Core Values
- Maintain and expand opportunities for students
- Foster long-term financial sustainability

We have an opportunity to protect what matters most and keep our promise to students for years to come. Adapting to change is not new to us. We will do this together to leave Pal-Mac stronger for the next generation.