

May 27, 2004

Dear Committee Members,

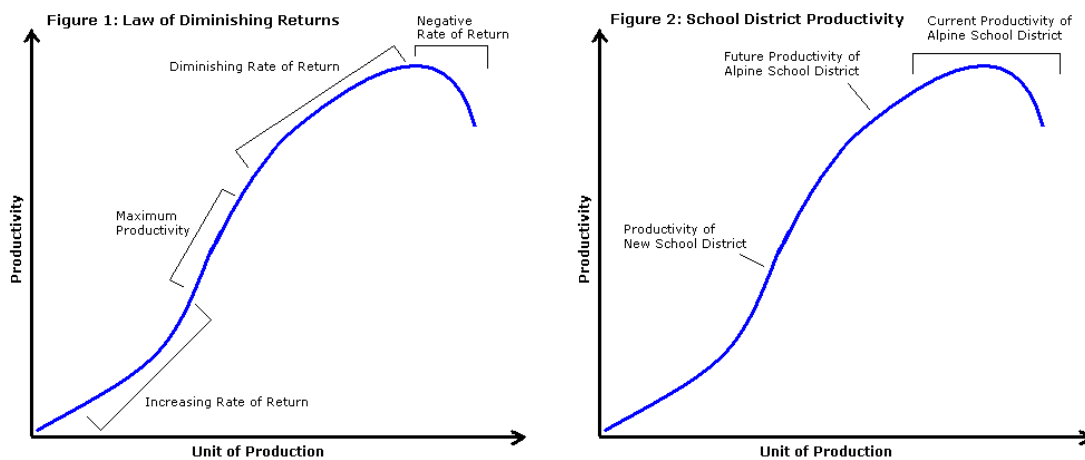
On my behalf, and that of all sponsors of this petition, we want to thank you for your efforts on preparing this important feasibility study. We appreciate your thorough efforts and are grateful for this opportunity to express our opinions on this matter.

In this letter I will share the main four reasons why I sponsored this petition to create a separate school district for the Lehi, Saratoga Springs, Eagle Mountain area.

First, many fellow citizens and I desire a new, smaller school district in order to gain more personal control over our children's education. The current boundaries of the Alpine School District are so large the voice of a single citizens get largely diluted among the many other voices and interests. The result is a general detachment between the school district officers and parents. This creates a feedback loop (a vicious cycle): as citizen involvement diminishes, the school district reacts by providing more services without parents' input, which in turn generates more feelings of disfranchisement and results in less citizen involvement. While gathering signatures for this petition, I was even surprised at the prompt willingness of almost everyone I approached to sign the petition (I estimate a 98% positive response among those I approached). Most of them express some form of frustration at the unresponsiveness of the Alpine School District due to its large size. I believe that the smaller proposed school district will promote citizen involvement, increase parents' control over their children's education, and enhance relationships between school district officials and parents.

Second, a smaller school district will help us in our communities to focus on better management of limited resources. One of the tactics used by those who oppose to the proposed division is to claim that the small school district will not have an adequate tax base to offer all the necessary services and programs. They claim that only by keeping the huge tax base of the Alpine School District will the needs of new communities such as Eagle Mountain and Saratoga Springs be met. This is just a scare tactic and please let me explain by drawing on an analogy. When Saratoga Springs was just a development its citizens could have chosen to incorporate with Lehi or to form their own city. Some may have feared that such a small community, without any businesses, could not even provide for the essential services, let alone for desirable civic services. However, the great majority decided to establish a new city and elected wise city managers who build the community with a zero debt policy. It is true that the city offices have been housed in a trailer, and that we do not yet have a city library, but taxes have not been raised, essential services have been amply provided, and Saratoga Springs remains in the black. This is the type of resource management the citizens in our communities have come to expect. This is not a matter of raising more taxes; it is a matter of applying good management. I believe that the new school district will have more than sufficient resources to provide for all the necessary academic programs and we will have the opportunity to better focus our limited resources.

Third, dividing the school districts as proposed will increase productivity of school district administrative personnel. One of the best-proven laws of Economics is the law of diminishing returns. This law describes the marginal rate of return per added production unit. The well-known s-shape curve shows how productivity changes as more resources are added to an organization (see Fig. 1). To maximize economic productivity, organizations should strive to function right at the inflection point maximizing productivity. It is a well-documented phenomenon that large bureaucratic organizations, such as the current Alpine School District, usually function at the diminishing or negative rate of return part of this curve. The best strategy to increase productivity is to split these organizations. By dividing the school district as petitioned, the new school district will have an opportunity to function as a highly productive organization and it will give a chance for the remaining Alpine School District to increase productivity too (see Fig. 2).



Fourth, the new school district will be more focused on academic achievement. As I was gathering signatures for this petition, one of the most often expressed wishes from my fellow citizens was their desire for the school district to stay focused on academics. From the instructional point of view, it is the natural tendency of large educational organizations to expand their sphere of influence: with more resources at their disposal and more diverse interests to satisfy, it is easy to lose focus and attempt to be everything for everyone. Research and standardized test results show that smaller school districts, with limited resources, outperform larger ones in academic achievement. The proposed new school district will enhance the students' academic performance by staying focused on its core academic interest.

Again, I thank you for your good work and analysis and for the opportunity to share our reasons for sponsoring this important petition.

Yours truly,

Pablo J. Riboldi, PhD