To Whom It May Concern:

As a new member of the Caledonia/Franksville area in 2004, my husband and I were astounded at the choices of Middle Schools available to our two children at that time. We had relocated from Upstate New York and had assumed that by purchasing a home in the Franksville area our school district would be modern and safe. After visiting the district administration offices and touring Gilmore Middle School, it became apparent that we would need to make other arrangements.

Our tour of the school was filled with the use of foul language in the hallways, unappropriate dress by young students and a general feeling that my children, who had grown up in a small, close knit community would not be safe. Our move to Wisconsin was made as a result of my husband illnesses (Agent Orange Exposure). We felt the need to be closer to a VA facility and his family in Upper Michigan and were encouraged by the apparent prosper of the area. After paying nearly $200,000 for our home, we did not anticipate nor appreciate having to pay private school tuition for our two children. Along with this came the need for me to transport my children either to school or to a bus stop, both a huge inconvenience to me at the time.

After middle school, our financial situation and my husband's continued health decline forced us to consider the use of Case High School in Racine. Although this decision was made with much apprehension, at the time it was the only choice we had. Both of my children attended Case High School and were at times subjected to bullying and an unsafe enviroment. Because we were very actively involved, these situations were not allowed to get out of hand. Both of my children graduated at the top of their classes and were accepted into top colleges. I do not consider this an accomplishment of the education provided at school, but rather what we provided at home.

Sadly, my children would return from school with horror stories about what went on during the day, much of what they would not have been exposed to in a smaller, more controlled school district. Upon entering college, my daughter, who graduated with a 4.4 GPA and my son who graduated with a 4.3 GPA both struggled with their classes. This was not due to their lack of dedication to their studies, but rather the inability of the school district to prepare them for higher education. I foolishly assumed that the IB curricular and upper level classes would have accomplished this. How is this possible when you have a child who graduated at the top of their class for them to struggle with continuing education? Thankfully with much tutoring and training, both have and continue to be successful in college and medical school. I am not against the RUSD, however, we should not be forced to remain a part of a district that holds our children's futures in their hands. Our property values continue to suffer as a result of our school district.

In my neighborhood, we have about 15 children, none of whom attend RUSD. What does this tell you? The recent passage of the referendum, although necessary, does little to appease our conscious. So the district will expand Gifford to include a middle school. This is only being done to quiet the efforts of Caledonia residents to form their own district.  This is our community and our property and the choice of school district should be up to us. Never will the Board of Education vote to allow us to seperate from RUSD. Look around, no other small communities are required to be a part of a large, failing district. Imagine the outcry if communities such as Oak Creek were forced to become part of the Milwaukee School District. We have worked hard and accomplished much to secure nice homes and a nice enviroment for our children, along with this comes the responsibility and obligation to provide a good educational enviroment.

Sincerely,

Wallace and Linda Maske