

Dear Pioneer Community:

I have been reading with interest the stories in the Arcade Herald regarding the 50th anniversary of the Pioneer School District. It is hard to believe that 50 years have passed since the beginning of the model for merged school districts was formed. Even harder to believe is that I participated in school board decisions for 38 of those 50 years! I can honestly say that those were the most rewarding times of my life. It was rewarding to see the growth and progress our students made when they were able to go to a variety of colleges or universities due to a rigorous academic program and to be successful and competitive students. It was rewarding to see our students become gainfully employed due to a vocational education that prepared them for many different careers. I still read the Herald with interest to see what “our kids” are doing and have done. Becoming a merged district was the best decision our community ever made. It allowed us to have the best facilities at minimal cost to our community. By being a larger district, our students had the opportunity for many more options than small districts can provide. We were also able to attract the best teachers and administrators because of our excellent reputation and opportunities. Although the economy in Western New York has suffered over the past years, Pioneer has never offered less than a quality education to our children in order to give them the best available anywhere. We may not have always ranked high, but the real proof was in how successful our students were when they left us. I was always proud of our reputation when I attended state and national conferences.

Although I will not be personally able to attend any of the festivities and celebrations, my heart will be with you. Congratulations to everyone who has made the last 50 years a success and best wishes to those who will make the next 50 years even better.

Sincerely,

Heinke Lillenstein, Pioneer and BOCES Board member 1978 to 2015