



# Geneseo High School

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Date: 3-20-09

To: The Geneseo Board of Education

From: Steve Scherer

Re: Proposal

This is a proposal for the Geneseo Board of Education to formally adopt a musical Alma Mater for Geneseo High School

Alma Mater: The school or university from which one graduated. The term also refers to a school's official song: "The graduation began with everyone singing the alma mater." From Latin, meaning "nurturing mother."

Most colleges and many high schools have an alma mater, a chorale-like song, sometimes a hymn, that professes appreciation and loyalty to that institution. The song is sung in a reverent manner at ceremonial times to reaffirm this loyalty. I have researched our school song, GHS, to learn that it is the only school song Geneseo has ever had, and that there has never been an alma mater. With Geneseo's historical traditions, I believe it would be appropriate to institute an Alma Mater for current students and alumni to be able to express their loyalty to their high school. This could be performed at times such as graduation, baccalaureate, at concerts, or during a football pregame.

Over the past four years I have explored numerous collegiate alma maters in an effort to select one to propose for our use. Based on my musical expertise, I have carefully selected a theme that best fits Geneseo High School. I heard the Western Illinois University Alma Mater for the first time this fall. It was written in 1930 but had fallen out of use until 1993 when it was revived. I have secured official permission from the university to adopt the song as Geneseo's Alma Mater. I have received a copy of the band arrangement which the Honors Band has rehearsed since January. I also received a copy of the four part choral arrangement and have adapted the lyrics to fit Geneseo. They are:

## GENESE0 LOYALTY

Geneseo, come together, learning life's new way to pave  
Paths before us, ever striving, Green and White, our colors brave

We all hold the keys within us, with new knowledge we will grow  
Stronger in our bond unyielding, truer to the world we know

Geneseo, Alma Mater, may we honor they fair name  
Geneseo, ever greater, never forget from whence we came

I have recorded the band playing the Alma Mater, and have a vocal quartet rehearsed and ready to perform. With your approval, I would like to bring the vocal quartet to the April board meeting to perform the piece to the band's recording, and present it for adoption by the school district.

When Bob Reade spoke at the dedication of the football field, I remember him re-stating his philosophy that if there isn't a tradition where you are, then start one. I related his comments to my desire to establish an Alma Mater here. We have many good traditions at Geneseo, but this is one that could act as a timeless bridge between our current students and alumni, as well as between the academics, arts, and athletics.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Scherer