

GREENWICH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Greenwich, Connecticut

Date of Meeting September 12, 2013

Title of Item: Facility Utilization and Racial Balance Update

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION OR PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION ITEMS

 Action required

 X **Informational only**

Submitted By Dr. William McKersie

Position Superintendent

I will be present at Board Meeting to explain if called upon

 X
Yes

No

Synopsis of Proposal: Please see the attached report: Update on Facility Utilization & Racial Balance Planning and Analysis.

Recommended Action:

Update on Facility Utilization & Racial Balance Planning and Analysis
William S. McKersie, Ph.D. Superintendent
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Background

At the August 29, 2013 Board of Education Meeting, the Superintendent and Administration presented a working proposal for how to address Facility Utilization & Racial Balance. The proposal outlines a long-term and multifaceted solution. It provides a problem statement, context explanation, larger strategic rationale, a specific approach and a detailed work plan. By design, the proposal highlights the next necessary steps to be detailed planning by a district-wide work group (of administrators, staff and parents) and site-specific work groups for each of the involved schools (these work groups also would include administrators, staff and parents).

The Board of Education (BOE) reviewed the proposal on August 29 and raised a series of questions. In turn, the Superintendent has organized the questions into seven issues for further analysis and explanation. The seven issues, framed as questions:

1. **How Do We Resolve Unique School Question?**
2. **What are the Educational Effects for Students in Concentrated vs. Diverse learning Environments?**
3. **What is the Benefit of a Flexible Enrollment Management System and How Does it Work?**
4. **What is the Correct Definition of a Magnet School and How Does it Encourage a Successful Choice Based System?**
5. **What is the Process for Designing or Strengthening Magnets and How Will the Community Be Involved?**
6. **What is the inventory of support programs within school and before or after school for Hamilton Avenue School and New Lebanon School?**
7. **What are the cost estimates for transportation options?**

At the September 12, 2013 BOE Work Session, the Superintendent and Administration will provide explanation and analysis on each of these questions. Background information for four of the issues (#1, 2, 6 and 7) is presented in this document. All other information will be presented verbally at the Work Session, with documentation to follow thereafter.

ISSUE #1: How Do We Resolve the Unique School Question?

1. The administration recommends that the BOE move quickly to resolve how to address the question of whether or not New Lebanon and Hamilton Ave qualify as “Unique Schools” as defined by the State of Connecticut. We hope that the BOE can determine at the September 12,

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2013 Work Session the specific next steps for obtaining an answer or ruling from the State Board of Education and Commissioner.

ISSUE#2: What are the Educational Effects for Students in Concentrated vs. Diverse Learning Environments?

The BOE seeks clarification, based on research and evidence of best practices, about what is known about the effects on learning of students being in schools with high concentrations of low-income students as opposed to schools with a diverse mix of socio-economic levels.

The Superintendent conducted a literature review and has arrived at a clear and definite conclusion. **Statistical and qualitative research strongly supports the conclusion that low-income students are far more likely to perform well academically in schools with diverse socio-economic levels than low-income students in schools with high concentrations of low-income students.** Concentrating low-income students with other low-income students dampens academic performance, even beyond which any extra investment of programs and interventions can overcome. Thus, the Greenwich Public Schools, to ensure the best educational opportunities for its low-income students, must arrive soon at solutions that reduce concentrations of low-income students.

Highlights of the literature review are presented below. The scholarly sources are diverse—in discipline and methodology—but come largely from a highly regarded compendium published in 2013 by Oxford University Press. Entitled *Closing the Opportunity Gap: What America Must Do to Give Every Child an Even Chance* (edited by Prudence Carter and Kevin Welner), the book assembled research-based essays from a wide-range of leading scholars to answer the essential question, “How to close the opportunity gap that leads to the achievement gap?”

Three essays are especially apt for the BOE’s question about concentration effects. I have provided a summary of key points for each essay. In several places I raise up “Big Cautions” for the GPS.

I. KEVIN WELNER and PRUDENCE CARTER – “Achievement Gaps Arise from Opportunity Gaps” (Welner is Professor of Educational Policy, University of Colorado Boulder; Carter is Associate Professor of Sociology, Stanford University and Co-Director of the Stanford Center for Educational Opportunity).

- Achievement gaps persist due to failure to adequately address the roots of the cause: opportunity gaps.
- Educational disparities and intergenerational economic inequality are highly correlated with skin color, ethnicity, linguistic and social class status.
 - The longer the lower-status groups have less access to opportunities, the more inequality has compounded the adverse effects.

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- OECD Study: US has among the lowest rate of intergenerational social mobility internationally and one of the highest rates (correlations) of influence of parental SES on student achievement and later earnings.
- National Statistics
 - HS Graduation Rate: 78 percent (2010) – Highest since 1976
 - Whites and Asians: 94 and 83 percent
 - Black and Latino: 66 and 71 percent
 - Dropout rates for Black and Latino more than double the national average
 - Failure Rates
 - 20 percent of AA will fail one grade in k-12, compared to 10 percent overall
 - College Prep Enrollment
 - One-third or less of AA, Latino and NA students
 - 50 percent for Asian and White
- *Big caution #1:*
 - “Narrow focus on the AG predictably leads to policies grounded in high stakes testing, which in turn leads to narrow thinking about groups of students, their teachers and their schools. While these assessments attempt to determine where students are, they ignore how they may have gotten there and what alternative pathways might be available for future students. Schools, principals and teachers are told they have no excuses and they will be held accountable for results. Similar pressure is exerted on students. This accountability, however, is rarely extended to those making the demands. Policymakers are not required to provide supports necessary for equitable learning opportunities, nor are they held accountable for the consequences of these tests...”
- *Big caution #2:*
 - Need to understand that, while the fair and sensible provision of educational resources among schools is absolutely necessary, it is not sufficient to cast out inequality. Sometimes the presumed effects of resource-rich schools are countervailed by other social factors. Racial, ethnic, class and gender dynamics that pervade the wider society permeate school walls with great ease.
 - Karolyn Tyson (Ch. 12) calls attention to the contradictions embedded in schools with more material resources:
 - Students of different social groups may attend “good” schools together, but the segregation that often occurs within them belies claims of equal opportunity.
 - In many schools, AA, Latino and NA students are rarely exposed to the upper-levels of college prep classes.
 - Interplay between the structure of tracking and student performance and behavior is powerful.

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II. GARY ORFIELD – “Housing Segregation Produces Unequal Schools: Causes & Solutions” (Orfield is Professor of Education, Law, Political Science & Urban Planning, UCLA.)

- Educational opportunity is directly and deeply connected to housing. Segregated neighborhoods linked to segregated schools produce unequal education.
- Segregation gains from 1960s-80s have been largely lost. Latino segregation in particular has increased.
- Vast majority of schools serving predominantly low income children of color offer worse education than White and Asian students typically receive.
 - Lower test scores
 - Higher dropout rates
 - Weaker college preparation
- Poor children are at greater risk of having developmental difficulties; chronic, untreated medical problems; and inadequate nutrition (Rothstein, Ch. 5)
- School compounds these inequities because they are deeply affected by social inequalities.
 - Most important variables for improvement:
 - Teacher quality
 - Student peer groups
 - Support for teachers and students
 - Curriculum
 - Level of Instruction
 - Teacher effectiveness and quality challenged by high concentration
 - Higher Turnover
 - Higher within district and public criticism
 - More inexperienced teachers
- Achievement Gap has widened, after years of narrowing
 - Declined from 1960s-80s
 - Little progress since
 - HS grad rate gap has narrowed
 - Latino-White achievement gap increased (Black-White has fallen slightly)
- Solutions
 - Unrestricted school choice plans often left minority schools totally segregated, as white populations selected out
 - Managed/Controlled Choice programs have been better, but many have been dropped due to Supreme Court rulings about race-based educational decisions.
 - Better: Magnet Schools with firm desegregation policies
 - Dropped due Supreme Court ending many desegregation plans (1991) and blocking desegregation controls (2007)

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III. RICHARD ROTHSTEIN (2013) – “Why Children from Lower Socioeconomic Classes, on Average, Have Lower Academic Achievement Than Middle-Class Children” (Rothstein is Research Associate at the Economic Policy Institute and Senior Fellow at the Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy at UC Berkley School of Law.)

- **Common View:** Many low-income children have been successful in school despite their family hardships. If these children can succeed, all should be able to do so. Thus, public schools must be failing if they produce large gaps in academic achievement between middle class white and low-income minority youth.
- **Problem with the Common View:** Suffers from a lack of sophistication about the academic and behavioral differences that are typically produced by social and economic differences.
 - Every human characteristic, despite wide distribution, has a central tendency or average.
 - It will also always be the case that, on average, lower-class children will achieve at lower levels than children from higher social classes. This is true in every industrialized country. On international tests, every country has an achievement gap comparable to the United States.
- If two groups of students attend equally high-quality schools, the group with lower SES will have lower average academic achievement than the more fortunate group. Each of the following well-documented social class differences has a palatable though small effect on academic achievement, but the cumulative effect explains much of the achievement gap:
 - Health matters: sight, diet, iron-deficiency anemia, toxins, asthma, pediatric care, stress
 - Affordable housing
 - Parents have less education
 - Parents work more transient and stressful
 - Dual income challenges
 - Different parenting styles and approaches
- *Big Caution #3: Concentrating Disadvantage*
 - The negative effects of lower social class are exacerbated when large numbers of disadvantaged students are concentrated in particular schools.
 - Remediation becomes the norm
 - Teachers have little time to challenge the exceptional students
 - Isolation of low-income black and Latino students has been increasing nationally.
 - Integrating these students into schools where more privileged students predominate is an essential prerequisite for narrowing achievement gaps and enhancing the opportunities for learning.

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- Poorly performing segregated schools cannot be turned around unless their isolation is addressed.
- In high poverty environments, the problems students bring to school are so overwhelming that policy should never be premised on the assumption that they could be overcome by even the most skilled and dedicated faculty. While schools can make a difference; they cannot erase the damage done by concentrated poverty.
- Bryk et al (2010) – Investigation of reform in Chicago Public Elementary Schools.
 - Schools that made a difference had well-developed and aligned curriculum, collaboration between teachers and principals, and involved parents and community.
 - But surprise: Well-designed programs made little or no difference in schools serving neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.
 - Bryk et al Conclusion: “Our findings about schooling in truly disadvantaged communities offering a sobering antidote to a heady political rhetoric arguing that all schools can be improved.”
- Statistical and qualitative studies document positive effects of school integration. Ranges from Gary Orfield to Eric Hanushek
 - Hanushek study in Texas on 4th-7th Grade Math Performance
 - Reducing black student concentration would not have a significant effect on white students and could reduce black-white achievement gap by 10 percentage points.
 - In literature review by Vigdor and Ludwig (2008) evidence strong that school segregation link to test score gap is compelling.
 - Montgomery County, MD Evidence (Powerful Example)
 - County purchased apartments in suburban DC, designated them for families eligible for public housing.
 - Families were randomly assigned
 - Allowed a scholar to track reading and math results in a quasi-experimental (randomized) study
 - Three-quarters of the students were African American
 - Results:
 - Students attending schools with fewer than 20 percent low income outperformed similar children from schools with higher concentrations.
 - Benefits of integration disappeared when concentration of low-income exceeded 35 percent
 - Ultimate point: Benefits of integration were far greater than the benefits of substantial additional resources in a more isolated school. (Schwartz, 2010)
- *Big Caution #4: No Success Sustained or at Scale*

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- What about claims that some schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged students have higher achievement?
- Certainly some schools do have higher achievement and should be imitated.
 - Remember, however: Always a distribution of human and institutional behavior, with exceptions outside of the average or typical.
- However, no schools serving high concentrations of low income students have demonstrated consistent and sustained improvement that closes—not just narrows—achievement gaps.
- Counter claims tend to be based on insufficient evidence:
 - Schools where have well-educated parents
 - Schools that filter students at point of entry
 - Schools that have concentrated on teaching to the test narrowly
 - Schools achieving success relative to low standards for proficiency
 - Charter school claims
 - Based on minimally proficient levels of success
 - Have not been sustained
 - Self-selection biases at work
 - Not serving truly comparable populations of students

To provide additional research perspective, we have attached to this update a two page briefing by the organization PSEA Education Services Division entitled, “Student Achievement is More than Academic.” The briefing, citing 17 different sources, concludes clearly that racial segregation impedes achievement and that racial integration matters for white and minority students.

ISSUE #6: What is the inventory of support programs within school and before or after school for Hamilton Avenue School and New Lebanon School?

The following question was submitted to the principals at Hamilton Avenue School, New Lebanon School, North Street School and Parkway School by Dr. McKersie:

Please send me a simple list of all before and after school programs that your schools have or participate in. And, if possible, please include a rough number of student participation. Programs would include those in your schools, as well as those provided by partner agencies, such as BANC, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Library, etc. You also should include any school vacation programs, such as February School (do not worry about summer vacation, however).

The principals responded with the following information:

Hamilton Avenue:

- Before School AM Literacy Tutorial - 60 - 65 students

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- Early Bird Morning Program - 15 students
- AFTERS' Program (PTA Sponsored) - 65 students
- After school Math Tutorial - 30 students
- After school Literacy Tutorial - 12 students
- YWCA - 8 students
- YMCA - 21 students
- Boys & Girls Club - 80 - 90 students
- CCI Homework Club (2x a week) - 15 students
- February Academy (3 days) - 30 students
- Girls Inc. - 13 girls

New Lebanon School:

- Befores – 40 students
- Afters – 45 students
- Boys and Girls Club – 40+ students
- Archibald (BANC) – 67 students
- YMCA – 12 students
- YWCA – 3 students
- Homework Club – 20+ students
- February School – 45 students
- CMT Prep / Math Facts – 60 students

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North Street School:

- Before classes- 42 students
- After classes- 205 students
- After school reading academy (CMT prep)- 44 students
- After school math academy (CMT prep)- 38 students
- Boys and Girls Club- 6 students
- YMCA- 1 student
- YWCA- 11 students
- NSS Mornings- 6 students

Parkway School:

- Before - 126 students
- After - 518 students
- Editorial Board – 15 Students
- Before School Remedial Support - Literacy - 12 students
- After School Math Tutorial -20 students
- After School Literacy Tutorial - 20 students

We can provide additional analysis of this information based on BOE questions.

ISSUE #7: What are the cost estimates for transportation options?

The Administration recommends that a Hub-Based System be instituted as part of a new school choice process. A Hub Stop would be established at Western Middle School and Central Middle Schools, with a dedicated bus running from each Hub to and from North Street School and Parkway School (IF they are determined to be new schools of choice).

It is difficult to estimate costs without particulars finalized. However, the following assumptions provide preliminary insights as to costs:

- The price per bus is approximately \$74,500. Each bus can transport 72 students to one school.
- For example, if New Lebanon will send students to Parkway and North Street that requires two buses.
- If you add Hamilton Avenue to Parkway and North Street, that would require an additional two buses.

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- TOTAL would be four buses @ \$74,500 EACH = \$298,000.



Student Achievement is More than Academic

Racial Segregation Across Schools

Racial Segregation Impedes Achievement. The Supreme Court knew that in 1954, when they found that racially segregated schools inherently deprive specific students the best opportunities to learn. Today, however, almost two-thirds of African-American children still go to schools that are “majority minority,” and about 4 of ten sit in classrooms that are 90 to 100 percent minority.¹ Latino students are the most segregated students of color in the country, with more than three-quarters attending majority-minority schools;² many Latino students live and go to school in such highly-segregated communities that they have very little exposure to English.³

Despite the Supreme Court decision and decades of local integration efforts that followed, K-12 public schools remain some of the most segregated institutions in the nation. Evidence is clear, however, that the Supreme Court got it right; racial segregation in schools drives inherently unequal outcomes, and integration is key to closing student achievement gaps. As educators develop programs and policies intended to close student achievement gaps, we must acknowledge the critical role that racial segregation plays in perpetuating inequality.

A large body of research documents the deleterious effects of segregation on the achievement of students of color. For example, even after controlling for family background variables, previous achievement, and peer effects, students assigned to elementary schools with a majority of African-American students are likely to end up with lower test scores, lower grade point averages, and lower placements in secondary school curricular tracks.⁴ Minority segregation in schools remains a significant predictor of low graduation rates, even when the effect of several other school indicators is controlled,⁵ and dropout levels rise as the level of minority segregation in a school increases.⁶

The negative impact of segregated schooling continues even after graduation; differences in wages earned by African-American adults from segregated and integrated schools are statistically significant even after controlling for student social and background characteristics.⁷ Segregated children grow into segregated adults who are uncomfortable in integrated settings, where most high-quality jobs and higher education opportunities reside.⁸

Education policymakers who are committed to closing student achievement gaps simply cannot ignore the relationship between racial segregation and student achievement. What was true fifty years ago remains true today: segregated schools deprive specific students of the best opportunities to learn.

Racial Integration Matters for White and Minority Students. Research not only clarifies the deleterious impact of racial segregation; it also clarifies the extent to which racial integration benefits all students.

- **Academic Benefits of Racial Integration**

- African-American students attending integrated schools, compared to those attending schools with majority-minority populations, are more likely to enter white-collar jobs and have more years of formal education.⁹
- Learning in diverse settings encourages complex and critical thinking.¹⁰ For example, one study found that students in racially and ethnically diverse classrooms, “showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes, growth in intellectual engagement and motivation and growth in intellectual and academic skills.”¹¹
- Decreasing the racial isolation of African-American students in school could have a substantial impact on closing achievement gaps. Even when other variables are controlled, desegregation improves the test scores of African-American students and does not adversely impact the performance of white students. One study found that desegregating students in Texas would, by itself, close the test score gap between African-American and white students by 15 percent.¹²

- **Social Benefits of Racial Integration**

- Almost all teachers and about nine out of ten students agree that it is important for students of different racial and ethnic groups to interact, but substantially fewer students and teachers believe that interracial interaction currently occurs in their schools.¹³

- Students from every racial and ethnic group who attend integrated schools report a higher level of personal civic engagement than students who attend segregated schools.
- Cross-race friendships that develop in integrated schools encourage broad, positive attitudes across students of different races,¹⁴ and where different groups have more contact, levels of prejudice are significantly lower than within isolated groups.¹⁵
- African-American and white students who attend integrated schools are more likely to have friends from a racial group other than their own, more likely to work in integrated workplaces, more likely to live in integrated neighborhoods, and more likely to favor integrated schools for their own children. These differences persist even when researchers control for socioeconomic status, prior achievement, and student location.¹⁶
- White students who attend integrated schools say that their integrated experience better prepared them for work and public life in diverse communities.¹⁷

Recent Supreme Court cases have narrowed substantially the ability of states and districts to engage in race-based school assignments. However, specific measures to support integration are still possible, provided that racial considerations do not predominate over non-racial considerations in decision-making. Several districts, for example, have implemented socioeconomic school integration plans. Others have created academic programs such as language immersion or International Baccalaureate to attract white, middle-class families to schools with large percentages of minority students. Districts may also strategically build new schools on borders of traditionally segregated neighborhoods, drawing attendance zones that differ from segregated housing patterns.

As educators, policymakers, and other education stakeholders try to meet the accountability demands placed on public schools, it is important to acknowledge that academic practices are only a part of the solution. The evidence is clear: efforts to close student achievement gaps are fundamentally incomplete unless they confront persistent racial segregation in schools. Schools that intensely stratify students by race simply cannot be effective agents of social equality, and comprehensive policies to support student achievement must include measures to reduce racial segregation within the education system.

¹ Dana Goldstein, "Segregated Schools Leave Children Behind," *The American Prospect*, September 19, 2007. www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=segregated_schools_leave_children_behind.

² Richard R. Valencia, Martha Menchaca and Ruben Donato, "Segregation, Desegregation, and Integration of Chicano Students: Old and New Realities," in *Chicano School Failure and Success: Past, Present, and Future*. 2nd ed. Richard R. Valencia, ed. London: Routledge Falmer, 2002, pp. 70-113; also Gary Orfield and Chungmei Lee. 2005. *Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

³ Russell Rumberger, Patricia Gandara, and Barbara Merino, "Where California's English Learners Attend School and Why it Matters," *UC LMRI Newsletter* 15 (2) (2006), 1-2

⁴ Roslyn Mickelson, Segregation and the SAT, 67 Ohio St. L.J. 157 (2006); Roslyn Mickelson, "Subverting Swann: First- and Second-Generation Segregation in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools," *American Educational Research Journal* 38 (2001), 215-52.

⁵ Christopher Swanson, *Who Graduates? Who Doesn't? A Statistics Portrait of Public High School Graduation, Class of 2001* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2004).

⁶ Cited in the court proceedings from Jefferson County and Seattle.

⁷ Michael Boozer, et al. *Race and School Quality since Brown v Board of Education*. In Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, Microeconomics, ed. Martin Neil Baily and Clifford Winston (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1992): 269-338.

⁸ Dana Goldstein. 2007 *ibid*.

⁹ Robert Crain and Jack Strauss. *School Desegregation and Black Occupational Attainments: Results from a Long-Term Experiment* (Baltimore, MD: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, 1985).

¹⁰ John Brandsford and Dan Schwartz, "Rethinking Transfer: A Simple proposal with Multiple Implications," in *Review of Research in Education*. Asghar Iran-Nejad and P. D. Pearson, eds. (Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, 1999): 61-101.

¹¹ Several sources cited in Amici Curiae Brief of 553 social scientists in support of respondents in Seattle and Jefferson county court case.

¹² Eric Hanushek, John Kain, and Steven Rivkin, "New Evidence about Brown v. Board of Education: The Complex Effects of School Racial Composition on Achievement," Working Paper, National Bureau of Economic Research (Cambridge, MA: NBER, 2006).

¹³ Kelly Bagnashi and Marc Scheer, "Brown v Board of Education: Fifty Years Later," in Trends and Tudes Newsletter of Harris Interactive Youth Research 3 (6) (June 2004)

¹⁴ Shana Levin, Colette van Laar and Jim Sidanius, "The Effects of Ingroup and Outgroup Friendships on Ethnic Attitudes in College: A Longitudinal Study," *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* 6(1) (2003), 76-92

¹⁵ Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(2006), 751-83.

¹⁶ Jomills Braddock, Robert Crain, and James McPartland, "A Long-Term View of School Desegregation: Some Recent Studies of Graduations as Adults," *Phi Delta Kappan* 66, no. 4, (1984), 259-64. Also Julie E. Kaufman and James Rosenbaum, "The Education and Employment of Low-Income Black Youth in White Suburbs," *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 14 (3) (1992), 229-40.

¹⁷ John T. Yun and Michal Kurlaender, "School Racial Composition and Student Educational Aspirations: A Question of Equity in a Multiracial Society," *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 9(2) (2004): 143-68.