

Greenwich Board of Education

Achievement, Facility Utilization,
and Racial Balance:
Status and Steps for Determining
the Board Plan

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Summary: Issues/Challenges

- Achievement
 - Improved achievement to be the focus as plans are made to address facility utilization and racial balance
- Facility Utilization
 - Overcrowded elementary schools
 - Underutilized elementary schools
 - Middle school enrollment variance
- Racial Balance
 - New Lebanon and Hamilton Avenue Schools

Actions to Date

- Methodical examination of issues using third party experts
- Careful formulation of proposed direction with broad based community involvement (over 20 large and small group meetings and forums)
- Elimination of redistricting as an option; Focus on Innovation and Choice
- Alternative proposals presented and discussed by Board in August/September

Potential Alternatives: Address Racial Balance

Racial Balance Alternatives

- Legal challenge
 - Constitutionality of Statute
 - Applicability of Unique Schools clause in regulations
- Choice
 - Permits enrollment in school outside neighborhood zone
 - Add 1 or 2 new magnet schools (North Street, Parkway)
 - Choice to enroll in any underutilized school
- Redistrict
 - Board voted to reject this option on 6/20/13
- Review and strengthen existing magnet schools

Potential Alternatives: Facility Utilization

Facility Utilization Alternatives

- Choice
 - Add 1 or 2 magnet schools
 - Choice for students in overcrowded schools to enroll in underutilized school
- New Lebanon expansion
- Review and strengthen existing magnet schools
- Note: Redistricting eliminated as an option per Board votes on 6/20/13 and 9/26/13

Findings based on June data:

- Overcrowding – severe at New Lebanon, need to monitor Glenville and Cos Cob
- Underutilized schools - Parkway, North Street, Old Greenwich
- Current enrollment supports 11 elementary schools

Note: If New Lebanon (NL) construction project is part of approved racial balance plan, it is eligible for State reimbursement at 80%. If NL is designated a Unique School and thus no racial balance plan is required, then State reimbursement for construction project would be at Greenwich's typical 20% rate.

Potential Alternatives: Achievement

- Achievement
 - As plans to address utilization and racial balance are developed, their focus should remain on academic needs of all students
 - Integrate efforts with other District priorities that are focused on achievement, like Common Core, Digital Learning, new math curriculum, etc.
 - Review and strengthen programs, services and magnet themes in Title 1 schools, if appropriate
 - Enhance community and family programming to support engagement and student achievement at New Lebanon and Hamilton Avenue Schools
 - Add 1 or 2 new magnet schools. If theme is to be part of magnet, it should meet needs of all learners. Services should be included to provide real choice for all families.

Specific Recommendations

- Plans have been recommended by the Administration, Board members and members of the public
- Some elements in each of these Plans have commonalities
- For next steps, Board will develop the Board Plan by element
- Once Board Plan is approved, Administration will form workgroups of staff and parents to develop more detailed implementation plans, periodically reporting to Board and community

Tonight's Agenda

- Board will discuss new information
 - Flexible enrollment management system
 - Achievement gap research
 - New Lebanon facility issues
- Board will confirm the information that is still needed to be able to vote on Board Plan
- Board will discuss process for voting on Board Plan at its October 10th

Development of Board's Plan: October 10th Discussion and Vote

- Board will vote on each element of a Board Plan, starting with:

Unique Schools

- If State confirms that New Lebanon and Hamilton Avenue Schools are Unique Schools,
 - Identify what, if any, Plan is needed for facility utilization and achievement issues
- If State disagrees that New Lebanon and Hamilton Avenue Schools are Unique Schools,
 - Decide if BOE challenge Statute, challenge Regulation or develop Racial Balance Plan

Development of Board Plan: October 10th Discussion and Vote

- Board will vote on each element of a Board plan, continuing with:
 - If Plan is needed for Racial Balance, ideas are:
 - Add 1 or 2 new magnets with real choice (NSS and/or Pkwy)
BOE to set parameters around scope of workgroup efforts (including theme development guidelines, possibility of no theme, middle school assignments, transportation, services, lottery rules, phasing, resources, etc.)
 - Add choice to enroll in any underutilized school
 - Review and strengthen existing magnets/Title 1 school programs
 - BOE to set parameters around workgroup efforts to consider all elements of school experience to better support achievement for all students (including themes, District initiatives, services, programs, pre-K, family involvement, community support, resources, etc.) and magnet logistics (transportation, middle school assignment, lottery rules, etc.)
 - New Lebanon expansion – capacity and support spaces

Development of Board Plan: October 10th Discussion and Vote

Board will vote on each element of a Board plan continuing with Facility Utilization. These elements may be part of a Racial Balance Plan if one is developed or may be needed if no Racial Balance Plan is required.

- Plan for Facility Utilization includes following ideas:
 - If existing choice options do not provide for enough movement to address overcrowded schools, consider:
 - Add 1 or 2 new magnets
 - Provide choice to underutilized schools
 - BOE to set parameters around scope of workgroup efforts to develop plan proposal for content and logistics for either selection
 - Review and strengthen existing magnets/Title 1 schools (services, programs, magnet themes, etc.)
 - New Lebanon facility issues (if not part of racial balance plan, reimbursement rate is 20% ; if part of a racial balance plan, then reimbursement rate is 80%)
 - Middle schools – impact of existing magnet school rules for middle school assignment; Parkway School split for middle school
 - WMS as a magnet middle school
 - Note: Redistricting eliminated as an option per Board votes on 6/20/13 and 9/26/13

Information Needs

- In addition to the information already received, the Board needs some additional data in order to develop its Plan:
 - Response from Commissioner regarding Unique Schools designation
 - Market research report
 - Updated enrollment forecasts
- These are expected prior to October 10th BOE meeting, allowing BOE to vote on Board Plan. If sufficient information is not available, vote will be deferred.

Public Forum

Additional Public Forum
Tuesday, October 8, 2013
Central Middle School
7 pm

Opportunity to provide additional input prior to
Board action, expected on October 10.