

## **Statement from the Hamden Board of Education Regarding a Yale Undergraduate Paper Circulated in the Community:**

June 26, 2019

The Hamden Board of Education has recently become aware that an academic paper written by a Yale undergrad student has been circulated throughout social media. While the Board appreciates the interest and concerns expressed in this assignment and supports academic freedom, there are many flaws with what this paper concludes. The student's paper asserts that the Hamden BOE had been influenced by a small group of privileged citizens to deviate from its goal of racially balancing its District's elementary schools. In response to the paper being circulated, the Board wishes to express its commitment to the 3R process and its anticipated outcomes:

- The Board of Education is proud that it delved into this important initiative and remains committed to balancing its elementary schools;
- The Board recognizes that it is engaged in a complex process that includes the renovation, re-acquisition, and closing/repurposing of schools, the development of intra-district magnet schools, and the redistricting of its elementary schools;
- Over the past several months, the Board has engaged in meetings with the Legislative Council in order to ensure the State's financial support to help fund the necessary renovation projects to provide capacity for sixth grade to successfully transition to the Middle School, develop innovative magnet school programs, and provide pre-k programs to all elementary schools and build capacity in affected schools. The Board of Education's recent efforts required all applications be submitted to the State by June 30<sup>th</sup>. This effort required full vetting and approval by the Hamden Legislative Council;
- At each Council meeting, in addition to providing a rationale for intra-district magnet schools, the Board continued to stress the need and commitment for a broader redistricting plan;
- Contrary to the student's thesis, "This final vote underscores the puzzle that drives this study: why did the Board step back from their (sic) ambitious goal of redistricting?" The simple answer is the Board has not. The Board of Education needs to meet a June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline to have projects to the State for consideration (to ensure approximately 67% State reimbursement. This timeline required the Board to concentrate its efforts on informing and gaining approval from the Council. At each Council meeting, it was directly stated that the District remained committed to racially balancing its schools and fully expected the need to redistrict, even with a full complement of magnet schools;

- While the student asserts, “I will describe how extensive, oppositional mobilization of the small-but politically powerful-group of affluent white parents known as Whitneyville Mobilize happened largely through informal channels, and shifted the trajectory of the Board’s decision-making process before regular public meetings on the issue even began,” no Board member has any knowledge of this group, nor has any Board member been influenced to “shift” his/her/their position from committing to racially and socio-economically balancing elementary schools;
- Throughout the process, the Board received correspondence and held conversations in public at noticed Board meetings and in various schools across the District. At no time was there any knowledge of “secret” or “influential” activity. Any such forms of communication are antithetical to the Hamden Board of Education’s work;
- The Board expects to impact between 30-50% of its elementary students to achieve the racial balance reflective of the overall school population;
- The Board remains committed to this effort, as it believes integrated schools provide greater student outcomes for all and prepare all students for the world which awaits them.