

Board of Education  
Darien, Connecticut

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021**

**PLACE:  
DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS'  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
MEETING ROOM  
7:30 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

- |  |                    |           |
|--|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. Call to Order.....  | Mr. David Dineen   | 7:30 p.m. |
| 2. Chairperson's Report.....   | Mr. David Dineen   |           |
| 3. Public Comment*.....  | Mr. David Dineen   |           |
| 4. Superintendent's Report.....  | Dr. Alan Addley    |           |
| 5. Approval of Minutes.....  | Board of Education |           |
| 6. Board Committee Reports.....  | Mr. David Dineen   |           |
| 7. Presentations/Discussions   |                    |           |
| a. Update on Safe Reopening....<br>Plan for the Fall   | Dr. Alan Addley    |           |
| b. First Reading and Discussion...<br>on Proposed Draft District Goals<br>for 2021-2022                              | Dr. Alan Addley    |           |
| c. Further Review and Possible....<br>Action on Reciprocal Agreement<br>for Use of Facilities with YMCA              | Mr. Richard Rudl   |           |
| d. Update on Enrollment for the...<br>2021-22 School Year and<br>Possible Action on Utilization<br>of Budget Control | Mr. Richard Rudl   |           |

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021**

7. Presentations/Discussions (cont.)

- e. Update on the Policy Audit..... Mrs. Kathrine Stein  
Review Ms. Marjorie Cion
- f. Continued Discussion on..... Mr. Christopher Tranberg  
Gifted Program
- g. Updated Master Agenda -..... Dr. Alan Addley  
February through August 2021
- h. Further Discussion and Possible. Dr. Alan Addley  
Action on Proposed Schedule of  
2021-2022 Regular Board of  
Education Meetings and  
Subcommittee Meetings

8. Action Items

- a. Personnel Items..... Ms. Marjorie Cion
  - i. Appointments
  - ii. Resignations/Retirements

- 9. Public Comment\* ..... Mr. David Dineen

- 10. Adjournment..... Mr. David Dineen

AA:nv

**\* The Board of Education meeting will be available to the public in person and via Zoom. In-Person attendance at the Board meeting is limited by room capacity and social distancing requirements. Members of the community who are vaccinated are not required to wear masks.**

**Those members of the community wishing to participate in public comment may join the meeting via Zoom:**

**<https://darienps.zoom.us/j/97353892263>**

**Those members of the community wishing to view only, should do so through the Darien Youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUnnvyKBfFrTWQRuoB6OZA>**

**In order to reduce audio interference, members of the community are requested not to simultaneously view by Youtube while participating on Zoom.**

**APPROVED  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2021**

**PLACE:  
DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
BOARD OF EDUCATION CONFERENCE ROOM  
VIA ZOOM  
7:30 P.M.**

**Board Members Present:**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Present	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Absent									x

**Administration Present:**

Dr. Addley, Mr. Tranberg, Ms. Klein, Ms. Cion and Mr. Rudl

**Audience:** Meeting held in Board of Education office and via You Tube / Zoom

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Call to Order           | Mr. David Dineen, Chair<br>At 7:31 p.m. (0:00) |
| 2. Chairperson's Report    | Mr. Dineen<br>At 7:31 p.m. (0:00)              |
| 3. Public Comment          | Mr. Dineen<br>At 7:34 p.m. (0:03)              |
| None                       |  |
| 4. Superintendent's Report | Dr. Alan Addley<br>At 7:34 p.m. (0:03)         |

5. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Dineen  
At 7:36 p.m. (0:05)

**Motion to Approve Minutes of the Special Meeting and Executive Session held on May 25, 2021; Minutes of the Regular Meeting held on May 25, 2021; and Minutes of the Special Meeting held on June 3, 2021:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Mrs. Parent**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Mr. Maroney**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**

6. Board Committee Reports

Mr. Dineen  
At 7:36 p.m. (0:05)

**PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS**

7. Presentations/Discussions:

- a. Anticipated Appointments: Hindley School Principal; Tokeneke School Principal

Dr. Addley  
At 7:37 p.m. (0:06)

**Motion to Appoint Keri Snowden as Hindley School Principal:**

**1<sup>st</sup> MRS. PARENT**

**2<sup>nd</sup> MRS. RITCHIE**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**

**Motion to Appoint Ryan Betts as Tokeneke School Principal:**

**1<sup>st</sup> MRS. RITCHIE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> MRS. PARENT**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**



**Motion to Amend the agenda to add the appointment of an Assistant Elementary Principal:**

**1<sup>ST</sup> MR. BROWN**

**2<sup>ND</sup> MRS. OCHMAN**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**

**Motion to Appoint Anmarie Galgano as an Elementary Assistant Principal:**

**1<sup>ST</sup> MR. SINI**

**2<sup>ND</sup> MR. MARONEY**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**

b. Superintendent's Award Recipients

Dr. Addley  
At 7:41 p.m. (0:10)

c. Recognition of Darien Public Schools' Retirees

Dr. Addley  
At 8:11 p.m. (0:40)

d. Update on American Rescue Act Expenditures and Discussion on In-Person Instructional and Continuity of Services Plan

Dr. Addley  
At 8:58 p.m. (1:27)

e. High School Vision of a Graduate – Presentation and Discussion

Mrs. Ellen Dunn  
At 9:29 p.m. (1:58)

- f. Report on Senior Internship Project at Darien High School Mrs. Dunn  
At 10:05 p.m. (2:34)
  
- g. Update on District Enrollment for 2021-2022 School Year Mr. Richard Rudl  
At 10:25 p.m. (2:54)
  
- h. Discussion and Possible Action on Funding for Security Updates Dr. Addley  
Mr. Rudl  
At 10:28 p.m. (2:57)

**Motion that the Board of Education request an appropriation from the Board of Finance in the amount of \$225,000 to the Board of Education for approval of a Lockout/Lockdown System / Mass Notification System. Our current Capital Account has a current balance of \$100,000, which together would cover the total cost of \$325,000 to replace the current Lockdown and Mass Notification system:**

**1<sup>ST</sup> Mr. Sini**

**2<sup>ND</sup> Mr. Brown**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**

- i. Discussion of Proposed Dates and Times for High School Professional Learning Communities for 2021-2022 School Year Dr. Addley  
At 10:35 p.m. (3:04)
  
- j. Further Discussion and Action on 2022-2023 School Calendar Ms. Marjorie Cion  
At 10:40 p.m. (3:10)

**Motion to Approve the 2022-2023 School Calendar:**

**1<sup>ST</sup> MRS. PARENT**

**2<sup>ND</sup> MR. MARONEY**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**

8. Action Items

a. Personnel Items

- i. Appointments
- ii. Resignations/Retirements

Ms. Marjorie Cion  
At 10:43 p.m. (3:13)

**Motion to Approve the Personnel Items as Detailed in the Personnel Action Report  
Dated June 8, 2021:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Mr. Sini**

**2<sup>ND</sup> Mrs. Ochman**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**

9. Public Comment

Mr. Dineen  
At 10:43 p.m. (3:13)

None

10. Adjournment

Mr. Dineen  
At 10:44 p.m. (3:14)

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Mr. Sini**

**2<sup>ND</sup> Mr. Brown**

	Brown	Dineen	McCammon	Maroney	Ochman	Parent	Ritchie	Sini	Stein
Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
No									
Abstain									

**RESULT - MOTION PASSED (8-0-0)**

Meeting adjourned at 10:44 p.m. (3:14)

Respectfully Submitted,

D. Jill McCammon,  
Secretary

# Safe Reopening Plan

Fall 2021



July 27, 2021



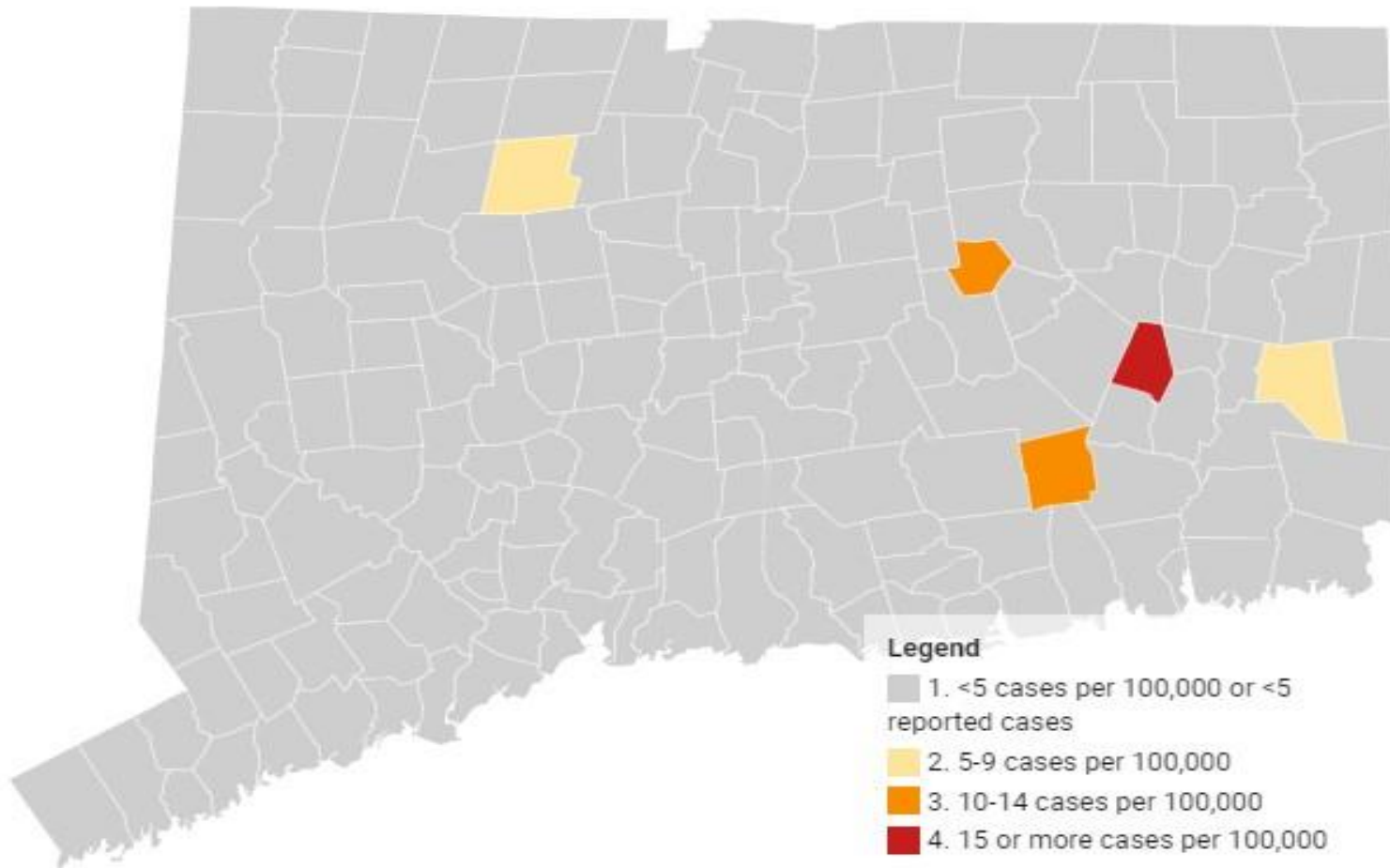
# UPDATES

1. COVID Metrics
2. CSDE & DPH Guidance
3. In-Person Instructional and Continuity of Services Plan (Safe Reopening Plan)
4. Remote Learning
5. American Rescue Act Expenditures (ARP)

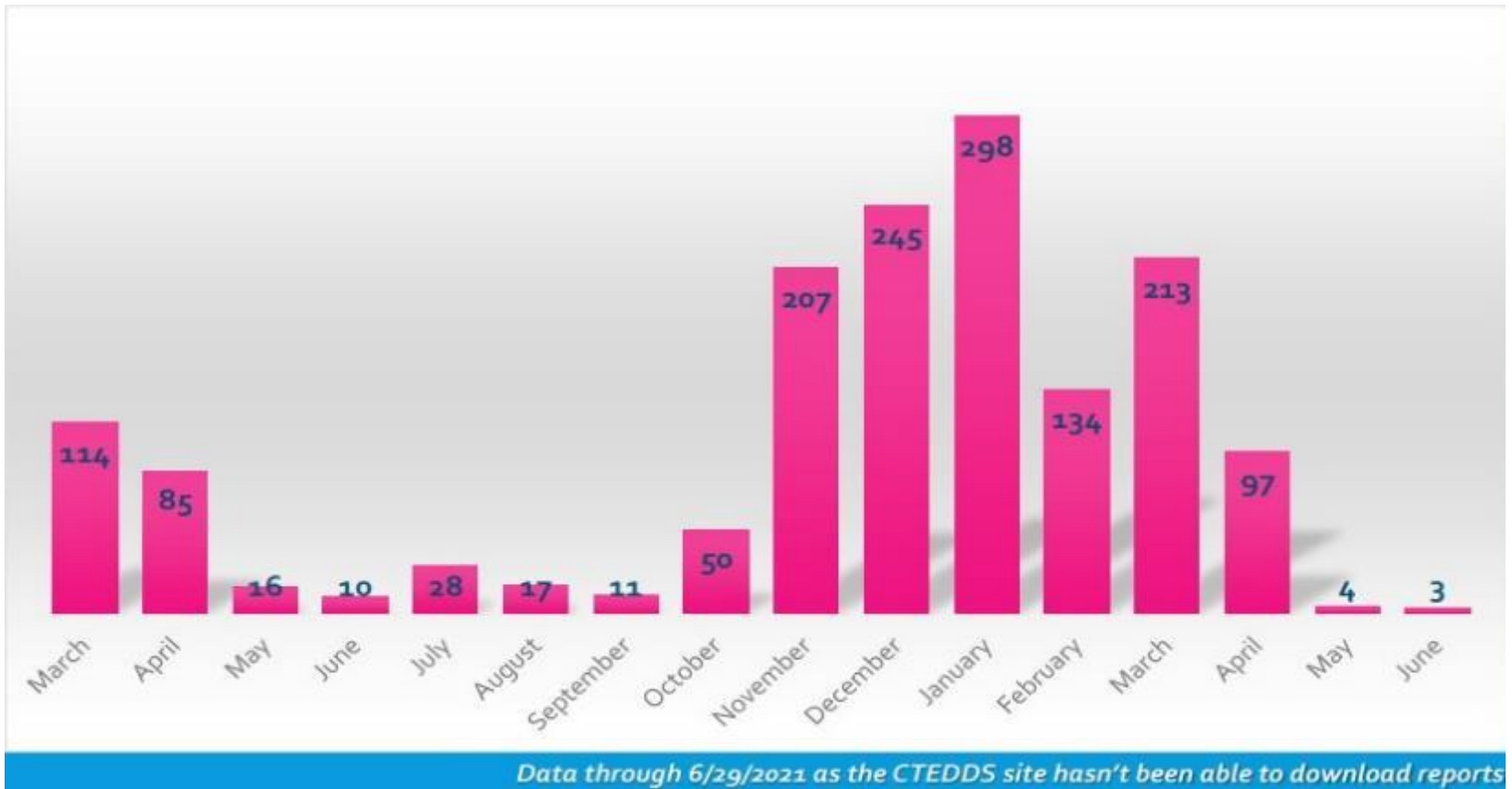
COVID CASES at DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
UPDATED: 07/22/2021

SCHOOL	CURRENT CASES	CURRENT QUARANTINE
DHS/FITCH	0	0
MMS	0	0
HINDLEY	0	0
HOLMES	0	0
OX RIDGE	0	0
ROYLE	0	0
TOKENEKE	0	0
Central Services	0	0
Total	0	0

# COVID Average Daily Rate Cases Per 100,000 Population (06/27/2021 – 07/10/2021)



## Town of Darien: COVID Cases March 2020 – June 2021





# ARP Expenditures

Description	Category	Grant Amount
Literacy Interventionist	Acceleration, Academic Renewal & Student Enrichment	\$219,730
Special Education Teacher	Acceleration, Academic Renewal & Student Enrichment	\$72,445
ESY/Recovery Services	Acceleration, Academic Renewal & Student Enrichment	\$215,720
High School Psychologist	Social, Emotional & Mental Health	\$72,445
Ruler	Social, Emotional & Mental Health	\$26,000
Technology Access	Strategic Use of Technology & Staff Development	\$253,600
Furniture Storage	Building Safe & Healthy Schools	\$12,000
Ventilation Maintenance	Building Safe & Healthy Schools	\$75,720
Contact Tracing and COVID Compliance Officer	Building Safe & Healthy Schools	\$40,250
Campus Monitor	Building Safe & Healthy Schools	\$37,995
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,025,905</b>

*State has increased our allocation by \$720 as of July 12, 2021*

# Questions & Comments



**To:** Members of the Board of Education  
**From:** Dr. Alan Addley, Superintendent of Schools  
**Subject:** Draft Board of Education Goals 2021 - 2022  
**Date:** July 23, 2021

Prior to last year, the Board of Education's annual goals were departmental in nature and aligned to Cabinet members' areas of responsibility.

Given the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the transitional nature of the upcoming year, the self-evaluation of the Board, and the District's priorities, I invite the Board to consider the adoption of a combination of high-level and short-term goals.

Here are some suggestions for consideration:

**Goal #1:** Support teaching and learning through the District's Safe Reopening Plan.

**Goal #2:** Oversee the implementation of the District's Strategic Plan.

**Goal #3:** Advance the District's elementary school building projects.

**Goal #4:** Complete a policy audit.

**Goal #5:** Enhance District Communications.

**Goal #6:** Increase engagement in professional development.

I look forward to your reflections and a full discussion about the process and content of the suggested goals.

# **DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**DATE:** July 23, 2021  
**TO:** Board of Education  
**FROM:** Dr. Alan Addley, Superintendent of Schools  
Richard Rudl, Director of Finance & Operations  
**SUBJECT:** YMCA

## **Follow Up:**

After the Board of Education meeting on July 13<sup>th</sup>, we inquired with Chelsea Piers regarding the cost and availability of their swimming facilities. Chelsea Piers would charge \$30 per hour per lane plus an additional \$45 per month membership fee, which is half the cost of the YMCA, however the only availability would be after 8pm at night, which does not meet the needs of the district. We also inquired whether the YMCA could have availability for Sundays in place of the Girls and Boys Club in Greenwich. Both facilities would charge \$60 per hour per lane but the YMCA availability would be from 7am to 9am in place of the Greenwich facilities 8am to 10am time frame.

## **Surrounding Districts:**

Nearby districts, such as New Canaan and Wilton also have a similar in-kind relationship with their YMCA and school facilities.

## **Recommendation:**

It is the recommendation of the Administration to enter into a written executed agreement between the Superintendent and the CEO of the YMCA for a reciprocal use agreement of the YMCA facilities and the Darien Public Schools Facilities, which would:

- Allow use of the YMCA for Boys Swimming, Girls Swimming and Gymnastics
- Allow use of the Darien Public Schools facilities for YMCA basketball
- Limit use of the Darien Public Schools facilities not to exceed 2,920 hours. Any hours exceeding 2,920 would be charged at the BOE approved facility usage rate. The YMCA has indicated to the Administration that they would need to limit their hours if we entered into an agreement that called for a billable hour relationship. This would provide a 12.5% subsidy to the YMCA based upon the current BOE approved facility rental rates and the proposed charges by the YMCA for district use.
- Charge the custodial overtime fees associated with use of the facilities during the school year. Custodial overtime is currently the only financial subsidy the district provides the YMCA as there is a direct cost that hits the operating budget. Lost revenue from not charging building rental fees is solely an opportunity cost. This would generate approximately \$27,000 in revenue based on reduced usage.

## **DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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- Summer camps for the YMCA would be charged at the Town Youth Sports and Community fee of \$27.00 per camper rather than the YMCA fee of \$45.00 per camper. This would result in a loss of revenue of approximately \$3,700 starting in FY23. This was the recommendation in 2016, which was never implemented.
- Utilize the YMCA on Sundays in place of the Girls and Boys Club of Greenwich.
- The contract would be subject to annual renewals approved by both the Superintendent and YMCA-Darien CEO.

# **DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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Richard Rudl

*Director of Finance and Operations*

35 Leroy Avenue, P.O. Box 1167

Darien, CT 06820-1167

TEL: 203-656-7405 FX: 203-656-3502

**DATE: July 23, 2021**  
**TO: Board of Education**  
**FROM: Dr. Alan Addley, Superintendent of Schools**  
**Richard Rudl, Director of Finance & Operations**  
**SUBJECT: Enrollment Update**

Enclosed is a summary of the current enrollment for FY22. Enrollment exceeds projection by 39 students K-12 as of July 21<sup>st</sup>. Elementary enrollment is up 42 students, primarily at Ox Ridge (+39) and Tokeneke (+9).

Since the last enrollment report to the Board of Education on June 22<sup>nd</sup> the following changes have occurred:

- Hindley Kindergarten has added 1 more student creating a 4<sup>th</sup> section as budgeted.
- Tokeneke 3<sup>rd</sup> grade has lost 2 students thus losing the 4<sup>th</sup> section.
- Total K-5 enrollment has increased by 4 students.

We are asking that the Board of Education set a total of 109 sections K-5 as illustrated below. This will result in the need for the previously requested three sections of budget control at the following schools:

- Royle 1<sup>st</sup> Grade
- Holmes 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade
- Ox Ridge 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

The charts below identify K-12 enrollment as of July 21, 2021.

# DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Richard Rudl  
Director of Finance and Operations

35 Leroy Avenue, P.O. Box 1167  
Darien, CT 06820-1167  
TEL: 203-656-7405 FX: 203-656-3502

## Kindergarten

	Registrations July	Projection	Budgeted Sections	Variance to Budget Sections
Hindley	67	76	4	0
Holmes	71	75	4	0
Ox Ridge	78	73	4	0
Royle	55	62	3	0
Tokeneke	63	65	3	0
<b>Total Kindergarten</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>

## First Grade

	Actual First Grade Enrollment (July)	Projected First Grade Enrollment	Budgeted Sections	Variance to Budget Sections
Hindley	71	67	4	0
Holmes	62	58	3	0
Ox Ridge	83	77	4	0
Royle	69	56	3	+1
Tokeneke	55	55	3	0
<b>Total First Grade</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>+1</b>

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## Second Grade

	Actual Second Grade Enrollment (July)	Projected Second Grade Enrollment	Budgeted Sections	Variance to Budget Sections
Hindley	63	66	3	0
Holmes	81	79	4	0
Ox Ridge	90	79	4	0
Royle	53	55	3	0
Tokeneke	84	75	4	0
<b>Total Second Grade</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>

## Third Grade

	Actual Third Grade Enrollment (July)	Projected Third Grade Enrollment	Budgeted Sections	Variance to Budget Sections
Hindley	83	80	4	0
Holmes	70	66	3	+1
Ox Ridge	78	70	4	0
Royle	52	51	3	0
Tokeneke	68	68	3	0
<b>Total Third Grade</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>+1</b>



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## Fourth Grade

	Actual Fourth Grade Enrollment (July)	Projected Fourth Grade Enrollment	Budgeted Sections	Variance to Budget Sections
Hindley	62	65	3	0
Holmes	75	74	4	0
Ox Ridge	75	66	3	+1
Royle	51	56	3	0
Tokeneke	73	73	4	0
<b>Total Fourth Grade</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>+1</b>

## Fifth Grade

	Actual Fifth Grade Enrollment (July)	Projected Fifth Grade Enrollment	Budgeted Sections	Variance to Budget Sections
Hindley	84	82	4	0
Holmes	78	87	4	0
Ox Ridge	74	74	4	0
Royle	58	56	3	0
Tokeneke	76	74	4	0
<b>Total Fifth Grade</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>

## Middlesex

Grade	Actual Enrollment (July)	Projected Enrollment	Variance
6	349	355	-6
7	358	360	-2
8	392	386	+6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,099</b>	<b>1,101</b>	<b>-2</b>

# DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## Darien High School

Grade	Actual Enrollment (July)	Projected Enrollment	Variance
9	387	379	+8
10	348	349	-1
11	343	343	+0
12	364	372	-8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,442</b>	<b>1,443</b>	<b>-1</b>

## Total Enrollment

District	Actual Enrollment (July)	Projected Enrollment	Variance
K-5	2,102	2,060	+42
Middle School	1,099	1,101	-2
High School	1,442	1,443	-1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,643</b>	<b>4,604</b>	<b>+39</b>

# Memorandum

To: Board of Education

From: Kathrine Stein  
Marjorie Cion

Date: July 27, 2021

Re: Recommendation to Repeal All Policies not published on our Website

The Superintendent has requested that there be an audit of all existing Board of Education policies to ensure that all policies are up to date and that all existing policies are posted on the District's website. We have begun working on that audit.

After reviewing the policies relating to "Community/Board Relations" (Series 1000), several issues became apparent. First, many of the policies not currently posted on the District's website were enacted as early as 1977 and have not been amended or revised since that time. Many do not comply with current law. In addition, several of our current posted policies conflict, in whole or in part, with these older versions. They would need to be repealed in part and replaced in part with the older policies. We also discovered that there is not one, single repository for older policies; therefore, there may be additional policies in existence that we do not, and cannot know about. In order for a policy to be enforceable there must be prior notice to the affected individuals. Therefore, policies that are not posted on our website cannot be used as the basis for discipline of staff or students and cannot be enforced against individuals who did not have prior knowledge of their existence.

At the recent Board of Education retreat, it was suggested that the Policy Committee work on ensuring that all of our policies align with current law and best practice. In order to accomplish this goal and to ensure that there are no policies about which we are unaware, we are recommending that the Board of Education vote in favor of a "batch repeal" of all policies not currently on the District's website. During a review of Board Policies prior to the 2015 – 2016 school year, the Board of Education voted to "batch repeal" a group of policies that were either extremely outdated or conflicted with current law. In taking this action again, the Board would eliminate the possibility that a stakeholder could come forward with a policy that the Board knows nothing about and request that the policy be enforced. Our understanding is that this has happened occasionally over the past several years.

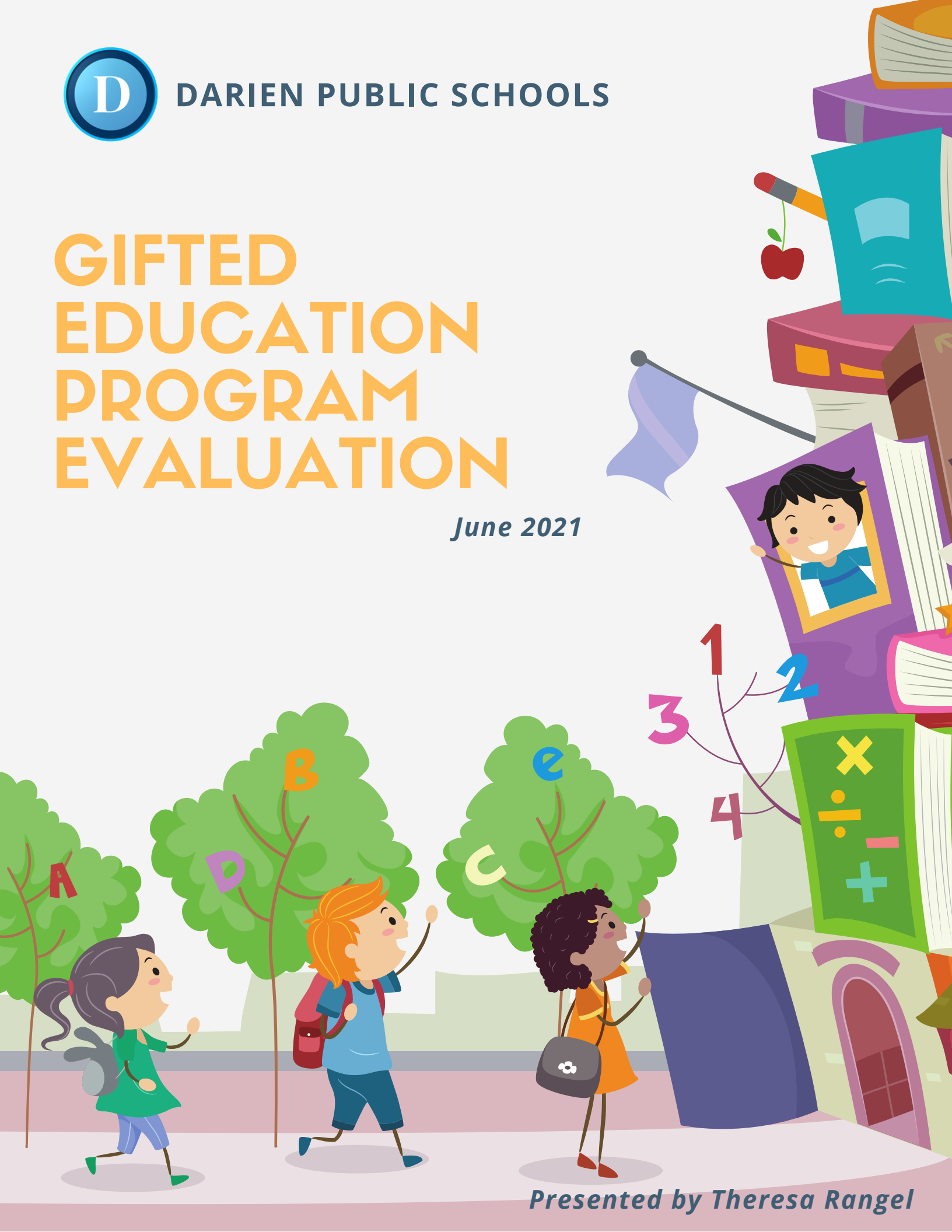
After the batch repeal, the Policy Committee will undertake a crosswalk between Darien's policies and the Shipman and Goodwin list of Model Policies in order to identify needed additions and/or updates to our current policies. We will then be able to consider recommendations about additional necessary policies.



DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

June 2021



*Presented by Theresa Rangel*

Darien Public Schools  
Central Services  
35 Leroy Avenue  
Darien, Connecticut 06820

Print Date: June 18, 2021

DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**GIFTED  
EDUCATION  
PROGRAM  
EVALUATION**

*June 2021*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The District's 2021 gifted education program evaluation provides a comprehensive update to the Board of Education on the current status of gifted programming. The evaluation also offers highlights and considerations for the District to support planning efforts when looking toward the future.

The evaluator conducted a process evaluation utilizing an inquiry model that began with the broad focus area of best practices in gifted education. The evaluation was designed with consideration of a variety of data sources to comprehensively address the focus area. Data were collected from targeted focus groups, one-on-one interviews, virtual classroom observations, surveys from various stakeholders, and a resource and document review.

After collecting data from all sources, the data were analyzed by sorting information into negative, neutral, or positive responses to the prompts. The evaluation team reviewed data for evidence and efficacious delivery of best practices in gifted education aligned with the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC). Themes emerged leading to key focus areas of Identification, Program Design, Curriculum & Instruction, and Parent Engagement. Each area is described in this report with parent engagement woven throughout all sections.

Two frameworks for identification were suggested by research and used as exemplars of best practices. The *traditional framework* identifies students with intense focus on standardized assessment while the *inclusive framework* allows for more flexibility in nomination and identification criteria. The District primarily uses a traditional framework and identifies students based on a combination of cut scores being met.

A review of the best practices in program design identified many strengths in the District's program. Several areas, however, are not fully addressed in District practices. The program goals were found to be in alignment with NAGC standards with both curriculum and social-emotional goals. Each grade band was evaluated for program design and alignment with best practices in gifted education and given commendations and considerations for improvement or better alignment to best practices.

Through a systematic review of relevant documents and resources, observations, and utilization of stakeholder feedback from surveys, interviews, and focus groups, the evaluation team developed commendations and considerations for improvements.

Highlighted commendations and considerations have been prioritized in this executive summary. Additional commendations and considerations are embedded throughout the program evaluation.

### **Highlighted Commendations**

- The Board of Education allocates budget resources to meet program needs.
- Over 90 % of parents surveyed feel that the gifted program provides their child(ren) with a learning environment where they feel safe.
- The district has a strong and active parent support group in DAEG.
- 85 % of parents feel that the gifted education program contributes to their child's/children's development of positive self-esteem.
- There is a clear understanding by all stakeholders that students benefit from being grouped with students of similar academic interests and abilities.
- Both students surveyed and students in focus groups feel that the Idea/Achievers Program challenges them as thinkers.
- 80.2% of students surveyed expressed that they get to try new things in the Idea/Achievers Program.
- 92.6 % of all students surveyed said they feel comfortable participating in the Idea/Achievers classes.
- Dedicated administrator who provides program oversight.

### **Highlighted Considerations**

- Provide professional development for all staff in the following areas: the process for identifying gifted learners, attributes of gifted learners, and differentiation to support gifted learners in the general education setting.
- Identify students by their areas of strength and consider a process for identifying talents in addition to academic giftedness.
- Revise the middle school schedule to accommodate full periods of gifted education learning opportunities.
- Ensure secondary learning experiences are rigorous and relevant to students by connecting to their interests and preparing them for a global society.
- Increase time elementary students receive services from teachers of the gifted.
- Establish a District stakeholder group that meets regularly to systematically review services for gifted learners.
- Provide opportunities to accelerate instruction in elementary schools in the area of mathematics.
- Create conditions for schoolwide enrichment at the elementary level for all students.



# DARIEN COMMUNITY AND SCHOOLS

Located along the shore of the Long Island Sound in Fairfield County, Darien is the jewel of Connecticut's "Gold Coast." With its quaint small-town charm and easy access to two train stations, Darien's location is ideal for a quick commute into the city. In addition, Darien's population, just over 20,000 residents, has increased in diversity in the last decade. Darien Public Schools consists of seven schools, including one high school, one middle school, and five elementary schools.

The Darien Public School System is lauded as one of Connecticut's highest-performing school districts. A town with a rich history, Darien prides itself on its academic excellence, competitive sportsmanship, and recognition as having the best high school in Connecticut, according to U.S. News. With a robust curriculum including 24 AP programs, 21 art courses, and recognition by the National Association of Music Merchants award for Best Community in Music Education, many families move to Darien for the opportunity for their children to attend the high quality, award-winning schools system.

Darien has a distinguished history of providing educational programming for gifted students. The long-standing program includes tenured staff, most of whom have worked together for well over a decade. Darien has committed to meeting the needs of gifted learners, as demonstrated through the funding of full-time staff members dedicated to instruction and servicing gifted learners throughout the school day. Although State and Federal law does not mandate the servicing of gifted students once identified, Darien opts to provide gifted learners programming to meet their diverse learning needs. Currently, 350 students in grades 1-12 are identified as gifted learners across the District. Participation in school-provided programming is optional.

Darien's gifted program is supported by the Darien Advocates for the Education of the Gifted (DAEG). The goal of the DAEG, as stated on their website, is to advocate for high-quality educational programs for the gifted students in Darien. In addition, research suggests that the formation of strong parental connections leads to better academic and social outcomes for gifted students (Henderson, A.T. and K.L. Mapp 2002).

Whether at the elementary or secondary level, students identified as gifted have opportunities to work with certified staff and like-minded peers to explore unique interests and develop skills.



# EVALUATION PURPOSE

The Darien Board of Education provides oversight of teaching and learning across the District. Program updates and reviews are regularly included in Board of Education presentations and budget discussions. For example, a 2019 program update to the Board of Education reflects a shift from language-based programming to more math inclusion. While the Board is apprised of program updates, a comprehensive update, evaluative in nature, has not been provided for some time.

In the winter of 2021, the Darien Board of Education requested an evaluation of the District's gifted education programming. This request was partially in response to a 2020 sharp decline in student enrollment in the ninth-grade gifted program known as Achievers. This raised concern regarding program effectiveness and allocation of resources.

As a result, Theresa Rangel, an administrative intern and current elementary principal in Norwalk, was selected to lead the evaluation by the Superintendent of Schools. Additionally, Nicole Waicunas of the University of Connecticut's Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development, provided additional consult throughout the evaluation. This external team worked collaboratively with the Darien administration to create conditions for objective data collection, analysis, and reporting conditions. The team worked with a shared purpose of examining best practices in gifted education and comparing District practices against those standards of best practice. The team was also charged with identifying program highlights and considerations for improvement.

# EVALUATION DESIGN

In order to provide the Board of Education with meaningful program commendations and considerations to enhance teaching and learning, a process evaluation, often referred to as a program monitoring evaluation model was adopted. This type of evaluation model was selected because the program being evaluated is already in existence. This model gathers data by engaging in a cycle of inquiry that includes the identification of a focus area, designing an evaluation with data sources to comprehensively address the focus area, collecting data, analyzing data, and sharing and informing findings with the administration and Board of Education. From there, it is upon the administration and Board to take action where they feel it is appropriate to move the program forward. Once an action is taken, it is incumbent upon the District to evaluate actions and determine if programmatic enhancements are adequate or require a closer look. The inquiry cycle representing this process is pictured in Figure 1 below.



Fig. 1 - Process Evaluation Cycle of Inquiry

Systematic triangulation of a variety of data sources that identify clear themes when analyzed is the key component to process evaluations. These data can represent information gathered through a variety of methods including focus groups, interviews, surveys, observations, or document and resource reviews. Once themes emerge, they are referenced for alignment with research-based standards and best practices in accordance with those identified by NAGC. The commendations and considerations from this evaluation may guide the District's efforts to take action for further programmatic improvements.

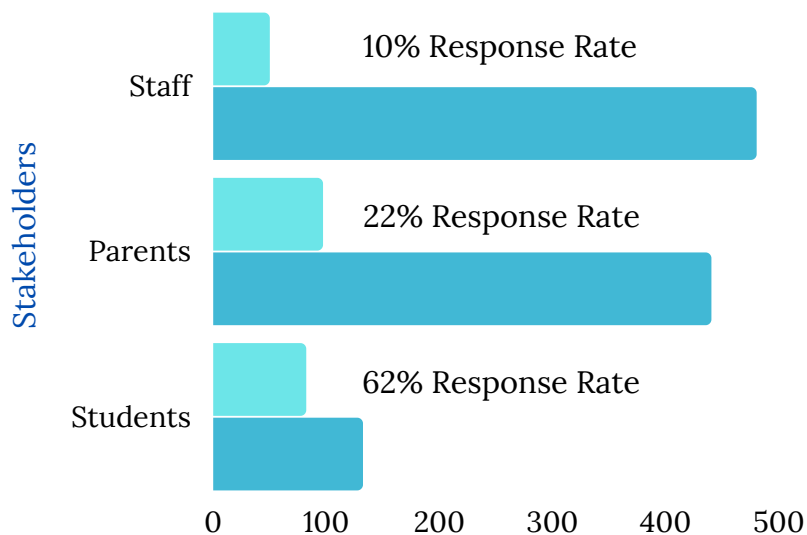
This evaluation included the collection of data and analysis from a variety sources.

1. Targeted **Focus Groups** involved small groups of individuals sharing a similarity in role or position in relation to the evaluation. Focus groups capture data through direct interaction with a researcher or evaluator. Focus groups in this evaluation included:
  - four principals
  - one program director
  - three DAEG parent co-chairs
  - twelve middle school students (grades 6 & 8)
  - ten elementary students
  - five teachers of gifted education
2. A small subset of **interviews** occurred to collect in-depth information regarding specific program elements representing individual perspectives. This method offers insight into thoughts and feelings related to specific experiences. Interviews included:
  - one program director
  - one middle school principal
  - one high school principal
3. The evaluator attended **virtual classroom observations** through Zoom as well as a live presentation. Although most observations occurred virtually, those experiences offered authentic perspective regarding curriculum and instructional delivery.
  - two elementary classes
  - two middle school classes
  - one high school class
  - attendance / observations / conversations at DHS Achievers Night
4. Various stakeholders participated in **surveys** aligned to NAGC standards. Responses provided in-depth information related to participants understandings and motivations related to specific topics. Survey participants included:
  - certified teachers across grade levels and content areas
  - parents of students identified as gifted
  - students identified as gifted in grades 6-9
5. **Resource and document reviews** offer authentic information that can be systematically reviewed and interpreted in relation to the evaluation. Resources and documents reviewed included:
  - identification process
  - curriculum documents
  - Idea Website
  - previous presentations

# DATA ANALYSIS

The evaluator analyzed data collected from stakeholder surveys for negative, neutral, or positive response rates. This, combined with narrative comments on surveys, interview notes, and class observations, were used to identify themes according to best practices described by the NAGC. Surveys were distributed to identified gifted students in grades 6-9, the parents of identified gifted students in grades 2-12, and all certified staff members. There was limited survey participation from District staff with a 10% response rate. This raises questions for the evaluation team regarding the perceived level of importance this subject matter has to staff members, a concern similar to one raised by the parent focus group. The parent response rate is considered to be a moderate response at 22%. Students had the largest response rate at 62%; however, only 14.8% of those respondents were from high school. There are currently fifty 9th grade students identified as gifted, and 24% responded to the survey. There are forty eight 8th graders identified as gifted, and 27% responded to the survey. There are fifty five 7th graders identified as gifted, and 58% responded to the survey. There are thirty six 6th graders identified as gifted, and 69% responded to the survey. As participation rates are shared, it is also important to note in the data analysis that the 9th grade Achievers' group was the only invited group of students that did not participate in a focus group due to scheduling constraints.

## Stakeholder Gifted Survey Response Rates



Number of Stakeholders Surveyed & Response Rate

Fig. 2 - Stakeholder Gifted Survey Response Rates

The evaluation team comprehensively reviewed Idea for evidence and efficacious delivery of best practices in gifted education aligned with the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC). This included surveys, virtual classroom observations of instruction, observation of Achiever's Night, a program website review, one-to-one interviews, and focus groups. Identified students, parents of gifted students, teachers of the gifted, classroom teachers, and administrators were included stakeholders throughout the process.

The NAGC Program Standards were used to compare the District's gifted education practices against research-based best practices. These standards partially determined this evaluation's key focus areas of identification, program design, curriculum & instruction, and parent engagement's important role is embedded in each section of this report. There are references to various data sources throughout the evaluation that inform commendations and targeted considerations from program improvement.

Data gathered also highlighted some areas of concern that have been triangulated through multiple data points and are discussed in more detail throughout the report.



*"Students with gifts and talents perform—or have the capability to perform—at higher levels compared to others of the same age, experience, and environment in one or more domains. They require modification(s) to their educational experience(s) to learn and realize their potential."*

~NAGC



## TWO FRAMEWORKS

Understanding what "gifted" means in the context of a particular school district setting, federal and state legislation, and in education beyond a the local district are essential components in designing high-quality gifted programming for students.

According to reviews of literature prepared by Hanover Research, Best Practices in Gifted and Talented Education and Best Practices for Junior High School Gifted and Talented Programs, there are two primary approaches to the identification of gifted learners. The traditional framework identifies students who are high-achieving students. These students perform at advanced levels across most content areas. The traditional framework identifies students predominantly based on academic performance and achievement.

There have been significant shifts toward a more inclusive framework that leading experts endorse in gifted education that is more inclusive and provides services in a more tiered approach. The inclusive framework identifies students based on gifted potential and seeks to increase the overall representation and widen the definition of giftedness.

# FOR GIFTED PROGRAMS

In a traditional framework, students are selected by using achievement scores on standardized assessments. According to the NAGC, the best practice in identifying students in a traditional framework include a nomination, screening, and placement process. Identifying a gifted student under the traditional framework is intended to be done in a phased manner so that there is time to accumulate detailed information about each child throughout the years, allowing the data to tell a story about each child's academic and intellectual capabilities.

The inclusive framework expands the definition of what it means for a student to be high-performing. It also seeks to mine for gifted potential in students through experiential opportunities that are offered to all learners. Students identified in the inclusive framework may have talents in other areas, including creative thinking, performing arts, or artistic skills. This model posits that all students are potentially gifted and looks to create the environment or circumstance that will help reveal those gifts.

Darien engages a traditional gifted education framework. The framework guides the nomination, identification, and placement process of gifted students. The gifted program in Darien is known as Idea.



# IDENTIFICATION FRAMEWORKS

Frameworks from National Association of Gifted Children

## TRADITIONAL FRAMEWORK

Test & Assessments

Portfolios

Student Cumulative Reports

Teacher Observation and Ratings

Nominations: Self, Peer, Teacher, Administration, Parent

Student Educational Profiles

## INCLUSIVE FRAMEWORK

Test & Assessments: Culturally Sensitive Identification Protocols

Student Cumulative Reports

Use of performance & non-performance measurers

Effective Home, School and Community Connections

Increased training for individuals involved in the assessment process

Identification process is periodically evaluated to ensure it is best practice oriented

# IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

This evaluation reviewed the District's identification process of gifted students compared to best practices in gifted education identification advocated by the NAGC. In 2018 the District updated and enhanced its identification process. Changes have not significantly increased the number of students identified for gifted education services but components have been added that align with recommended identification practices, including a test for creative thinking.

The first level of identification provides opportunities for all students to be considered for identification through a universal screener in grades 3 or 5. Additionally, teachers or families may complete a program referral form that may allow a student to advance to the second phase of evaluation. There are also procedures in place for students and families new to the District that follow a similar protocol.

The process for the second-level of evaluation gathers more information regarding students abilities and skills in a variety of areas. The current process considers the following data:

- Individual Intelligence Assessment (Otis Lennon Student Ability Test- OLSAT)
- Renzulli Scales for Rating Behavior Characteristics of gifted students
- Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)
- Creative Writing Assessment
- Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking
- Parent Questionnaire

Criteria for eligibility requires that students meet the pre-determined performance indicators in three of the assessments administered during the second-level evaluation. Although gifted parents are aware of the criteria for their children to be identified, as illustrated in Figure 3 below, some confusion persists as to when the testing process takes place and what the scores indicate.

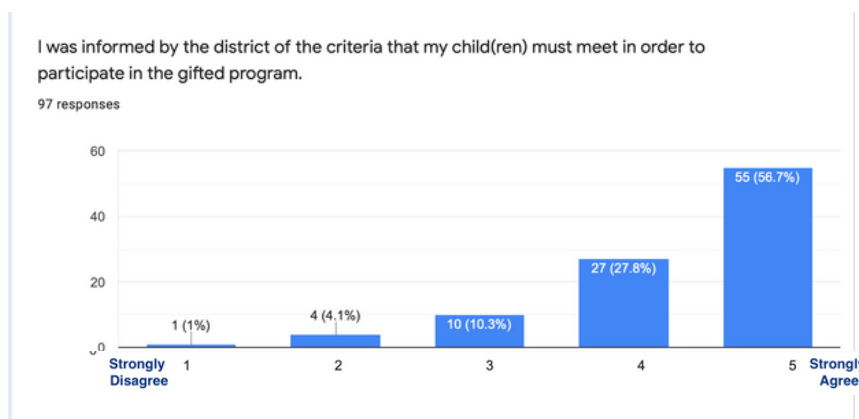


Figure 3 - Parent Survey Response - Identification Criteria

Several parents commented that the program information was available online but was not well communicated if you didn't know the program existed.

*"I was unaware of the program until my child was flagged by the Otis Lennon test in 3rd grade and subsequently tested for Idea. I wish, as a first-time parent, my child's teachers would have informed me of the program." -Parent quote from survey, 2021*

Even for parents who were aware that the testing was taking place, there was a lack of understanding of what the scores meant when they were received:

*"It was when we received his 3rd-grade OLSAT scores that we contacted his teacher to see if his results were of note. We didn't know what the OLSAT was; we didn't even know he was taking it in school." -Parent quote from survey, 2021*

The District's gifted website does an admirable job highlighting the identification process. The site includes identification flow charts for current students and students new to the District. Additionally, the site highlights timelines for assessment and the criteria for admittance into the gifted programs. Despite the information available on the website, many parents, teachers, and administrators are not clear of the identification process and/or timelines. Figure 4 below represents teacher responses indicating a need to review the process annually.

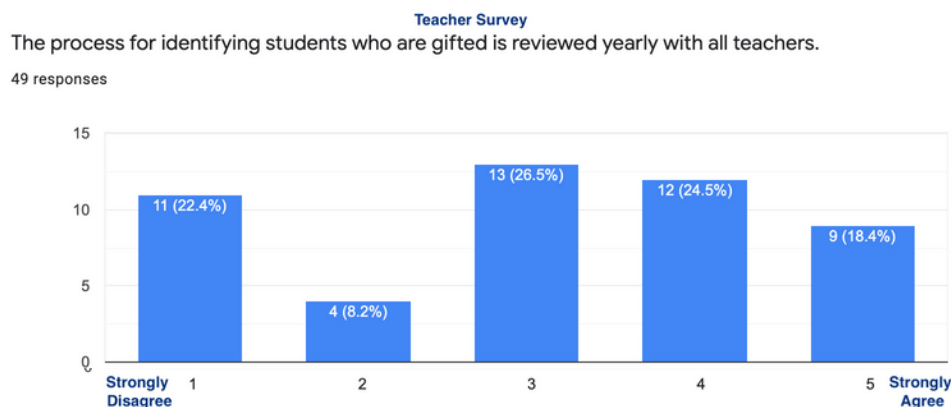


Figure 4 - Teacher Survey Response - Gifted Identification

## **Twice-Exceptional Students**

Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may also be referred to the identification process for gifted education. During the evaluation process, testing accommodations outlined on a student's IEP are followed. The special education team, along with the teacher of the gifted, determine who will administer the assessments. Should the student qualify for gifted education, the student is identified as twice-exceptional and will be offered gifted programming in addition to special education services. Teachers of the gifted and special education collaborate to determine the best approach to supporting students during their Idea learning time.

### **Commendations**

- The identification process has been reviewed and updated to align with best practices.
- There is a research-supported process for traditional identification.
- The District has processes and practices in place for the identification of students who are twice-exceptional.
- The website clearly describes the identification process.
- The framework used for District identification aligns with programming offered to identified students.

### **Considerations**

- Include student portfolios in the identification process to allow both teachers and parents to have a more holistic view of each student as a whole child.
- Provide professional development for all staff in the following areas: the process for identifying gifted learners, attributes of gifted learners, and differentiation to support gifted learners in the general education setting.
- Identify students by their areas of strength and consider a process for identifying talents in addition to academic giftedness.
- Enhance distribution of information regarding the identification process for parents and community; including informing parents of when the assessments are given.

# PROGRAM DESIGN

Program Design for gifted learners refers to the services, activities and support students receive when they are identified as gifted. The Idea program design was reviewed for alignment to best practices in gifted programs as endorsed by the NAGC. The best practices for program design are represented below in Figure 5. A checkmark indicates the evaluator successfully identified evidence of that practice, while areas without checkmarks represent those where there was little or no evidence of that practice within the District. For example, currently there is no District-wide stakeholder group that meets regularly to discuss gifted programming. While the responsibilities of what that group may manage and discuss are evident, there is no formal, systematic approach to accomplishing this work.



Figure 5 - NAGC Best Practices in Program Design



## Idea Program Statement

While not explicitly labeled as a mission, vision, or philosophy statement, the District's Idea website introduces the program with the following statement:

*The Darien Public Schools recognizes the diverse needs of all students through the differentiation of a robust and rigorous curriculum that is engaging, meaningful, creative, and cognitively complex. Differentiation and choice exist within the general education program to serve all students within the social, emotional, and learning spectrums. The Darien Public Schools also recognizes that gifted students require specialized instruction due to their high intellectual ability and exceptional demonstration of the following traits: original or divergent thinking, curiosity, abstract reasoning ability, passion for learning, and creativity. The Idea Program offers distinct opportunities for students in grades two through nine based on their unique learning pathways through rigorous, enriching, interdisciplinary programming through the domains of English Language Arts and Mathematics.*

Data collected indicates that additional work is needed to ensure current practice moves closer to this vision-adjacent statement. Importantly, the statement reflects inclusivity and the value of robust curriculum. It also acknowledges the need for specialized instruction for gifted learners. Although there is an emphasis on differentiation, survey data indicated that most teachers felt they had not received enough training on differentiation to support gifted students. The overview statement also indicates that opportunities for students in grades two through nine are based on unique learning pathways. A general review of the District's Idea curriculum suggests no variation to the curriculum based on students' individual learning pathways. Each Idea student receives the same curriculum.

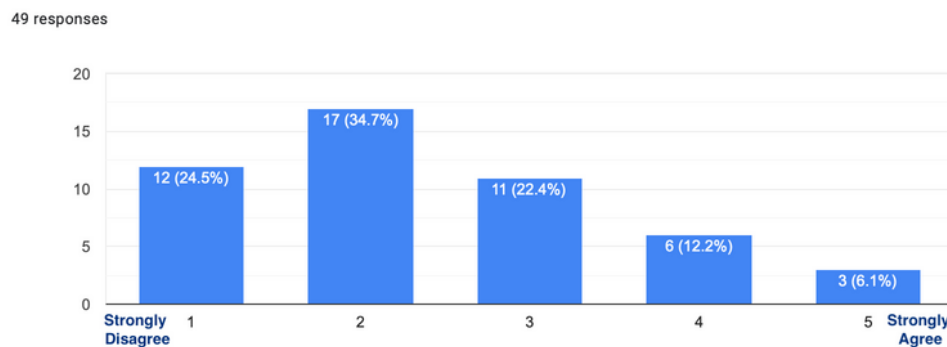


Figure 6 - Teacher Survey Results for Training to Support Ability to Differentiate for Gifted Students throughout the Day



## Program Goals

The Idea program goals align with the NAGC standards and are divided into two sections outlining both the curricular and social-emotional needs of gifted learners.

### Idea Curriculum Goals

1. Critical Thinking
2. Communication
3. Creative Thinking
4. Global Thinking
5. Reflection
6. Collaboration

### Idea Social-Emotional Goals

1. Executive Functioning
2. Self-Identification
3. Social Awareness and Interpersonal Skills
4. Self-Management
5. Risk-Taking

## The Elementary Program

The elementary program is a pullout model with identified students meeting by grade level with their Idea teachers for seventy-five to ninety minutes per week. According to meta-analysis research done by the Davidson Institute, the pullout model has an effect size of .65. This effect size suggests that pullout instruction falls in the medium range, indicating that approach is beneficial for gifted learners. For the elementary Idea program, the maximum potential of time with gifted educators is 45 minutes twice per week. Due to the amount of testing done by the Idea teachers, there is limited time to provide additional services to students. All stakeholders raised concerns as to whether this was enough time to support these learners. Interview, focus groups, and survey data indicated limited time spent with gifted teachers as an area of concern:

*"IDEA (approx. 30-40 min pull out 2x/week) is a good start but alone is insufficient to fully meet the needs of gifted students. Regular general education classroom curricula in Darien are not always sufficiently rigorous for gifted students."*

*-Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

*"My 2nd grader would benefit from being pulled out more often or for a longer period of time, such that his overall curriculum was geared toward gifted kids. Although the District talks about differentiation, this happens less in practice, and some gifted students (like my 2nd grader) are really bored with the pace and content of the material in the general classroom."*

*-Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

The number of service hours in the elementary program combined with the need for regular classroom teachers to have additional professional development in differentiation for gifted learners make it difficult for gifted students to receive an adequate level of challenge in the typical education setting. Student focus groups emphasized this in the italicized comments below:

*"In Idea, we get to do more interesting stuff, like the riddles, we don't do that in other classes. It's stuff that challenges our minds more when other classes don't really do that." - Student Quote from Survey, 2021*

*"We dive deeper in certain topics, like in our normal classes we are doing a bunch of things at once, but in Idea, we focus on one thing for a couple of classes."*  
*- Student Quote from Survey, 2021*

In addition to the concerns raised about the amount of time students were being serviced, parents also indicated concern over the level of challenge students experience when they are not in Idea.

*"They both have experienced at times school refusal due to boredom when not challenged(in the regular classroom). And it has been VERY challenging some years to keep them motivated if teachers in the regular classroom were not willing or able to slightly alter the work for them ."* - Parent Quote from Survey, 2021

In speaking with students in the elementary focus group, it was clear that the Idea class was the place where students felt the greatest challenge. In response to the question, "What is the hardest part about school for you?" Students at the elementary level agreed that it was the work they do in the Idea Program. This narrative changed for students who were asked in the middle school Idea program. When asked the same question, students in the middle school identified other areas as more of a challenge and indicated that Idea is where they felt most relaxed.

While widespread program satisfaction was expressed at the elementary level, concerns regarding the allocation of adequate space for learning arose from parents, students, and teachers alike. Teachers reported regular shifting of spaces and all groups shared that at times the space prohibits the types of activities available to students in the program.

## Commendations

### Program Design

- Program goals align with the NAGC standards.
- There is a written program statement related to gifted students.
- There are written goals and objectives for the program.
- 92.6 % of all students surveyed said they feel comfortable participating in the Idea/Achievers classes.

### Elementary Program

- The student focus group for elementary students reported that they feel challenged and engaged when in Idea.
- There is a clear understanding by all stakeholders that students benefit from being grouped with students of similar academic interests and abilities.
- Parent, student, and teacher survey results reflect a high value for the teachers in the Idea program.

## Considerations

### Program Design

- Group students together for instruction by their areas of talent for some portion of their gifted instruction.
- Develop a continuum of services to meet the broad range of individual gifted students.
- Create a policy that provides opportunities for grade level acceleration and grade level placement.
- Create a district-wide stakeholder group that meets regularly to review district services for gifted students.
- Clarify and communicate expectations for supporting gifted learners in the general instruction setting.
- Ensure alignment with program goals and curriculum to produce evidence that goals are explicitly addressed in the written curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

### Elementary Program

- Increase time students receive services from teachers of the gifted.
- Provide additional professional development for classroom teachers to support differentiating learning opportunities in their classrooms. Consider providing a series of continual professional development for teachers in the area of differentiation as this area of focus is essential and transcends the needs of gifted learners.
- Allocate a dedicated and appropriate space for gifted education programming at each elementary school.

## Idea at Middlesex Middle School

The middle school program services identified students during their FLEX and lunch periods for 90 minutes a week. Students are required to attend during two lunch periods or during a shared lunch and FLEX period. The middle school program design appeared in the commentary from every stakeholder group as something that the District should address.

Parents demonstrated more uncertainty regarding quality of learning, communication, and responsiveness at the middle school level. They attribute the change to the limited time and focus given to student growth due to students meeting while having lunch. Below are a couple of highlighted samples of parents' thoughts of the lunchtime middle school program.

*"Middle School IDEA is too vague, and the lack of student accountability/grades/scheduling during lunch dilutes the impact. It feels more like a club than a class, and students lose momentum in their "gifted" development, leaving them ill-prepared for advanced courses in high school."*

*- Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

*"Separately, as a parent, I don't see what they are doing in Idea class in middle school because they are not working on projects at home. It is my sense, though, that the middle school curriculum can be more robust. My son seems to have gotten more out of the 5th-grade curriculum than 6th grade, but it's possible it's just not as visible to parents once they hit middle school."*

*- Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

While parents unanimously disagreed with the lunchtime classes for the middle school program, students were divided depending on if they saw time with peers as a desirable event or preferred to use their class time for other purposes. Student comments on this matter can be found below.

*"It can be kind of annoying because if you have friends at lunch, you can't sit with them."* - Student Quote from the focus group, 2021

*"We kind of have longer to eat you can keep eating through the class. Because we have study lunch and you have to go to study hall. It makes it more laid back."*

*- Student Quote from the focus group, 2021*

*"Make the classes during flex instead of during lunch."*

*- Student Quote from Survey 2021*

According to the Hanover Research Group, gifted students serviced in by ability grouping approach have the opportunity to deliver comprehensive programs, provide flexible grouping based on several variables and focus on talent development. The current data does not support that the strengths of this model are being captured during the interrupted learning time. Interviews with staff, including teachers of the gifted, administrators, and general staff survey comments, provide another data source that supports the need to review the class schedules provided to gifted middle school learners. The statements below highlight some concerns raised.

*"I have heard it described by some parents as more of a lunch bunch."*

*- Staff Quote from an interview, 2021*

*"The schedule needs to be shifted to allow for some real-time and focus so that students can stay in the learning mode and not just a different kind of social gathering." - Staff Quote from an interview, 2021*

*"I think the kids really enjoy their time there. It seems to be where they can be themselves. I wish it weren't during their lunchtime. Many of these students need the social interactions to be well-rounded." - Staff Quote from an interview, 2021*

### **Commendations**

- Students in the 6th grade and 8th-grade focus groups reported enjoying their time in Idea and reported that they felt it was a relaxing space.
- Both students surveyed and in focus groups reported that they feel the Idea program challenges them as thinkers.
- Parents report that there are positive relationships between the teachers at the middle school level and the students.

### **Considerations**

- Revise the middle school schedule to accommodate full periods of gifted education learning opportunities.
- Improve program communications between teachers of the gifted, classroom teachers, parents, and students.
- Embed student work on self-efficacy by explicitly working with students to discover their own interests, learning styles, and preferred expression models.

## High School Program Model

The high school model is a yearlong elective class that meets four days in an eight-day cycle. Although the course is a year-long course, it is a pass/fail class where students earn half a credit. Students are required to have a mentor for their project to support their learning. Several students and parents have advocated for full credit; however, more stakeholders would like to see the potential of the program brought closer to fruition by adding more rigorous checks and balances and increasing the explicit instruction in project management.

*"The high school project (we only know 9th grade) should have taught project management and other entrepreneurial skills - frankly, it did not meet those needs.*

*The concept is great, but it fell a bit flat on meeting those goals."*

*- Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

The Achievers' Program seems to be unique in the state and, as such, can be redefined in the District to create a pocket of excellence. Eighth-grade students seem to have conflicting feelings about enrolling in the Achievers program due to the increased pressures of high school and a need to see a solid return on investment as they begin their path to college readiness. During our focus group, eighth graders spoke openly about beginning to think more seriously about what they needed on their applications for college. Some students bemoaned that the Achievers classwork did not help them in this area. The addition of community service or service-learning as a component to this coursework could provide an opportunity to support others and give students application material while deepening their social-awareness and interpersonal skills. The following narrative statements and survey data from students shine a light on the information above:

*"I chose not to participate in the Achievers program because I would like the extra elective to act as a study hall. I also feel like adding on another class to the already intimidating freshman year would be a little more difficult."*

*- Student Quote from Survey, 2021*

*"I want to participate because a.) my friends are also doing it b.) I wanted to because it sounds fun and c.) I enjoy the IDEA program and want to see it out until its last years." - Student Quote from Survey, 2021*

*"I'm not choosing to participate because there are many other electives I want to take that interest me more." - Student Quote from Survey, 2021*

In looking at the collective feedback regarding the Achievers program and the direct observation of the final projects from students over the past two years, it is evident that not all students are dedicating the same amount of time and work quality to this year-long program. Although the projects are selected by students and the presentations of the final projects are student-driven, there needs to be a higher level of rigor in project development regardless of the method chosen for the presentations. The ability for students to have the opportunity to participate in a self-designed course or independent study is a positive programmatic attribute as identified in Renzulli's Continuum of Special Services for the Schoolwide Enrichment Model.

Many students seem reluctant to use their time in freshman year to enroll in the Achievers program. The pie graph below in Figure 7 shows the number of 8th graders surveyed committed to joining the 9th-grade Achievers program. Of the twenty-five respondents, only 5 were committed to taking the class.

25 responses

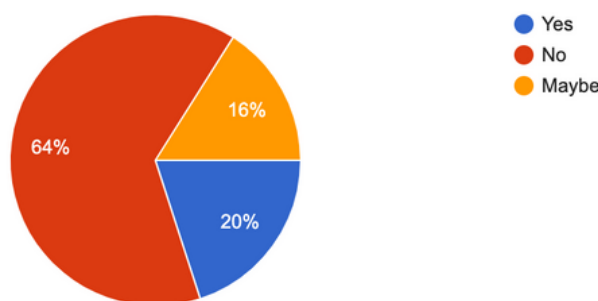


Figure 7 - Student Survey: If You Are Entering High School Next Year, Do You Plan to Participate in the Achievers Program?

The District must either realize the program's potential by investing in revisions that will make it more robust and meaningful or consider if it should continue to be supported. Continuing the status quo without the checks and balances needed to motivate high-achieving students is a missed opportunity for student achievement. This is reflected in the following parent and staff comments.



*"9th-grade IDEA is a great concept, but the implementation is lacking in terms of teaching students project management skills. They focus too much on showing their work and seemingly not at all on setting goals for important milestones to be achieved over the year." - Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

*"I can't help but think that this program is something that should be available to more than just the gifted students at the high school level."  
- Staff Quote from an interview, 2021*

### **Commendations**

- The District supports having a unique high-school program for gifted learners.
- Students are required to have a mentor in their area of interest as a part of this course, which is a best practice in gifted learning for secondary students.
- Students are able to deeply explore a personal area of interest.
- Students are encouraged to be independent in their learning early in their high school careers.

### **Considerations**

- Ensure secondary learning experiences are rigorous and relevant to students by connecting to their interests and preparing them for a global society.
- Provide all high school teachers with an orientation to the Achievers program to better capitalize on the internal resources available in the high school.
- Implement a service-learning component that requires students to seek an authentic audience for their projects.
- Offer open spaces in the Achiever's program to students who exhibit interest and are willing to engage in a course application process that includes an interview and a learning portfolio representing their interests and strengths as a learner.

# CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

*"The major goal of gifted education is not to standardize young learners. Rather, most people in the field believe such programs are intended to expand the reservoir of people who will contribute to creative innovations in the arts and sciences and to all areas of human endeavor designed to make the world a better place".*

*- Joseph Renzulli 2021*

To anchor the understanding of research-based best practices in the area of curriculum and instruction several resources will be used including those from UConn's Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development as well as NAGC.

Definitions of common curriculum and instruction terms are provided in this section to better understand the essentials of teaching and learning and application of an equity lens.

**Enrichment Teaching and Learning** is best defined using these four principles:

1. Each learner is unique, and therefore, all learning experiences must be examined in ways that take into account the abilities, interests, and learning styles of the individual.
2. Learning is more effective when students enjoy what they are doing, and therefore, learning experiences should be constructed and assessed with as much concern for enjoyment as for other goals.
3. Learning is more meaningful and enjoyable when content (i.e. knowledge) and process (i.e. thinking skills, methods of inquiry) are learned within the context of a real and present problem; and therefore, attention should be given to opportunities to personalize student choice in problem selection, the relevance of the problem for individual students at the time the problem is being addressed, and authentic strategies for addressing the problem.
4. Some formal instruction may be used in enrichment learning and teaching, but a major goal of this approach to learning is to enhance knowledge and thinking skill acquisition that is gained through formal instruction with applications of knowledge and skills that result from students' own construction of meaning (Renzulli, 1994, p. 204).

**Differentiated Instruction** - Planning, instructing and assess students with understanding where they are in their learning and building upon the premise that students learn in different ways and learn best when attention is paid to their individual learning styles and interests. Tomlinson (2000)

The NAGC describes **acceleration** as the process of moving a student through the traditional curriculum at a faster rate in comparison to peers.

The NAGC defines **twice exceptional** or **2e** learners as those who possess the characteristics of gifted learners as well as demonstrate evidence of having one or more learning differences that align to federal or state criteria. Like all gifted learners, those who are twice exceptional are highly knowledgeable and their giftedness may be harder to evoke as a result of their learning differences.

The current curriculum and instructional practices have been a cornerstone of the Darien Idea program for many years. Although there have been attempts to increase mathematics, problem-based learning, and other topics in the curriculum, concerns persist for students and parents who would like to see other subject matter added, most notably in mathematics and sciences.

The evaluation of the curriculum and instruction of the Darien Idea program included a review of the following areas:

- Content taught at each grade band with a review of sample lesson units
- The information available on the Darien website
- Program goals and vision
- Student, Parent & Teacher surveys
- NAGC Program Standards
- Classroom observations and student focus groups

In looking at the curriculum and instruction of the Idea program, it was important to be guided by a basic set of questions as a frame of reference:

- To what extent are the stated goals and vision of the gifted program fulfilled in their actual operation?
- To what extent is the gifted program meeting the needs of the identified students as perceived by all stakeholders?
- What are the curriculum & instruction strengths and weaknesses in relation to best practices in gifted education?
- What are the recommendations for program improvement or revision?
- What academic areas are used to identify students and what academic areas are instructed?

Parents also weighed in on the curriculum. Their concerns ranged from wanting to ensure students who excelled in math didn't fall behind to wanting to see other subject matters included in the curriculum in general. The statements from the parent survey below are a sample of the many comments on this matter.

*"I do appreciate the enrichment that IDEA provides, particularly to support the "think outside the box" learners who are strong in ELA. It would be great if there could also be an accelerated program, especially in math. The jump from fifth-grade math to middle school advanced or very advanced math, especially for students whose families can't or choose not to arrange for extra schooling/tutoring to get ahead of the curriculum, seems absurd. Adding that level of pressure to a child who is dealing with the significant SEL associated with starting middle school doesn't make sense; nor does it make sense to force parents to choose between a better transition from the SEL perspective (going with easier math) and access to future higher-level classes in high school (requiring harder math)." - Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

*"There's too much emphasis on enrichment/cultural learnings (Greek mythology) and not enough focus on technical/advanced skills (e.g., math, advanced writing, science, etc.). Most of the activities seem exclusive (i.e., small elite groups) but not challenging, commensurate to their gifted status. I know many parents feel this way. It's the old debate of enrichment vs. technical in terms of what such programs should focus on." - Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

*"It would be nice if students clearly cut out for the double accelerated math track had the opportunity to learn the necessary concepts at an advanced pace in elementary school. This would likely need to be an add-on to the existing Idea curriculum, as I wouldn't want to remove anything currently offered." - Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

Still, other parents referenced the desire to see students connect with their overall future goals. The development of future career goals aligned with talents and interests is in the first standard from the NAGC and is an important part of gifted development.

*"I was interested in the question about helping the students identify (their) future school or career goals. This is something that would be great to see more of for Idea middle schoolers. Giving them ideas for how to channel their talents in the future would be great. They are in the program because they have the aptitude, but how they apply that aptitude in the future is a totally different story."*

*- Parent Quote from Survey, 2021*

The commentary from administrators and teachers highlights many of the same topics as the parent and student responses. One notable difference is that staff has openly discussed the topic of equitable learning experiences. Administrators also commented on the desire to see students outside of the Idea program have access to more hands-on enrichment opportunities during focus group discussions and interviews across the grade bands. They cited that regular education teachers could teach some of the integrated learning experiences in regular classrooms with adequate training for teachers. Below are several comments that highlight this point.

*"The Idea classes have become a focus for parents because they feel it is the only place their kids can get enriching opportunities. We could do this in regular classrooms if teachers had the training. "* - Staff Quote from Interview, 2021

*"It feels like what is happening in the Idea program is good instruction for all students. Why wouldn't we want all of our students to be able to explore their interests? I think we need to look for ways to make this more accessible."*

*- Staff Quote from Interview, 2021*

*"I would love to learn more about ways to engage my IDEA students even more. At times, the curriculum does not allow students to explore personal topics of interest. I feel this would not only greatly benefit the IDEA students, but general ed. students as well."* - Teacher Quote from Survey, 2021

The concern for advanced students in math also surfaced in this stakeholder group, as evidenced by the comment below. The need to explore an acceleration in the area of math is clear in all data sources.

*"There is no option for students who excel at math to participate in gifted programs. It only identifies and services those who excel at reading and writing. This is a disservice to so many mathematically strong students who are in heterogeneous classrooms, with little opportunity to explore that content further.*  
- Teacher Quote from Survey, 2021

"The use of enrichment, differentiation, acceleration, and curriculum enhancement has resulted in higher achievement for gifted and talented learners as well as other students when it is applied to a broader population of high and average achievers "(Colangelo, Assouline, & Gros, 2004; Field, 2009; Gavin et al, 207; Gentry & Owen, 1999; Gubbins, Housand, Oliver, Schader& DeWet, 2007; Kulik, 1992; Reis et al, 2007; Rogers, 1991; Tieso, 2002).

Overall it is evident that students, parents, teachers, and administrators can see the benefits of having a robust gifted program. There is an excessive number of comments made by both students and parents about the level of challenge in areas other than language arts. In focus groups, students were asked at both the middle school and elementary level what they would change, if anything, about their Idea learning experience. The student responses were similar, with all students expressing a desire to have more science and hands-on opportunities to create. Student perception of where they are working harder varied based on the grade level. Elementary students all agreed that they are most challenged in their Idea classes, while middle school students named other subject areas, including math and social studies and geography.

Students in the middle school expressed that they felt they were unprepared for the level of math difficulty once they got to middle school, while elementary students felt classwork did not challenge them in math.

In speaking with both gifted teachers and parent representatives, there is a general concern that the identification process or teacher disposition for recommending students to the gifted program can negatively impact students who are not placed into the program immediately. They must sometimes wait several years to qualify. This was also evident in the narrative section of the survey as highlighted by this parent comment:

*"My experience was that whether your child qualifies or not, if their teacher did not like IDEA, they were not going to recommend, and the child ultimately suffers until you try again with a more IDEA-friendly teacher." - Parent Quote Survey, 2021*

### **Commendations**

- Nearly all parents surveyed feel that the gifted program curriculum offers their children unique and relevant challenges.
- 85% of parents feel that the gifted education program contributes to their child's development of positive self-esteem.
- Most students and parents feel that WordMasters is a valuable addition to the Idea curriculum
- Classroom observations showed students were engaged in active participation, guided discussions, and exceptional presentation skills.

### **Considerations**

- Provide opportunities to accelerate instruction in elementary schools in the area of mathematics.
- Create conditions for schoolwide enrichment at the elementary level for all students.
- Support staff development and understanding of differentiation and acceleration in the core content areas.
- Review current curriculum at all levels to make sure the curriculum is culturally relevant, meets the stated goals indicated for the Idea program, and incorporates more content areas including science, math, and the arts.
- Embed NAGC Standard 1 explicitly into the curriculum by identifying and developing students' intellectual, academic, creative, and leadership abilities.

# CONCLUSION

Overall, Darien's Idea Program for gifted students has many strengths. It is clear that the families who are being serviced value the program and find it to be a rewarding experience. Parents are extremely fond of the Idea teachers and support the work they do. A strength of the program is the predominantly veteran gifted teaching staff that dedicates a considerable amount of their personal time to make sure that students and families feel supported. This level of commitment to excellence was evident in all points of data collected, most notably at the elementary level. The students feel loved and supported by their Idea teachers and feel that they can go to them for support even after they are no longer in the program.

Another strength for the District is the written curriculum that documents the pace and sequence of learning for gifted learners. The newly created program goals align with best practices and will help support additional revisions to the curriculum.

Perhaps one of the District's greatest strengths is the clear commitment to continuous improvement, supported by the Board of Education, with a budget for program needs.

There were several areas where the District can make improvements to the program. As noted throughout this evaluation, there is a need to systematize the communication of program information to parents in the program and prospective parents. Additionally, there are NAGC best practices in program design that have not yet been implemented as part of District practice. An example of this is creating a policy that governs students' ability to gain early entrance, grade skipping, early credit, and early graduation according to individual student needs. An additional consideration that may yield many benefits is exploring the SEM model piloted at the elementary level. This could address the need for differentiation outside of the Idea program and support the District's ability to develop talent in young students. Although students are identified through a series of set criteria, it is important to individualize students' areas of high ability to better allow for differentiation of curriculum both in and out of the Idea program.

Attention to the commendations and considerations, especially those highlighted in the executive summary, will enable the district to strengthen the program and address gaps that do not align with best practices.



# RESOURCES

Best Practices in Gifted and Talented Education - Hanover Research (2017)

Henderson, A.T. and K.L.Mapp. "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement"

"Grouping the Gifted and Talented: Questions and Answers." Davidson Institute.

The National Association for Gifted Children

Reis, S.M., & Renzulli, J.S. (2010). Is there still a need for gifted education? An examination of current research. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 20. 308-317.

Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development

Tomlinson, C.A. (2000). *The Differentiated Classroom*. ASCD. Alexandria, VA

# APPENDIX

Appendix A: [Parent Survey 2021](#) question template

Appendix B: [Student Survey 2021](#) question template

Appendix C: [Teacher Survey 2021](#) question template

Appendix D: [2019 Board Update](#) Memo



DARIEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

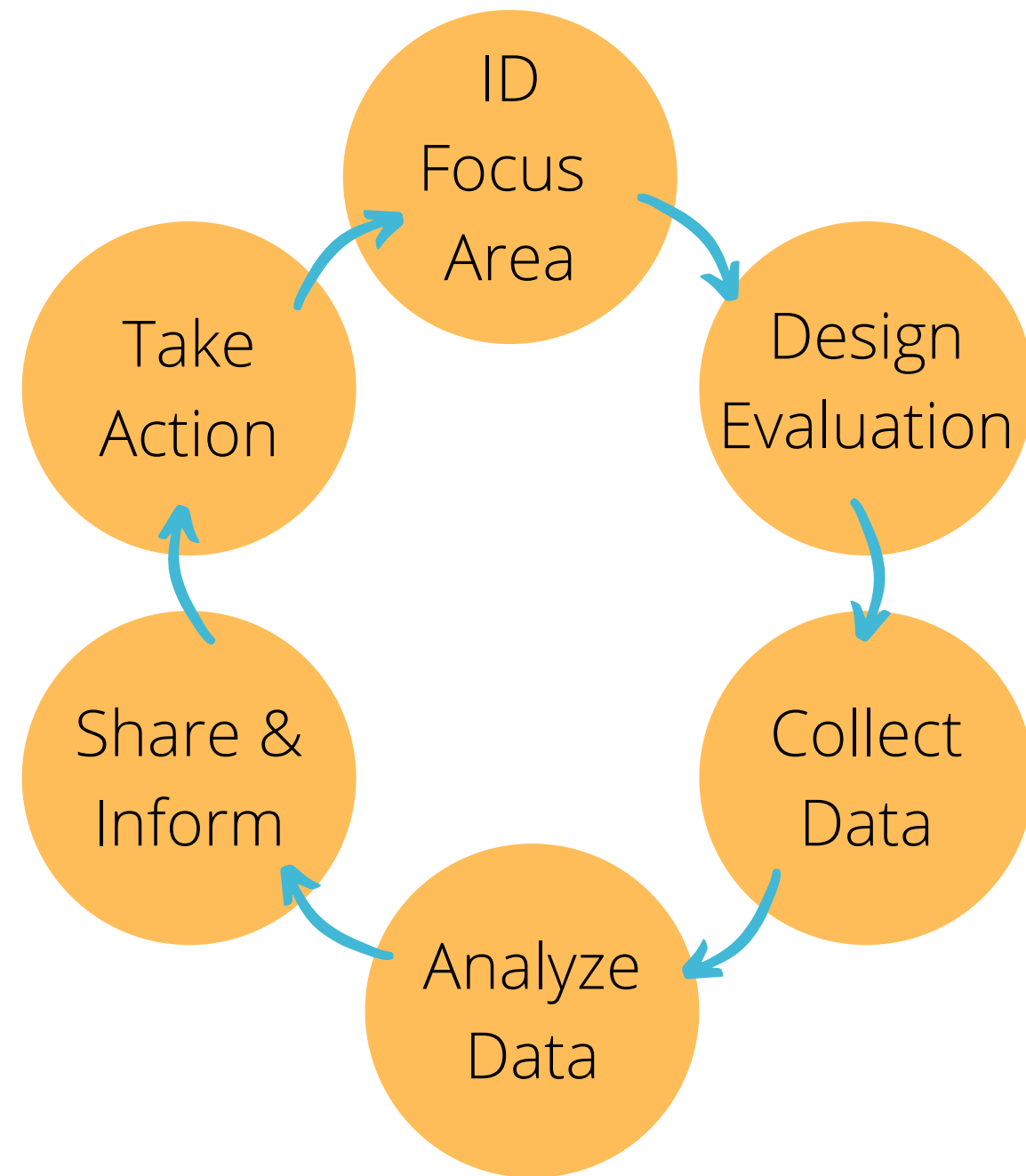
# GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

*June 2021*



*Presented by Theresa Rangel*

# EVALUATION PROCESS OVERVIEW



## Inquiry Process

- Collecting data
- Reviewing Best Practices
- Identifying Themes
- Creation of an evaluation to support opportunities for improvement in Idea

# DATA SOURCES

Focus Groups

Interviews

Observations

Surveys

Resource &  
Document  
Review



# PROGRAM INCLUSIVITY





# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

## Elementary

75- 90  
Minutes a  
Week

## Middle School

90 Minutes a  
Week

## High School

Pass/Fail  
Class  
4/8 Days

# HIGHLIGHTED COMMENDATIONS

- The Board of Education allocates budget resources to meet program needs.
- Over 90 % of parents surveyed feel that the gifted program provides their child(ren) with a learning environment where they feel safe.
- The district has a strong and active parent support group in DAEG.
- 85 % of parents feel that the gifted education program contributes to their child's development of positive self-esteem.
- There is a clear understanding by all stakeholders that students benefit from being grouped with students of similar academic interests and abilities.
- Both students surveyed and students in focus groups feel that the Idea/Achievers Program challenges them as thinkers.
- 80.2% of students surveyed expressed that they get to try new things in the Idea/Achievers Program.
- 92.6 % of all students surveyed said they feel comfortable participating in the Idea/Achievers classes.
- Dedicated program oversight from a District administrator.



# HIGHLIGHTED CONSIDERATIONS

- Provide professional development for all staff in the following areas: the process for identifying gifted learners, attributes of gifted learners, and differentiation to support gifted learners in the general education setting.
- Identify students by their areas of strength and consider a process for identifying talents in addition to academic giftedness.
- Revise the middle school schedule to accommodate full periods of gifted education learning opportunities.
- Ensure secondary learning experiences are rigorous and relevant to students by connecting to their interests and preparing them for a global society.
- Increase time elementary students receive services from teachers of the gifted.
- Establish a District stakeholder group that meets regularly to systematically review services for gifted learners.
- Provide opportunities to accelerate instruction in elementary schools in the area of mathematics
- Create conditions for schoolwide enrichment at the elementary level for all students.

# QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION







Thank  
You!





**PROPOSED**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MASTER AGENDA**  
**FEBRUARY 2021 THROUGH AUGUST 2021**  
**(Changes are in “Red”, “Bold”)**

**February 9th**

- Further Discussion and Approval of Proposed Board of Education 2021-2022 Budget
- Further Discussion and Possible Action on Proposed New Courses for Darien High School for the 2021-2022 School Year
- Darien Public Schools Status Update
- **Further Discussion and Action on Proposed Revisions to Board of Education Policies: 5275- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 – Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (Students); 4118- Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Personnel); 5200- Homeless Children and Youth; 5075- Physical Activity and Student Discipline; 5395- Transportation**
- **Further Discussion and Action on Board Master Agenda for February – August 2021**

**February 23rd**

- **Update on Kindergarten Enrollment for 2021-2022 – to be rescheduled for March**
- **Continued Review, Revision and Update of Board of Education Policies – to be rescheduled for March**
- Discussion on January 2020-21 Financial Report and Possible Action on Proposed Budget Transfers
- **Darien Public Schools Status Update**
- **Further Discussion on the Revised Feasibility Study to Remove the Portable Classrooms and Update the Libraries at the Elementary Schools**
- **Further Discussion and Action on Board Master Agenda for February – August 2021**

**February 25th**

- **Board of Education Strategic Planning**

**March 10th, Wednesday**

- Presentation and Discussion on Darien High School Second Semester Enrollment Distribution Report – or March 23
- Update on Kindergarten Enrollment for 2021-2022
- Interim Progress Report on 2020-2021 Goals and Objectives

**March 23rd**

- Presentation and Discussion on Darien High School Second Semester Enrollment Distribution Report – or March 10
- Discussion and Possible Action on Elementary Parent Conference Days for 2021-22 School Year – or April 27
- Discussion on February 2020-21 Financial Report and Possible Action on Proposed Budget Transfers
- Discussion and Possible Action on Establishing a date for Graduation

**April 7th (Wednesday)**

- Further Discussion and Action on Establishing 2021 Darien High School Graduation Date
- Update on Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle School and High School Enrollment for 2021-2022
- Action on Non-Renewal of Certified Staff Working under One-Year Contracts and Long Term Substitutes – or April 27

**April 27th**

- Action on Non-Renewal of Certified Staff Working under One-Year Contracts and Long Term Substitutes – or April 7
- Discussion on March 2020-21 Financial Report and Possible Action on Proposed Budget Transfers
- Update on Elementary Enrollment for 2021-2022 School Year
- Discussion and Possible Action on Elementary Parent Conference Days for 2021-22 School Year – or March 23

**May 11th**

- Update and Discussion on Extended School Year Program
- Verbal Update on High School and Middle School Scheduling – or June 8
- **Review of District Technology Plan**

## May 25th

- First Reading and Discussion on 2022-2023 Darien School Calendar
- Discussion on April 2020-21 Financial Report and Possible Action on Proposed Budget Transfers
- Update on Enrollment for the 2021-2022 School Year
- Discussion and Possible Action on Revision of the FY2021-2022 Budget to Meet the Reduction Approved by the Board of Finance and the RTM – or June 8

## June 8th

- Superintendent's Citizenship Awards
- Recognition of DPS Retirees
- Report on High School College Acceptances and Awards; Profile on High School Class of 2021 and Post High School Plans
- Report on Senior Internship Project at Darien High School
- Update on District Enrollment for 2021-2022 School Year
- Report on DAEG Barbara Harrington Fund Awards
- Verbal Update on High School and Middle School Scheduling – or May 11
- Discussion and Possible Action on Revision of the FY2021-2022 Budget to Meet the Reduction Approved by the Board of Finance and the RTM – or May 25
- Further Discussion and Possible Action on 2022-2023 District School Calendar

## June 22nd

- Annual Progress Report on 2020-2021 Goals and Objectives
- Annual Report on Donations
- Update Master Agenda – February through August 2021 – or July 27
- Discussion on May 2020-21 Financial Report and Possible Action on Proposed Budget Transfers
- Update on Strategic Planning
- First Reading and Discussion on Proposed Schedule of 2021-2022 Regular Board of Education Meetings and Subcommittee Meetings
- **Program Review - Idea (Gifted)**

## July , Special Meeting (date TBD)

- Board Self-Evaluation
- Renewal of Superintendent's Contract
- **Review of Student Activities Fund**
- **Review of Reciprocal Agreement for Use of Facilities with the YMCA**
- **Success Strategies for Leadership Team Evaluation: Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools**

## July 27th

- First Reading and Discussion on Proposed District Goals for 2021-2022
- Further Discussion and Action on Proposed Schedule of 2021-2022 Regular Board of Education Meetings and Subcommittee Meetings
- Update on Enrollment for the 2021-22 School Year and Possible Action on Utilization of Budget Control
- Update Master Agenda – February through August 2021 – or June 22
- Discussion on June 2020-21 Financial Report and Possible Action on Proposed Budget Transfers - or August 24
- Update on the Fall Opening of Schools

## August 24th

- Verbal Update on Regular and Special Education Staffing for 2021-2022
- Discussion and Action on 2020-2021 Final Year End Financial Report – or September 14, 2021
- Discussion on June 2020-21 Financial Report and Possible Action on Proposed Budget Transfers – or July 27
- First Reading of Board Master Agenda for August 2021-January 2022 – or September 14, 2021
- Action on District Goals and Objectives for 2021-2022
- Update on Summer Facilities Projects

**August 24th, cont.**

- Presentation and Possible Approval of Revised Facilities Use Fee Schedule
- Appointment of an Impartial Hearing Officer for Student Disciplinary Matters for the 2021-2022 School Year, as they arise
- Action Item – to Delegate to its Appointed Hearing Officer Responsibility for Hearing Expulsion Expungement Requests and for Hearing School Accommodations Appeals, including Transportation Appeals as provided by Statute

nv  
1/6/21  
2/5/21  
2/17/21

Working Draft



DARIEN BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Darien, Connecticut

**PROPOSED**

**SCHEDULE OF REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS  
FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR**

<b><u>2021</u></b>	<b><u>2022</u></b>
July 27	Jan. 8 or 15 * (Sat.) (15 - snow date)
Aug. 24	11
	25
Sept. 14	
	Feb. 8
Oct. 12	22?? (wk. of 2/21 recess)
	March 9* (Wed.)
Nov. 9	22
	April 5* (wk. of 4/11 recess)
Dec. 14	26
	May 10
	24
	June 14
	28

All meetings listed above are regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings. All meetings will be held in the Darien Board of Education Meeting Room, 35 Leroy Avenue, Darien, Connecticut at 7:30 p.m. (with the exception of January 8 or 15). The Darien Board of Education meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month, unless otherwise indicated by an \*.

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David P. Dineen, Chairman  
Darien Board of Education

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D. Jill McCammon, Secretary  
Darien Board of Education

**For the Purpose of Community Planning**

**DATE: June 17, 2021**  
**TO: Board of Education**  
**FROM: Dr. Alan Addley, Superintendent of Schools**  
**SUBJECT: Draft Monthly Committee Schedule 2021-2022 School Year**

Below please find a draft monthly schedule of dates for our Finance, Facilities and Policy Committees. Meetings could commence at 8:30 a.m. These are recommended tentative dates for the Board's consideration.

**Finance:**

September	September 23 (Thurs.)
October	October 21 (Thurs.)
November	November 18 (Thurs.)
December	No Meeting
January	January 20 (Thurs.)
February	February 10 (Thurs.)
March	March 17 (Thurs.)
April	April 21 (Thurs.)
May	May 19 (Thurs.)
June	June 23 (Thurs.)

**Facilities:**

September	No Meeting
October	October 14 (Thurs.)
November	November 11 (Thurs.)
December	No Meeting
January	January 13 (Thurs.)
February	February 3 (Thurs.)
March	March 10 (Thurs.)

April	April 7 (Thurs.)
May	May 12 (Thurs.)
June	No Meeting

**Policy:**

September	September 17 (Fri.)
October	October 22 (Fri.)
November	November 19 (Fri.)
December	No Meeting
January	January 12 (Wed.)
February	February 2 or 9 (Wed.)
March	March 18 (Fri.)
April	April 22 (Fri.)
May	May 20 (Fri.)
June	No Meeting

**PERSONNEL ACTION REPORT**

July 27, 2021

Item	Name	Action	Replacing/Location/Position	Effective Date		Tenure Area	Certification Class/Step
				From	To		
<b>Appointments</b>							
1	Karla Vining	Appointment	S Sicignano/DHS/Spanish	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Spanish 7 - 12 BA Step 7
2	Tara Goldsmith	Appointment	New Position/Ox Ridge/Elementary Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Elementary Teacher MA Step 15
3	Sara Tenke	Appointment	New Position/Ox Ridge/Elementary Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Elementary Teacher BA Step 4
4	Heather Rousseau	Appointment	N Chajon(Transfer to DHS)/MMS/French Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2023	Teacher	French 7-12 MA + 30 Step 15
5	Sara LeMoigne	Appointment	C Crabill/Hindley/Kindergarten Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Elementary Teacher MA Step 8
6	Amanda Merjian	Appointment	E Masino/ELP Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2024	Teacher	Integrated Early Childhood Special Education MA Step 5
7	Emery Tedesco	Appointment	J Reardon/Royle/Special Education Teacher	7/1/2021	1/1/2025	Teacher	Comprehensive Special Education BA Step 5
8	Gretchen Kmetz	Appointment	S Morris/DHS/Math Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Math 7 - 12 MA Step 7
9	Johna Reisch	Appointment	L Maurer/DHS/English Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2022	Teacher	English 7 - 12 MA Step 7
10	Allison Coupe	Appointment	S Smith/Royle/Special Education Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Comprehensive Special Education MA + 15 Step 4
11	Sarina Thomas	Appointment	New Position/DHS/Business and Computer	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Business 7 - 12 MA Step 5
12	Alyssa Conklin	Appointment	B McCardle/MMS/Special Education Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Comprehensive Special Education BA Step 7
13	Kelly Kinsey	Appointment	L Smith/MMS/Special Education Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Comprehensive Special Education MA Step 3
14	A Larkin	Appointment	K Glazer/DHS/ Math Teacher	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Math 7 - 12 MA Step 8
15	Olivia Sheldon	Appointment	L Cruickshank/MMS/ English	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	English 7 - 12 MA Step 5
16	Callie Jackson	Appointment	D O'Brien/MMS/Science	7/1/2021	6/30/2025	Teacher	Biology 7-12 MA Step 3
<b>Resignations and Retirements</b>							
17	Kathryn Natale	Resignation	SESS Facilitator/Hindley		6/30/2021		
18	Shira Schwartz	Resignation	SESS Facilitator/Royle		6/30/2021		
19	Carolyn Hoette	Resignation	SESS Facilitator/Tokeneke		6/30/2021		
20	Jill Deutsch	Resignation	Special Education Teacher/MMS		6/30/2021		
21	Lindsay Rust	Resignation	Special Education Teacher/MMS		6/30/2021		
22	Katherine Behar	Resignation	School Psychologist/ Tokeneke		6/30/2021		
23	Jose Alves	Retirement	Head Custodian/MMS		9/30/2021		
24	Barbara Plank	Retirement	Instructional Aide/ Ox Ridge		6/30/2021		