

Reorganization of Hamden's Elementary Schools Proposal (DRAFT)

8 GREAT SCHOOLS + 1000'S OF DIVERSE STUDENTS = 1 COMMUNITY

Capstone Project, UCONN ELP 2022 - Karen L Butler



Setting the Stage: State Diversity Requirements

The State of Connecticut requires each school within a district to be “diverse” relative to its population. The state uses a formula based on the total percentage of non-white students in the district. Every school must be within 25% of the district average.

Since 2010, Hamden has been notified several times that one or more of our schools are in imbalance or pending imbalance (within 1% of being imbalanced).

Compliance with the state diversity requirement is only a concern at the elementary level, since we have multiple elementary schools. All students in grades 7-12 attend school together in the same school (either HMS or HHS).

Hamden's Definition of Diversity

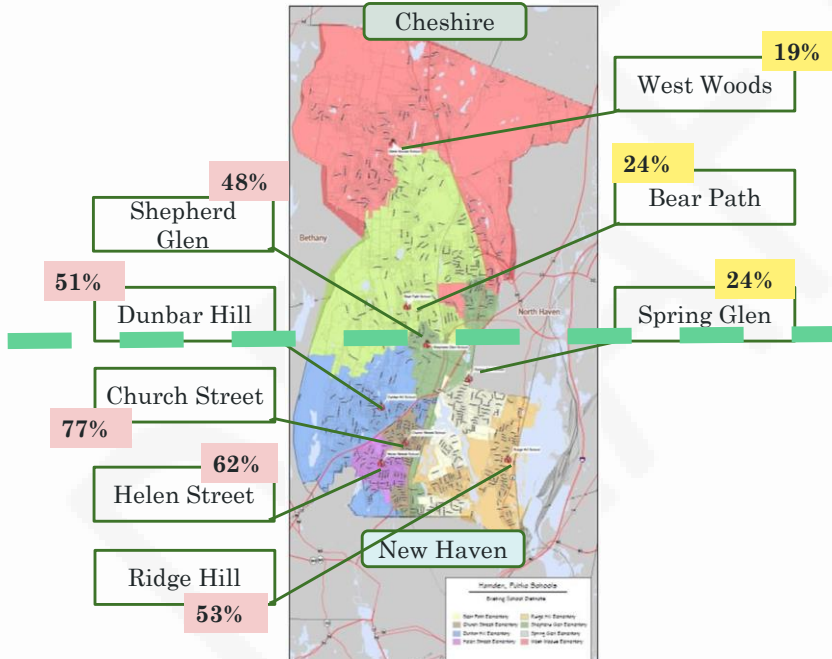


- In 2018, the BOE and administration began defining the “ideal diversity” of an elementary school population
- Discussions centered around the feasibility of attendance zones that would enable all elementary schools to be +/- ~10% to 15% of the district average across several demographic factors such as:
 - Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility (District average: 52%)
 - Black (District average: 30%)
 - White (District average: 35%)
 - Hispanic (District average: 22%)
 - English Learners (District average: 6%)
 - Asian (District average: 7%)
 - Two or More Races (District average: 5%)

Note that percentages shown are from 2018-19 school year

Hamden's Economic Layout*

*As measured by percentage of Free and Reduced Lunch Students, 2019-20



With the exception of one school, the distribution of wealth in Hamden is clearly divided North/South. Sections nearest New Haven have the most economically disadvantaged population (>50%)

Enrollment by School - October 2021

| Schools | Total Students | White Students | Non-White Students | F/R Eligible Students | Special Ed students | Multilingual Students |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Bear Path * | 396 | 189 | 207/52% | 97/24% | 24/6% | 18/5% |
| Church St * | 256 | 18 | 238/93% | 197/77% | 34/13% | 30/12% |
| Dunbar Hill * | 260 | 42 | 218/84% | 132/51% | 31/12% | 27/10% |
| Helen St * | 311 | 47 | 264/85% | 194/62% | 36/12% | 37/12% |
| Ridge Hill * | 285 | 99 | 186/65% | 150/53% | 25/8% | 39/14% |
| Sh Glen | 322 | 58 | 239/74% | 154/48% | 23/7% | 40/12% |
| Spr Glen | 401 | 248 | 154/38% | 97/24% | 35/9% | 17/4% |
| West Woods* | 331 | 119 | 193/58% | 64/19% | 37/11% | 18/5% |
| Totals | 2562 | 820 | 1489/58% | 1111/40% | 298/11% | 226/8% |

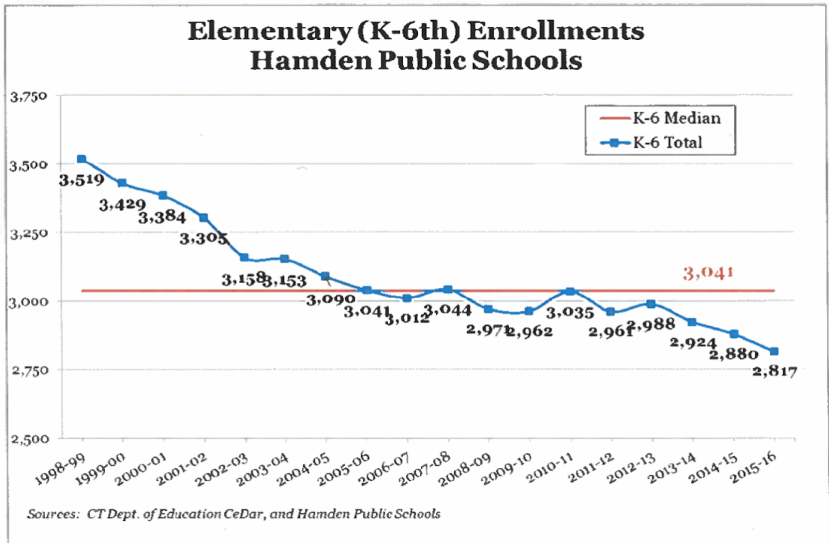
Yellow = 10-25% greater than district average

Red > 25% of district average

Green > 20% of district average

Rationale for Reconfiguration

Since 1998, enrollment in Hamden elementary schools has steadily declined. The combination of a declining enrollment, state mandate to address racial imbalance and recognition of economic disparity presents Hamden with an opportunity to address inequities that impact student outcomes.



District Elementary Schools Data At a Glance

| School Name | High Needs (F/R, EL, SWD) | ELA Perf Index | Math Perf Index | Sci Perf Index |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Bear Path | High Needs | 62.3 | 61.2 | 62.3 |
| Bear Path | Non High Needs | 78.5 | 80.8 | 78.4 |
| Church St | High Needs | 57.6 | 51.9 | 54.3 |
| Church St | Non High Needs | * | * | * |
| Dunbar Hill | High Needs | 60.1 | 53.1 | 50.1 |
| Dunbar Hill | Non High Needs | 76.8 | 66.9 | * |
| Helen St | High Needs | 61.2 | 56.9 | 52.5 |
| Helen St | Non High Needs | 67.2 | 64.8 | * |
| Ridge Hill | High Needs | 60.6 | 56.8 | 57.9 |
| Ridge Hill | Non High Needs | 78.9 | 75.4 | █ |
| Shepherd Glen | High Needs | 67.8 | 65.6 | 61.2 |
| Shepherd Glen | Non High Needs | 79.1 | 76.7 | █ |
| Spring Glen | High Needs | 67.9 | 66.2 | 65.4 |
| Spring Glen | Non High Needs | 87.5 | 84.4 | 85.1 |
| West Woods | High Needs | 61 | 59.1 | * |
| West Woods | Non High Needs | 82.2 | 81.9 | 79.6 |

Of significant note:
Church Street School does not have enough **non-high needs** students to provide data in all areas (ELA, Math and Science).

Sister Schools: Elementary Schools Reimagined

K -2 Early Elementary



- Standard, literacy-based interdisciplinary curriculum
- Building students' foundation: literacy and numeracy skills
- Increased opportunity for structured play
- Focus on Social Emotional Learning skill-building

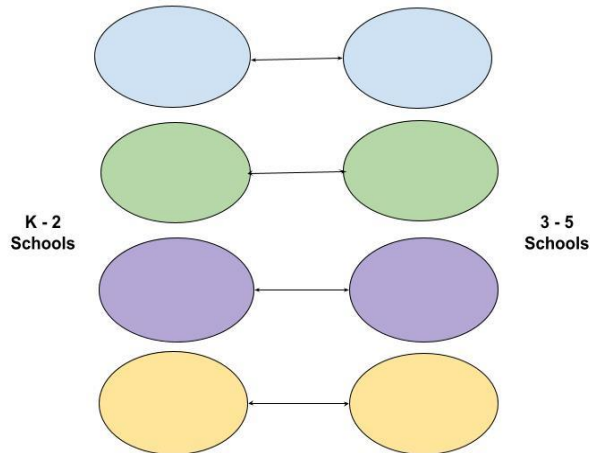
3 - 5 Elementary

- Curriculum aligned to Common Core standards
- Themes to allow flexibility in programming
- Possible Future themes:
 - Arts based/Higher Order Thinking (HOT)
 - Dual Language/Global Studies
 - Aerospace & Sciences (STEM)
 - Discovery & Agricultural Sciences

Sister School Pairings

(based on Demographics & Proximity)

Further demographic and facilities analysis would be needed to identify appropriate school pairings.



Other options may need to be considered once all essential information has been collected.

Geographical School Building Distribution

Two schools in Northern third

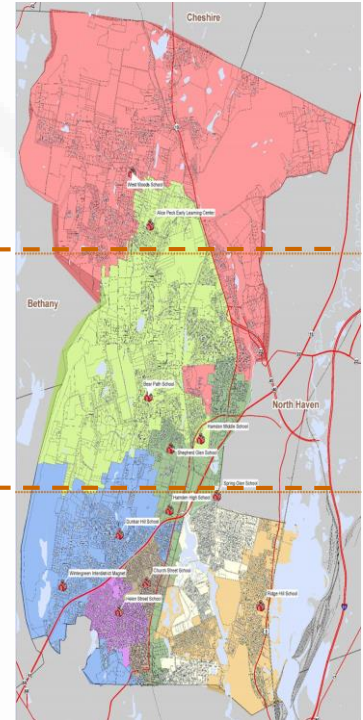
- West Woods
- Alice Peck

Two schools in Central third

- Bear Path
- Shepherd Glen

Six schools in Southern third

- Dunbar Hill
- Church Street
- Wintergreen
- Helen Street
- Ridge Hill
- Spring Glen



District Comparison: Hamden, Enfield, Wallingford

*Enfield and Wallingford currently have K-2 and 3-5 elementary schools

| District | Hamden | Enfield | Wallingford |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Enrollment # | 5412 | 5100 | 5770 |
| High Needs % | 56.9% | 54% | 42% |
| Eligible for F/R Meals % | 46.8% | 45.9% | 31% |
| English Learners % | 6.3% | 2.1% | 5% |
| Students with Disabilities % | 18.1% | 17.2% | 15% |
| District Accountability Index | 71.1 | 72.4 | 75.9 |
| Per Pupil \$ | \$19,964 | \$15,239 | \$18,224 |

Current & Projected Class Sizes (Averages based on Dec 2021 data)

| Grade | Total Students | Current # Classrooms/ Teachers | | Projected #Classrooms/ Teachers avg class sizes of 18 (K-2) | Projected #Classrooms/ Teachers avg class sizes of 20 (K-2) |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| K | 335 | 21 | | 19 | 17 |
| 1 | 333 | 20 | | 19 | 17 |
| 2 | 356 | 22 | | 20 | 18 |
| | | | | avg class sizes of 22 (3-5) | avg class sizes of 24 (3-5) |
| 3 | 361 | 20 | | 16 | 15 |
| 4 | 360 | 19 | | 16 | 15 |
| 5 | 376 | 19 | | 17 | 16 |
| 6 | 394 | 21 | | 18 | 16 |
| Totals* | 2515 | 142 | | 125 | 114 |

| Total Current Teaching Staff (2021-22) for grades K-5 | Staffing Needs with class sizes of 18/22 | Staffing Needs with class sizes of 20/25 |
|---|--|--|
| 121 FTE | 106 FTE | 98 FTE |
| | - 15 FTE | - 23 FTE |
| | | |

What the



says...

- Research does not identify/support one grade configuration as most effective
- Decision to reconfigure driven by practical needs (budget, space)
- Smaller grade spans gives ability to create more targeted programming
- Sharing academic expectations across grade levels is a must
- Anticipate some academic loss during Yr 1 (*rebounds in Yr 2)
- Division of schools “perceived” as a loss of cultural traditions
- Expect logistical and cultural challenges (transportation, moving, schedules, contracts, school traffic, new culture)
- Ensure reconfiguration plans are feasible BEFORE introducing



Positive Outcomes

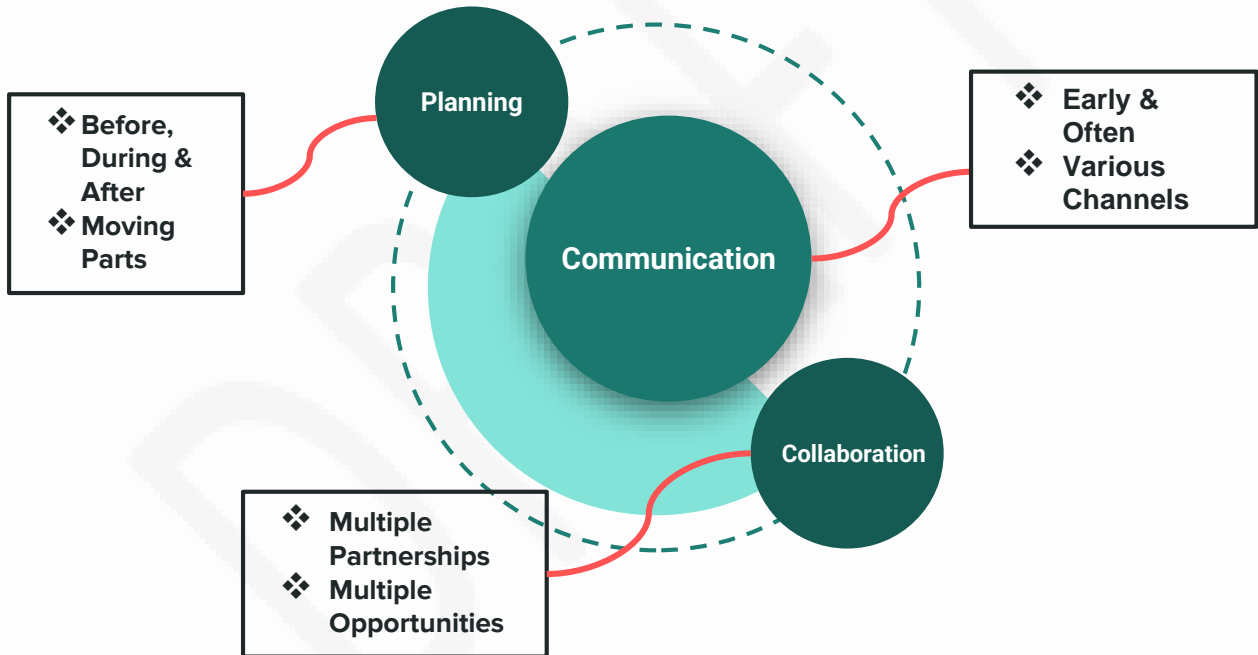
- Long-term structural resolution to the racial imbalance and economic disparity of schools
- Equitable distribution of high needs populations; Improved service to meet needs
- Eliminates need to rebalance staff every year; provides more options for student placement
- Improved curriculum alignment & implementation; assured student/grade level experiences, grading practices and parent communications
- Reduction in Achievement gaps and Increased overall achievement
- Better utilization of school buildings - every classroom occupied
- Reduction in certified and non-certified staff salary line in budget
- Potential consolidation of support staff (Math/ELA Specialists, Art, Music, PE, Media, ML, SRBI)
- Increased opportunities for district-focused family/community events (One Hamden)
- Focus on “elementary” not “building” issues; increase collaboration; minimize competition

Anticipated Implementation Concerns



- Students and families will undergo transitions twice in elementary grades
- Growing pains of melding two communities/cultures into one
- Limited time to determine placements (staff and students), transportation, relocate materials/furniture (over the course of one summer)
- Expense of initial transition costs (Moving costs, professional development or time for planning transition)
- Contractual considerations for various unions (ie. Seniority, re-assignments, etc)
- Potential “inconvenience” issues for parents with children at two schools (transportation, competing events - conferences, etc)

Critical Success Factors



Short & Long Term Recommendations

Short Term (2022 - 24):

- Conduct a formal feasibility study and prepare a cost-savings analysis, projected ROI analysis, transition plan/timeline
- Develop a Communications plan to inform and engage all stakeholders at all phases of (planning, transition, post-transition); Plan/Host Thought Exchanges, Listen & Learn tours, Community Conversations
- Develop clear expectations, guidelines and protocols to ensure compliance and consistency in implementation of new structural model
- Hold frequent meetings/updates with Administrators, Union leadership and staff to minimize anxiety and increase transparency

Long-Term Recommendations (2024 - 2026):

- Develop a tiered Professional Development plan to prepare 3-5 staff for implementation of new theme (phased in Years 2 and 3)
- Develop strategies to merge communities, sub-committees to explore themes for 3-5 schools

Performance Matters



Pending BOE Approval, the proposed reconfiguration would be incorporated into the district's Strategic Operating Plan. Over a 3-5 year period, a thorough analysis of the model' efficacy and impact on student achievement will be measured using the following:

- **School's performance (Next Generation Performance Index)**
- **Student Achievement (District Benchmark Assessment data (Math/ELA))**
- **School Climate Surveys**
- **Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)**
- **PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory**

Publications/Resources Used

- “Early Grades Reconfiguration Analysis for Attleboro Schools”, Hanover Research
- “Figuring and Reconfiguring Grade Spans” (K Reeves), AASA
- “Update on Relationship between Elementary Grade Span and Student Achievement” (H.S. Norwood), ERIC
- Review of BOE reports from 4 districts in Michigan that transitioned to the K-2 and 3-5 model
- Review of Enfield Public Schools 2010 reconfiguration plan
- Hamden Diversity Advisory Council Meeting Notes
- Hamden 3R Presentation (May 2021)
- Interview Laura Anastasio, CSDE Attorney
- Interview Altressa Cox-Blackwell, Enfield Public Schools

