

March 14 Board of Education Meeting

Andrea Gloria <andreags06@gmail.com>

Sun 3/12/2023 8:12 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Hamden Board of Education members,

I am very concerned with the proposed change of Elementary School start times. The reasons are below:

1. The original reason for changing the school start times given in the of Summer 2022 was to save money amid a reduced budget. But the Superintendent has said multiple times this year that THE CHANGE WILL NOT SAVE MONEY. This is confusing.
2. The revised reason for the change in school start times given this year by the Superintendent is "efficiency", and to "improve mental health and the quality of life of our children, staff, and families". It is not clear to me how forcing working families to pay additional money (a lot: \$238/month) for before-school care or to modify their work schedule, or to be at risk of losing a job for being late, is "improving" their quality of life or mental health.
3. We were asked to join a Transportation Working group to discuss the possible change, yet it appears that most of our concerns were ignored.
4. The proposed change is not equitable at the Elementary School level. It affects predominately Title I schools. At the Transportation Working group, it was said that the change in school times would be equitable and would be only within 20 minutes from the original start time. Yet, the recent District Survey is proposing two times, 8.35am and 8.45am. Note that a start at 8:45 AM implies NO CHANGE FOR LATE SCHOOLS, only one of which is Title I, compared to a move of more than 30 minutes for early schools, all of which are Title I. How is this equitable? Our early school families would carry all the burden of this change.
5. At the Transportation Group we were told that prior to making decisions, the District was going to reach out to the schools that would be more affected to figure out their needs. That has not happened. The survey regarding start times that the Superintendent sent, the Thought Exchange, is biased towards what they want to hear. It does not provide significantly different options, 1) the choices of start times are only 10 minutes apart and 2) a switch in the order of the HS, MS, and Elem bus tiers is not considered. This is bordering on being a push poll meant to manipulate the opinions of the recipients and fool them into thinking they are being given a real choice. Also, we know for a fact, that at least at Church St. School, online feedback is very limited compared to other communities. If you really want to know how these changes affect our families, YOU NEED TO COME TO THE SCHOOLS AND TALK TO FAMILIES, send information in print, and reach out via School Messenger.
6. To provide you with additional information on where our families at Church St. School stand, CAFE PTA ran a last-minute survey of our members. With 29 responders, the results indicate that, if given a real choice between start times of 7:30, 8:00, 8:15, 8:35, 8:45, or 9:00, 80% of the

respondents would rather start at 7:30 AM or 8:00 AM than at a later time. In addition, 86% indicated they will be negatively affected by a later opening time, and 52% indicated that they will require before-school care if the time were to move to 8:35 AM. We will be sharing more details of this survey with you.

7. With the current schedule, early schools start at 8:15 AM but students can enter the building at 8:00 AM. That is a relief to those that need to get to work by 8:30 AM. From the latest Superintendent communication, it seems that students will only be allowed in the building 10 minutes prior to the start time. Please at least consider extending that to 15 min again. It makes a difference.
8. Based on reasons #1 and #2 above, why do we need to change the start times at all? We are paying a company a lot of money to do their job and they need to do it well. If they are unable to handle the needs of our School District, then a possibility is to reduce their load (and what the District pays to them) by putting a different company in charge of either the Middle School or the High School transportation. For example, for daytime buses, we compared quotes between B & B Transportation and First Student and found that B & B quotes are approximately \$100 cheaper. That could be a better option to consider.

Sincerely,

Andrea Gloria-Soria

Church St. School Parent

48 Church St. Hamden

March 14 Board of Education Meeting - Transportation

Sarah Morrill <sarahamorrill@gmail.com>

Mon 3/13/2023 10:38 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Good morning,

I am writing to you to encourage you all to NOT support the change in start times for Hamden Public Schools.

Seemingly, the change only serves to benefit Hamden Public Schools' transportation company and does nothing to improve the education/wellbeing of Hamden Public School students nor does it have any positive impact on the budget.

This change is only being done as the bus company cannot work within the schedule requirements Hamden Public Schools have set forth. Currently there is a "four-tier" system for bus runs: High School; Middle School and two elementary schools. This was established several years ago as, at the time, the bus company could not accommodate all the elementary schools going at the same time.

Since the pandemic, the bus company has seen severe staffing shortages, not unlike many industries throughout Connecticut and the Nation. The bus company has consistently had disruptions to bus schedules across all schools, where many buses are consistently late, and in some cases never show. Late buses/scheduling issues was a pre-pandemic issue, only to be exacerbated by the pandemic. Now bus routes are doubled and in some cases tripled up to get students to and from school. This is disruptive to parents and students as one can imagine. The bus company's solution to this is to move to a "three-tier" system in which all elementary schools have the same start times. In order to do this, the bus company must push back the start times for elementary schools and has proposed anywhere from a 25 - 45 min change to start times.

What this change does, is solely put the burden on the Title I elementary schools, (all of which except for one, are considered "early start" schools). Church St., Dunbar Hill, Helen St. (which has no buses except for IIC students) and Shepard Glen all start at 8:00 a.m. (with a first bell at 8:15 a.m.). Most of the parents at these schools are working parents and in some cases single working parents, most of whom do not have the resources or flexibility in their schedules to go to work late or be able to afford before care on top of after care. The two scenarios will shift school start times to either 8:25 a.m. or 8:45 a.m. This is a tremendous burden to place on our Title I elementary schools and this change only serves to accommodate the bus company. I'm also not convinced that the bus company will now be able to accommodate all elementary schools (8 total) starting at the same time, when for years we've been told we needed to stagger start elementary schools b/c the bus company could not accommodate the schedule.

We are well aware child care costs are astronomical - and shifting the scheduling burden to become a tremendous financial burden for our Title I elementary school families is not the solution. Before and after care is \$584 per month for one child, or \$5,256 per school year. This is a huge annual expense

for families. Further the before/after care programs have not been involved in this transportation conversation and it's not clear to me they can accommodate a potential influx of students now needing their services. As more students potentially need before care - it will mean they are not taking the bus - which has also not been factored into the equation. The other piece not considered is if the 6th grade does indeed move to the Middle School - what does that do bus schedules/demand etc. Once again Hamden isn't thinking about the future and future impacts and will once again be reactionary instead of being proactive about problem solving.

Virtually none of the suggestions brought forth in the Working Transportation group have been implemented which includes, among other things:

- Combining high school/middle school bus routes (this is implemented in other districts)
- Combining private/magnet schools with HPS bus routes
- Consolidating bus stops/routes (as noted, buses are never at capacity and there are several individual door-to-door stops one right after another instead of a single pick up at a corner)
- If a bus stop is not utilized after a certain period of time - eliminate that bus stop all together (this is implement in other districts)
- Implement a more affordable and streamlined before/after care program (New Haven/Wallingford/North Haven all have far more affordable options through the Boys and Girls Club working with their district/schools for example) Its also not clear why elementary schools have two different before/after care providers further attributing to inequities.

This change is not the way to go and will create more problems than serve any benefit, particularly since there is no cost savings involved. This problem and subsequent "solution" has not be thought of holistically to include before/after care providers/cost and what future impact any changes to HPS make up will have on transportation needs; the ever changing enrollment figures; and implementing suggestions for changes.

Thank you,
Sarah Morrill
Parent of two elementary school students, Dunbar Hill Elementary
65 Cassella Dr., Hamden

sensory rooms

Monahan, Lisa <lmonahan@HamdenPublicSchools.onmicrosoft.com>

Mon 3/13/2023 6:49 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Good evening,

I was wondering about the sensory room space allocated for the students coming from the Wintergreen program. Is there a dedicated space within each building for the students? Is it a space that will be prepared and set up for daily use? Will this space be dedicated for the students who have it written in their IEP? Thank you!

Lisa Monahan

Public Comment - March 14, 2023 BOE Meeting

Valen Diaz <valen.r.diaz@gmail.com>

Mon 3/13/2023 9:07 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear BOE members,

I write with questions and comments for your consideration during the 2023-2024 school start time discussion. I am a parent at Helen St School (5th grader) and Ridge Hill School (2nd grader, special education student). I also serve as co-president of the Helen St PTA, my home school.

I participated in the Superintendent's district transportation working group. I also provided my input to the ThoughtExchange. I would like to express my concerns with this process and outstanding questions that have yet to be addressed. First, the Superintendent put forward a condition of no more than 20 min change for any school, which I thought was very clear during the last working group meeting. I was extremely disheartened to see the 8:35am-8:45am start time being considered at all in the ThoughtExchange survey. It's a clear violation of the Superintendent's own rule, as it would result in a 35 min change for early elementary schools from our current 8am drop off time.

There is also the question of the change from a 15 min arrival window (8am-8:15am early; 8:30am-8:45am late) to a 10 min arrival window (8:25am-8:35am or 8:35am-8:45am) for all elementary schools as well as clarifying when exactly the school buildings will open. Can the 15 min arrival window for elementary schools be preserved? Despite the planned arrival time for buses, can school buildings open to walkers and parent drop-offs at 8:20am for an 8:35am first bell? I have raised this question to the administration multiple times via email and despite my participation as a working group member; I have not received a response. I also raised this in my public input for the February BOE meeting. It still has not been addressed. This does make a difference for early elementary schools, with a large proportion of walkers and/or parent drop-offs. Unfortunately, my experiences outlined here have left me feeling like my input as a community member is not valued. It seems that the working group and now ThoughtExchange survey are largely just checking a box, as opposed to an opportunity for substantive and meaningful community input.

The burden of this change to school start/end times falls either largely or entirely on the four early elementary schools, all of which are Title I schools. The district's course of action again leaves families with the least resources to manage the disproportionately distributed effects of a solution to a district-wide problem, deepening the inequity that already plagues Hamden Public Schools. With either option presented, we are the most affected. I still can't help but point out again and again that Helen St families are not even offered bus transportation. The only exception to this are the special education students in the two IICs (self-contained classrooms) at Helen St. What I heard from Helen St families and staff was that any change later than the 8am drop off time will be extremely challenging. Families are concerned about getting to work on time and the added expense of before school care. Staff are concerned about the educational impacts on elementary school students with adjusting to a later start time and managing their own child care arrangements. This change will be a significant burden for a school community that experiences little to no benefit from a more efficient bus system, especially since this pursuit of improved efficiency has yet to be realized.

I urge the BOE to act to address these concerns and implement a responsive and equitable solution.

Sincerely,
Valen R. Diaz
112 Pleasant Drive

March 14th Board of Ed Meeting

Bonnie Pepper <bpepper24@gmail.com>

Mon 3/13/2023 10:09 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Board of Education,

I am writing to express my great concern about the environment in Hamden High School. Despite (or rather because of) the efforts of the administration and teachers to cultivate a safe and inclusive school, anonymous teacher(s) and/or staff (including "The Albatross") have been creating a hostile environment, particularly for students, staff, and faculty with marginalized identities. Their hostile and threatening tone and brazen disrespect for the values of our community are antithetical to a safe, nurturing, and welcoming school environment. My hope is that the school (and town) only further commits to an educational atmosphere that fosters a culture of respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion, in addition to censoring and removing these individuals.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Pepper

Hamden Parent

The Albatross

Corinne Jackson <corinnehj@gmail.com>

Tue 3/14/2023 10:18 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>; Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>

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Greetings,

I am writing to express concern that there is an extremely well-written but misinformed teacher sharing an angry and hateful perspective behind a pen name on a publication accessible and easy to find. The most disturbing aspect of this is that students will be able to see this and feel unsafe in a place where they need to be relaxed enough to learn. A student shouldn't have to worry if their teacher is offended by being asked to learn about microaggressions. To not be open to the idea that unconscious bias exists boils down to being a person clearly with the privilege that DEI experts work so hard to teach.

I can't imagine being a teacher in 2023. There is a lot of poor behavior from students, and behavior is a nonverbal response to how they are doing or things going on around them. Mental health, politics aside, is a crisis right now. Teachers are not experts at dealing with mental health and it must be an overwhelming situation. I can imagine the frustration with the administration, wanting and needing more support is understandable. But blaming the kids themselves is a sign that you need to take a break from teaching.

I don't know how the DEI training was administered, but from the article, it sounded like the vice principal hosted it.

No one is happy to be confronted with their bias or privilege. It's commendable that Hamden supports DEI training, but it must invest in hiring a professional to host these events or they risk doing more damage than good. People like the Albatross desperately need someone trained in gently unpacking the biases we all have.

Thank you for your time and service,
Corinne Jackson, Whitneyville Hamden resident.

Anonymous blogger/ Support for diversity training

Glaser, Leah (History) <glaserles@ccsu.edu>

Tue 3/14/2023 5:20 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to express support tonight for professional development and diversity training in Hamden Public Schools.

This is in response to the most recent post in a barrage of rants in the last few months, shared with me by my child, an HHS student, from an anonymous teacher at HHS on a self-identified conservative blog, that unfortunately is being widely read and widely shared by many students. The consistent thing about these posts are that they are often out-of-context, vitriolic, defensive, dismissive of structural and historic racism, expressing clear hostility toward administrators and students.

I realize this person has first amendment rights, and honestly they have provided parental "teaching moments" in critical thinking about understanding trustworthy sources of information. However, knowing that these posts are gathering steam and supporters who have communicated with members the BOE, I wanted to simply express *my* support for diversity and antiracist training, as a parent and as a professional Historian. While it may be annoying to some, it is not "criminal" to educate teachers about the evolution of structural racism. It is not "criminal" to combat the toxic effects of centuries of laws and social behaviors that have culminated in the racial climate today, and encourage self-reflection or be encouraged to understand perspectives other than one's own. The blogger's very outrage, and how this person is interpreting (or misinterpreting), characterizing, oversimplifying, and *aggravating* the many stresses in our school system as specifically at Hamden High, and blaming all of this on teachers and students at Hamden High, only underscores the need for educating teachers and students about racism, prejudice, ignorance, misdirected hatred, and empathy.

Thank you for taking my comments.

Leah Glaser
Spring Glen Terrace, Hamden

March 21 Special Board of Education Meeting

Andrea Gloria <andreams06@gmail.com>

Fri 3/17/2023 8:57 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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6. To provide you with additional information on where our families at Church St. School stand, CAFE PTA ran a last-minute survey of our members. With 29 responders, the results indicate that, if given a real choice between start times of 7:30, 8:00, 8:15, 8:35, 8:45, or 9:00, 80% of the respondents would rather start at 7:30 AM or 8:00 AM than at a later time. In addition, 86%

indicated they will be negatively affected by a later opening time, and 52% indicated that they will require before-school care if the time were to move to 8:35 AM. We will be sharing more details of this survey with you.

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8. Based on reasons #1 and #2 above, why do we need to change the start times at all? We are paying a company a lot of money to do their job and they need to do it well. If they are unable to handle the needs of our School District, then a possibility is to reduce their load (and what the District pays to them) by putting a different company in charge of either the Middle School or the High School transportation. For example, for daytime buses, we compared quotes between B & B Transportation and First Student and found that B & B quotes are approximately \$100 cheaper. That could be a better option to consider.

Sincerely,

Andrea Gloria-Soria

Church St. School Parent

March 21 BOE Meeting

Tarah Pawloski <tarah.pawloski1@gmail.com>

Mon 3/20/2023 11:06 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Hamden Board of Education,

I am writing to express my full support of Hamden Public Schools DEI training. I learned today that a Hamden High School teacher has been posting anonymous racist articles online criticizing the required DEI training — and going as far as comparing the training as an attack on white folks equivalent to the holocaust.

I am one of many concerned citizens that want to ensure that Hamden continues and EXPANDS its anti-racist training for all faculty. The articles that this anonymous teacher has published only further proves that Hamden schools have a lot of work to do to combat stereotypes, discrimination and racism.

Black and brown children are being unjustly “adultified” in our society - and are not treated with the same level of compassion, nurturing and sensitivity that white children are. This teacher certainly feels that their students don't deserve compassion, and is dangerously spreading a false narrative about Hamden's children. This behavior is rooted in white supremacy culture, and the BOE needs to do everything in its power to combat it.

I urge you to investigate this teacher as they have no place in our diverse and vibrant community.

Thank you,
Tarah Pawloski
Berkeley Court, Hamden

Sent from my iPhone

March 21 BOE Meeting, Racial Justice in Hamden Schools

Jack Davidson <jack@springglenchurch.org>

Mon 3/20/2023 11:30 AM

To: Gannon, Nadine <ngannon@hamden.org>; Highsmith, Gary <ghighsmith@hamden.org>; input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>; Melissa Kaplan <makaplan6@yahoo.com>

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Dear Superintendent Highsmith, Principal Gannon, and BoE Members,

I write to encourage you in your racial justice efforts, including the recent training on microaggressions.

The work of uprooting racism should never be deterred nor delayed by the anonymized rantings of those who refuse to learn new perspectives. A teacher who is unwilling to learn is not fit to be an educator, especially when student safety is on the line. How can a person teach if that person cannot open their own mind to new empathetic knowledge such as understanding the ways our students are harmed by racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, or any other form of bigotry?

If a teacher unrepentantly propagates racism in public forums under pseudonyms, they must be revealed and removed immediately. Otherwise, the integrity of the entire learning community is compromised. Please take action immediately to correct this destructive pattern.

On top of continuing these anti-racist trainings without pause, I implore you to also redress all forms of racism embedded in Hamden schools: the use of metal detectors, the racial disparity in discipline & tracking, the employment of police forces on school grounds, the inequitable distribution of PTA funding, the inadequate representation within teacher demographics, access to special services, and the segregation of our elementary school districts. Similarly, I hope you will engage a racial justice lens on any decision regarding Hamden schools, like the upcoming BoE votes on academic & holiday calendars, relocation of Winter Green programs, and adjustments to school start times, all of which impact students of color inequitably.

Thank you for your urgent work in these matters!

Blessings,

Rev Jack Perkins Davidson

Senior Pastor, he/him/his

Spring Glen Church

1825 Whitney Ave

Hamden, CT

SpringGlenChurch.org

203-903-8044

BOE meeting 3/21/2023

Carol Ann Cote <carolannslp@gmail.com>

Mon 3/20/2023 11:47 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Good morning, I am unable to attend the meeting tomorrow in person but would like the letter I sent to the BOE members dated March 7, 2023 read and made part of the meeting recording. As stated in the letter I have many concerns with the proposed move of HCLC to Alice Peck. I would like the board to consider portable classrooms which could be put on the Alice Peck property to house HCLC. This would provide separation of programs while maintaining all the essentials needed for the special education preschool program and safety of Hamden's youngest and most vulnerable students.

Also, I would like to know which board member represents Alice Peck. I requested this in the 3/7/23 letter but have not received a response.

Thank you!

Carol Ann Cote
35 Hillfield Road
Hamden, CT

--

Best Regards,
Carol Ann

Carol Ann Cote
Speech Language Pathologist
Alice Peck Learning Center
35 Hillfield Road
Hamden, CT 06518
203-407-2010

Hamden Public Schools
Hamden Board of Education
Mayor Lauren Barrett

March 7, 2023

Dear:

Mr. Highsmith, Superintendent of Hamden Public Schools
Ms. Kaplan, Board of Education Chairperson
Board of Education Members
Mayor Lauren Barrett

My family's roots are in Hamden going back generations and I have been employed by Hamden Public Schools for 29 years. I am proud of servicing the needs of Hamden families and students as a speech language pathologist having specialized in the special education preschool population. There are proposed changes that will greatly affect Hamden's preschool population for the next academic year and beyond. As an advocate for the youngest and most vulnerable population in Hamden for which I have had the pleasure to serve all these years, I feel compelled to speak out. I am referring to the administration's decision to move the Hamden Collaborative Learning Center (an alternative high school program) to the Alice Peck Learning Center. Just three years ago, the district spent considerable money and renovated Alice Peck School to accommodate the preschool population and designated it as an "Early Learning Center". This was a wonderful move and comparable to other towns in the area. The preschool population requiring special education services has grown significantly since I was hired in 1994 as the first full time preschool speech language pathologist. In addition, the special needs of this population have increased as most of our students are no longer itinerant, but rather require more specific, intensive services from special educators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, board certified behavior analyst, behavior technicians, social workers, psychologists and of course speech language pathologists. We now have nine classrooms managed by special educators, 3 full time and one part time speech language pathologists, one social worker, two school psychologists, one BCBA, three behavior technicians, numerous paraprofessionals and contracted occupational and physical therapists. The specific needs of our students have created the need for a sensory room, a motor room, a physical and occupational therapy room, and an evaluation room. These rooms are used to meet the needs of our students as outlined in the individualized educational plans. They are not "extras" but rather **essentials** for our student's growth. Many of our students come to us functioning at a 12 to 18-month old level, are non-verbal and often eventually

receive a diagnosis of autism. Many others have been traumatized and have significant social emotional issues. Others have physical limitations and/or cognitive deficits and almost all students have speech and language disorders. Our teams work hard and tirelessly to prepare our students for kindergarten by teaching them to walk and develop other motor skills, toilet train, communicate, become independent with feeding and dressing, learn to attend and listen, learn pre-academic skills etc. etc. This is their **window of opportunity**. Research has proven that intensive interventions during the preschool years have the best outcomes. It's taken 29 years to get to the point of a comprehensive, stellar program that meets the needs of our students and gives them the best chance for success. Even with the growth of the program, with the exception of one class, our programs are all half-day, 4-days per week for a total of 12 hours of services per week. To prepare our students more effectively for full-day kindergarten, full-day classes for at least several classes of the 4-year-olds would be highly recommended, and is offered in the majority of surrounding districts. Furthermore, the CT State Dept of Education mandates time with non-disabled peers, and would like the majority of our preschool students to be serviced in a classroom with an equal number of non-disabled peers. Our classes currently are self-contained, having only students with IEPs. As such, we are currently out of compliance with state regulations. In order to meet this demand for integrated classes, we would need to increase our class size and expand the number of classrooms. We will not have room to do this if the HCLC program moves to Alice Peck. Therefore, to best meet the needs of our students, I must speak out against any proposals that would eliminate parts of our program or diminish current services and prohibit the program from expanding. The proposal to relocate the Hamden Collaborative Learning Center to our building would do just that. There is simply not enough space to accommodate HCLC students and staff without sacrificing the quality of our preschool special education program and adhere to state mandates. The rooms noted above are essential to our student's success and offices are needed to provide appropriate therapies under HIPPA.

In addition, safety is a huge concern given the environment we live in today and the social/emotional, behavioral needs of the HCLC students. Recently police were called to HCLC at Wintergreen as a student brought a weapon into the building. Will security guards, cameras, metal detectors or other safety measures be put in place? Furthermore, Alice Peck does not have the necessities in case of a lockdown. Many doors do not lock, many windows do not have blinds, the public announcement system is not working properly, and there is no way to physically separate the two programs due to sharing the gym, nurse, main office, cafeteria etc. Years ago, HCLC was at Alice Peck and our young and vulnerable preschool students who were just learning to self-regulate their emotions and bodies, transition into the school and locations within the school witnessed and were subjected to foul and profane language, lockdowns, police presence, fights, students on drugs, defiance to authority (adults/teachers), and emotional disturbances which often resulted in a negative response or trigger for our preschoolers. How *frightened* they must have felt to see and hear a "big person" out of control. It is our job as educators and adults/parents to protect children, not to traumatize them.

Furthermore, how must the HCLC students feel being moved to a school with severely delayed preschoolers? What does that do to their self-esteem after being removed from Hamden High School? Don't they deserve an environment specific to their needs? Can't portable classrooms be put somewhere on the property to ensure separation of programs and safety?

Over the course of my career I have seen Hamden Public Schools make decisions that seemingly were not thought through adequately and subsequently were reversed. It is now happening again. After renovating Alice Peck specifically for the preschool population by putting bathrooms between classrooms with low toilets and sinks for toilet training purposes, creating rooms for specific physical and sensory needs and having access to state mandated typical peers (one classroom), the administration is now discussing reversing some if not all of the renovations to accommodate HCLC. I understand the financial hardships of the district, however, to sacrifice the well-being of our preschool students due to finances is not okay. There **must** be a better solution. There **must** be money somewhere. Our preschoolers and the HCLC students deserve better. Please do what is morally and educationally in the best interest of our students for both the Alice Peck Learning Center and Hamden Collaborative Learning Center. We must think, plan and strive to move forward! Just as the special education preschool program finally got what they deserved three years ago, so too must HCLC. A long term permanent solution for HCLC is needed as the number of preschool students entering our program continues to increase yearly. The decisions we make today **must** be sanctified and permanent for future students and the betterment of Hamden Public Schools as a whole.

I would like to invite all board members to visit APLC, see the facility, and get to know our students prior to making any final decisions or allocating funds. It is my hope that this letter and an open invitation to visit APLC educates the new board members about the preschool programs at Alice Peck Learning Center and the concerns the faculty/staff have with the HCLC proposal. I also would like to know which board member is assigned to Alice Peck. To my knowledge we do not have representation on the board.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carol Ann Cote'
Speech Language Pathologist
Alice Peck Learning Center
Personal email: carolannslp@gmail.com
Cell phone: 203-530-1233

P.S. Others topics of concern the Alice Peck staff and faculty would like to discuss:

1. Safety of students for drop off and pick up (bus and parent transport).
2. Increase in parking spaces and appropriately placed handicapped parking.
3. Staff bathrooms separate from student bathrooms as stated in our contract.
4. Asbestos in the building.
5. Representation to work with and educate administration and the board regarding the special needs of our students

Concerns about "The Albatross"

Laura Perkins Davidson <lauracperkins1@gmail.com>

Mon 3/20/2023 5:16 PM

To: Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>;input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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To the Hamden Board of Education -

It is with considerable dismay that I read the opinion piece by the disgruntled and disrespectful Hamden High School staffer who hides behind the pseudonym "The Albatross." It is clear that this individual needs far more help understanding micro-aggressions than the training could provide, seeing as they completely misunderstood the lesson.

I encourage you to continue in antiracist work and hope that the opinion of one individual will not sway either the HHS administration or the Hamden BOE from continuing to educate students and staff about racism and other social inequities.

I am deeply concerned that this individual continues to teach in our school district after so many negative articles and so much public disregard. The disdain with which they regard many students and staff in the high school indicates a mindset that should not be in a position of responsibility or influence for our children. I work in a high school. It is hard. I am often tired. And it is an honor to be in community with my students, fellow staff, and families. The dishonor that the Albatross shows the HHS community is not ok. Please take action to address and correct this destructive influence.

Sincerely,

Laura Davidson

53 Santa Fe Ave, Hamden, CT 06517

Public Comment - March 21, 2023 BOE meeting

Valen Diaz <valen.r.diaz@gmail.com>

Tue 3/21/2023 12:57 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Please note - I also submitted this public comment last week before the March 14, 2023 meeting was cancelled. Thank you.

Dear BOE members,

I write with questions and comments for your consideration during the 2023-2024 school start time discussion. I am a parent at Helen St School (5th grader) and Ridge Hill School (2nd grader, special education student). I also serve as co-president of the Helen St PTA, my home school.

I participated in the Superintendent's district transportation working group. I also provided my input to the ThoughtExchange. I would like to express my concerns with this process and outstanding questions that have yet to be addressed. First, the Superintendent put forward a condition of no more than 20 min change for any school, which I thought was very clear during the last working group meeting. I was extremely disheartened to see the 8:35am-8:45am start time being considered at all in the ThoughtExchange survey. It's a clear violation of the Superintendent's own rule, as it would result in a 35 min change for early elementary schools from our current 8am drop off time.

There is also the question of the change from a 15 min arrival window (8am-8:15am early; 8:30am-8:45am late) to a 10 min arrival window (8:25am-8:35am or 8:35am-8:45am) for all elementary schools as well as clarifying when exactly the school buildings will open. Can the 15 min arrival window for elementary schools be preserved? Despite the planned arrival time for buses, can school buildings open to walkers and parent drop-offs at 8:20am for an 8:35am first bell? I have raised this question to the administration multiple times via email and despite my participation as a working group member; I have not received a response. I also raised this in my public input for the February BOE meeting. It still has not been addressed. This does make a difference for early elementary schools, with a large proportion of walkers and/or parent drop-offs. Unfortunately, my experiences outlined here have left me feeling like my input as a community member is not valued. It seems that the working group and now ThoughtExchange survey are largely just checking a box, as opposed to an opportunity for substantive and meaningful community input.

The burden of this change to school start/end times falls either largely or entirely on the four early elementary schools, all of which are Title I schools. The district's course of action again leaves families with the least resources to manage the disproportionately distributed effects of a solution to a district-wide problem, deepening the inequity that already plagues Hamden Public Schools. With either option presented, we are the most affected. I still can't help but point out again and again that Helen St families are not even offered bus transportation. The only exception to this are the special education students in the two IICs (self-contained classrooms) at Helen St. What I heard from Helen St families and staff was that any change later than the 8am drop off time will be extremely challenging. Families are concerned about getting to work on time and the added expense of before school care. Staff are concerned about the educational impacts on elementary school students with adjusting to a later start

time and managing their own child care arrangements. This change will be a significant burden for a school community that experiences little to no benefit from a more efficient bus system, especially since this pursuit of improved efficiency has yet to be realized.

I urge the BOE to act to address these concerns and implement a responsive and equitable solution.

Sincerely,
Valen R. Diaz
112 Pleasant Drive
Hamden, CT 06514

BOE meeting 3/21/23

megan goslin <megangoslin664@hotmail.com>

Tue 3/21/2023 1:22 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear HPS administration and BOE members,

Thank you for your work. It concerns me to have to write this letter but in the current local and national political context it is apparently necessary to do so. I support the ongoing efforts of HPS to provide an explicitly anti-racist, inclusive education. I support spending BOE \$\$ to provide ongoing professional development to further the district's mission of providing safe(r) spaces for all of our students, staff, and educators. One of Hamden's greatest strengths is its diversity. I condemn the actions of a small but vocal minority who frame DEI efforts as divisive, as "reverse racism" or otherwise who attempt to re-center the narrative to a place that feels more comfortable for them while leaving the majority of our students behind. Through the district's efforts over the past several years, I have seen my children's educators increasingly incorporate a culturally responsive curriculum into their education, and my children are better for it. Their educations are richer for it.

I also want to encourage the administration to take the necessary and appropriate steps to identify the anonymous writer who is undermining the public's faith (including the faith of our students) in their education and even in their own psychological safety while at school. I honor the right of educators to make public political statements, even those that differ considerably from my own. However, their derogatory, racist, harmful language and disparaging remarks about our students precludes this anonymous educator from creating an educational environment where students can reasonably be expected to learn or feel safe. I encourage the administration to consider all available alternatives, including consultation with pertinent state level resources, to determine what options are available to conduct a formal investigation and implement appropriate accountability for the harm the anonymous writer has caused in our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Megan Goslin, PhD
Haverford St

March 21 board of education meeting

Sarah Dunn, Psy.D. <sbione@gmail.com>

Tue 3/21/2023 1:47 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hello,

I wish to submit for public comment the very concerning writings in local newspapers of "The Albatross." The racist, sexist, and angry threats of this individual as a teacher in our district is very concerning. I am concerned for my children, as well as all students and teachers, who come into contact with this aggression. Hate has no home in our community. I ask the BOE pursue finding do this person is and calling hearings as to their fitness as a teacher.

Sincerely, Sarah Dunn