

comment for September 19, 2023 Special Board of Education Meeting

Andrea Gloria <andreags06@gmail.com>

Mon 9/18/2023 9:14 PM

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

Cc:Melissa Kaplan <makaplan6@yahoo.com>;Walter Morton <morton.walter1@gmail.com>;Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>;Nathan Havill <nphavill@gmail.com>

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Dear Hamden Board of Education,

Last February, during the Equity Panel organized by Hamden's PTA Council, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and BOE Chair all highlighted the availability of Title I funding as one of the tools to help mitigate the continued inequity among Hamden's elementary schools. This point was made in response to the elimination of equity funds that had been previously allocated for schools with less wealthy PTAs, and the cutting of daytime buses used for field trips from the transportation contract.

We recently learned that those Title I funds were not available to the schools last year because they were distributed to the District too late in the school year to become available. Was the delay the result of the application not being sent from the district on time?

The Superintendent has told us that last year's funds have been rolled over, and will be available to Title I schools to use this year. We urge the Board to keep an eye on the process of both applying for and dispersing Title I funds this year, so that they are not delayed again. We also urge you to ensure that the Title I Schools DO receive the full amount of funds from last year and that they are not absorbed into the overall budget. We are VERY concerned that when facing a budget shortfall from the town administration and Legislative Council, funds meant to ensure equity in our schools will be seen as expendable and used to plug holes. We have already seen this happen with the loss of equity funds. The impact of the budget shortfall should not fall disproportionately fall on the backs of the families with the least resources.

Andrea Gloria-Soria & Nathan Havill

Church Street parents

Public Input - Special BOE Meeting September 19, 2023

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

Tue 9/19/2023 11:01 AM

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

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Dear BOE members and administration,

I would like to share with you all my family's experience with the changes to the bus transportation system this year. While we are aware of the actions that central office is currently taking, we have yet to see an improvement in the extremely long ride times for our special education student. I urge the administration and the BOE to take further action to address transportation issues as soon as possible, particularly for students with disabilities.

It was my understanding that First Student needed to change from a 4-tier system to a 3-tier system to improve efficiency and increase reliability of bus transportation for Hamden students. Our family's experience has been the opposite. Our 3rd grade special education student attends Ridge Hill School. This year, his morning bus ride time is anywhere from 50 min - 60 min. Before this change, his morning ride time was 20 min. This year, his afternoon bus does not drop him off at home until 65 min - 75 min after the school's 3:24pm dismissal time. In the past several years, his afternoon ride time was 15-20 min. These drastic increases in transportation time are significantly out of proportion with a 10-min change to the school start/end times and have a detrimental effect on students' quality of life. With this increased travel time, our child's day is now 9 hrs long, which is too long for an elementary school student, particularly for a child with disabilities. On our child's bus, there are still 1-2 students on board when our child is dropped off/picked up, so those students are spending even longer on the bus and have an even longer day.

State special education transportation regulations prohibit students with disabilities spending longer than one hour being transported to/from school. First Student is consistently out of compliance with this state regulation. These long transportation times are inappropriate for special education students and as the Superintendent noted in his district wide email, need to be prioritized and rectified immediately. We need to see results. Our special education students deserve better than this. It is disheartening to see such a significant decrease in the quality and appropriateness of transportation for children with disabilities. Hamden Public Schools changed the school start/end times of every, single school in the district to accommodate the needs of First Student. It should be the other way around. As a service provider, First Student is failing to meet the district's transportation needs and ultimately, it is our children paying the price, particularly children with disabilities.

Thank you. All the best,
Valen R. Diaz
112 Pleasant Drive

Charging for sports and other events at HHS

Stover, Carla <carla.stover@yale.edu>

Tue 9/19/2023 12:01 PM

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

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I am writing to raise a concern related to charging for admission to certain sports and school events and the potential impact of access for families and students. At HHS there is a \$5 charge to attend volleyball, football and basketball games for adults and \$3 for students. I raised this as an equity and inclusion issue with the Athletic Director and HHS Principal. Their responses indicated it was a budget issue and they needed to raise money and they have always charged for these sports. This can cause a disparity in access to sports or events like plays etc. for some students and families. For example my daughter plays 3 volleyball games a week. If my husband and I both want to attend and my daughter's college age sister that's \$13 per game. This adds up for families. Students may not have \$3 to attend a game and support their peers. There should be a mechanism for access to these for all. Any student at HHS should be able to attend any school event without worry about cost. Parents should be able to attend and cheer for their student athletes without worrying if it fits into their budget. These events build school community and are important. I would appreciate attention to this matter.

Carla Stover
1135 Main St.