

Riverside School Q&A

Submitted by Wendy Vizzo Walsh

- 1. Of the 270 PreK students what is the absolute number (number count) of students:**
- typical developing peers
- special needs

Our ratio is 9 peers to 6 special needs. We will not reach our final number until the very end of the school year as students can begin PreK at any point during the school year (when they turn 3).

Currently, our ratio is running higher this year with 7-8 children who have special needs. We were supposed to add a class in February, but we do not have the space right now. We are also watching the number of PreK students who will advance to kindergarten next year.

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- 2. How many special needs students take the bus?**
48

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- 3. Are PreK students on the bus with any other grade students?**

Yes. PreK students at New Lebanon School, Hamilton Avenue School, and Old Greenwich School share buses with other grade levels because they have the same start time.

In the morning, they ride with K-5 Special Education students, but this is only applicable for the AM routes due to different end times.

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- 4. How are PreK students both typical and special needs assigned to one of the six elementary schools?**

Special Needs Students:

We always aim for their home school, or the closest school to their zoned school. However, once classes fill up, students are placed where there is an opening. The district must balance the gender (number of boys and girls), and have a spot for the appropriate age. We would not put a three-year-old with a classroom of all 4 and 5 year olds. We must look at the profile of the student and then determine where there is an opening across the district. We always think about the closest proximity to their home if there is an option.

Peers utilize the lottery system and they check the boxes for school sites in which they are interested in attending. Some parents are happy to attend any school site, and some only want one or two different placements.

5. Can you describe what other PreK Special Education school districts have “neighborhood school” implementation?

Almost all of the schools in Fairfield County have a form of neighborhood schools. However, most of the districts are much smaller than GPS.

1. Norwalk had a PreK center (six classrooms), but they are dismantling it for the 2025-2026 school year and moving PreK out to their elementary schools.
2. Stamford has a PreK center (APPLES), which is attached to Rippowam Middle School.
3. Fairfield has a PreK center (Early Childhood Center), which is attached to Warde High School. They also have PreK’s out in schools (Holland Hill and Stratford Elementary).
4. Darien has PreK in two of their five elementary schools (Ox Ridge and Tokeneke).
5. New Canaan has Prek at West Elementary (South and East do not have PreK).
6. Westport has PreK at ColeyTown Elementary School (the other four do not have PreK).
7. Wilton has Prek as part of a PreK-2nd grade at Miller Driscoll (grades 3-5 are in another building).
8. Weston has PreK at their one elementary school (Hurlbutt Elementary).
9. Milford has PreK at 4 of the 8 elementary schools (JFK, Pumpkin, Orchard, Live Oaks).

6. GPS offers substantial discounts for TOG and GPS employees as well as free and reduced lunch students. How many in the 270 receive discounts from the three groups?

For the 2024-2025 school year, 18 total

- Reduced: 9
- Free: 5
- United Way designated: 4

7. How do you explain a need of PreK at Riverside with not one parent asking for the new service?

PreK sites are based on the needs of the district and where space is available. The staff were excited about having PreK, but the families are probably not aware. For the PreK children who are zoned Riverside, it is likely that their families would be thrilled to have PreK at the home school.

8. How many private preschools are in Greenwich?

We survey 31 different Preschools.

9. How many private schools are in Greenwich?

There are eight main private schools in Greenwich which are part of our enrollment report:

- Brunswick School
 - Eagle Hill School
 - Greenwich Academy
 - Greenwich Catholic School
 - Greenwich Country Day School
 - King School
 - Sacred Heart Greenwich
 - Whitby School
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10. How many private preschools are in the catchment area?

Two preschools are located in the Riverside catchment area: St. Paul's Day School and Children's Day School.

11. It's been described that the PreK classrooms could be a swing space during construction if PreK is not implemented. What will be the construction in place plan?

This has not been described by staff. It is also too early in the process to know as we do not have a design of exactly what is going to be done and we do not have a schedule that coordinates that work. The building committee would outline that work once they have a design and schedule.