



Trending: [Snow, then extreme cold this weekend](#) | [CT's Craig Melvin](#) | [How extreme cold impacts wildlife](#) | [CT real estate](#) | [I](#)

NEWS // EDUCATION

New Hartford forms task force to study future of school buildings: 'Should not be a siloed decision'

By [Michael Gagne](#), Staff Writer

Feb 6, 2026



Gift Article





An empty classroom in 2020. A new task force has been launched that will look at school building utilization in New Hartford.
Ned Gerard/Hearst Connecticut Media



Listen Now: **New Hartford forms task force to study future of school buildings: 'Should not be a**

0:00

4:30

1x

Everlit

NEW HARTFORD — A task force has been formed to examine the current and future uses of the [town's three school buildings](#), two of which currently enroll fewer than 100 students, officials said.

[My Ride: Restored 1937 LaSalle convertible finally back on the road](#)

[Watch More](#)

The [School Facility Utilization Task Force](#) will engage in a months-long study before preparing recommendations for the school board. Its members include representatives from the Board of Education, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance as well as community members.

ADVERTISEMENT
Article continues below this ad

The group will weigh the [educational](#) needs, while keeping in mind the costs for [New Hartford](#) taxpayers, Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa said.

It is too soon to say whether it will recommend consolidating any of the schools, he said.

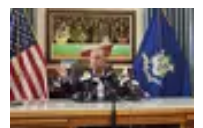
“For me — the biggest thing — it is my desire to solicit and determine the town’s desire to consolidate. It’s based on the town of [New Hartford’s](#) wants,” Sousa said.

More For You

Cellphone ban, funding fight and more: 5 education issues in CT this year



Lamont to push for free school breakfasts in CT's 2026 legislative session



Women's flag football team at Sacred Heart joins league supported by the Jets



Fairfield parents demand answers after McMahon school visit is canceled



Student-centered leadership earns top honors for four CT school administrators



Take control of your search results

Make CT Insider a preferred source on Google to see more of our journalism when you search.

[Add Preferred Source](#)

Sousa said he will advocate for what's best for students and staff and wants "what the town ultimately decides."

"This should not be a siloed decision," he said. "It shouldn't be just about saving money; it should be able creating the best education opportunities."

The Board of Education voted last spring to form the task force after it wrestled with rising costs during budget deliberations.

The school system serves about 450 students in prekindergarten through Grade 6. Currently, Ann Antolini School, which serves grades 3 to 6, has 250 students; Bakerville School has 95; and New Hartford Elementary has 96, according to the district.

The town's middle school and high school students are enrolled in the Northwestern Regional School District, or Region 7.

ADVERTISEMENT

Article continues below this ad

For some, though, school consolidation is a difficult topic: The town battled over a slated school closure just a decade ago.

In 2016, the Bakerville Elementary School building was slated to be closed after a decision by the Board of Education in late 2015. However, the board reversed course months later after voters in a nonbinding referendum overwhelmingly supported keeping Bakerville open.

At the time, Bakerville parents, led by Thomas Buzzi, lobbied for the school to stay open. Buzzi, who now sits on the Board of Education, said he formed a political action committee called Save Bakerville School as part of that effort.

The decision-making will be different this time around, Buzzi said.

ADVERTISEMENT
Article continues below this ad

"It will be a lot more open, which is great," he said. "There was a lot of information that didn't come to light last time."

Kristin Young, a Board of Education member who also chairs the task force, did not live in New Hartford when Bakerville was slated for closure.

Based on what she learned about the previous process, Young said it appeared to residents that “the decision was made suddenly, on the back of data people didn’t trust or understand, without opportunity for public input or discussion, and without a clear understanding of what the building would be repurposed for, or what that timeline was.

“Closing a beloved community school — a building that was a driving force behind many families’ decisions to build their lives in New Hartford — should be handled with more care,” she said.

ADVERTISEMENT
Article continues below this ad

The new task force will consider factors such as resources, educational programming and fiscal sustainability, she said. The goal is “to run a clean, transparent, public process,” she said.

The school district has “real economic challenges that need to be addressed that cannot be handled in the context of a budget season,” Young said. The previous budget deliberations were “incredibly difficult,” she said.

“We almost lost key programming such as our band and music program due to concerns that the year-over-year increase was too much for the town to bear, but were able to secure the funds to keep those programs in place after the initial town budget was voted down,” Young said.

The group will work with Silver Petrucelli and Associates, consultants that were contracted for \$48,500 to carry out the study, Young said.

ADVERTISEMENT
Article continues below this ad

Ultimately, if the task force and board recommend closing a school, any decision on the repurposing of that building and its future funding would be up to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, Young said.

“I think residents want to understand that as part of their decision-making process,” she said. “It would be a shame to leave any town-owned facilities unused because there’s no clear plan or momentum to repurpose the facility.”

CTI

Sign up for the Connecticut Briefing!

Get a daily news briefing and subscriber-exclusive reporting.

Email

voghels@newhtfd.org

Sign Up

By signing up, you agree to our [Terms Of Use](#) and acknowledge that your information will be used as described in our [Privacy Policy](#).

Feb 6, 2026



Michael Gagne

REPORTER



Michael Gagne is a reporter with the News-Times, covering Danbury City Hall and education. Michael joined Hearst Connecticut Media Group in late July 2023. He previously covered Meriden City Hall for the Record-Journal, and education for the Republican-American in Waterbury, as well as the Herald-News in Fall River, Ma. Michael is a native of Woonsocket, RI, and enjoys all things related to his home state, playing piano and cats.

Around The Web

Powered by **REVCONTENT**

If You Can't Raise Your Arm Above Your Head, Read This Immediately

By [RejuvaCare](#)



Mix Some Salt and Vaseline, Here's Why

By [WG Life Hacks 102](#)

Hang a Dryer Sheet in Your Closet - Here's Why

By [WG Tips 101](#)

3-Wood Distance With 7-Wood Accuracy in One Club

By [Performance Golf](#)

Neurologists: 1/2 Cup Each Morning Relieves Neuropathy Quickly! (Try It)

By [Health Headlines](#)

This 250th Anniversary Hat is Being Snapped Up in Connecticut

By [Peoasis](#)

Remember Her? Try Not to Choke When You See Her Now

By [gowdr](#)

Dementia and Memory Loss Have Been Linked to a Common Habit. Do You Do It?

By [Health Headlines](#)

1 Simple Hack to Cut Your Electric Bill (Try Tonight)

By [MirovX](#)

More For You



EDUCATION

Cellphone ban, funding fight: 5 education issues for CT in 2026

The 2025 legislative session kicked off Feb. 4, with proposals for education funding, free school breakfasts and a bell-to-bell cellphone ban.

EDUCATION

Yale announces free tuition for families making less than \$200,000

EDUCATION

Fairfield school cancels Linda McMahon's visit after parent backlash

NEWS

Craig Melvin steps back from NBC's Winter Olympics coverage

NEWS

Tracker: How much snow fell in Connecticut by Monday afternoon?

Let's Play



Typeshift



Really Bad Chess



Flipart



Cross|word



SpellTower





About	▼
Contact	▼
Services	▼
Account	▼

☒ Your Privacy Choices (Opt Out of Sale/Targeted Ads)