



REGION 15 SPACE UTILIZATION COMMITTEE

Presented to the Board of Education June 10, 2019



Charge to Region 15 Enrollment and Space Utilization Committee:

In consideration of Region 15 mission and enrollment trends, assess current and alternative plans for facility use relative to effectiveness and efficiency, and identify their potential impacts; recommend options to BOE.

Committee Members

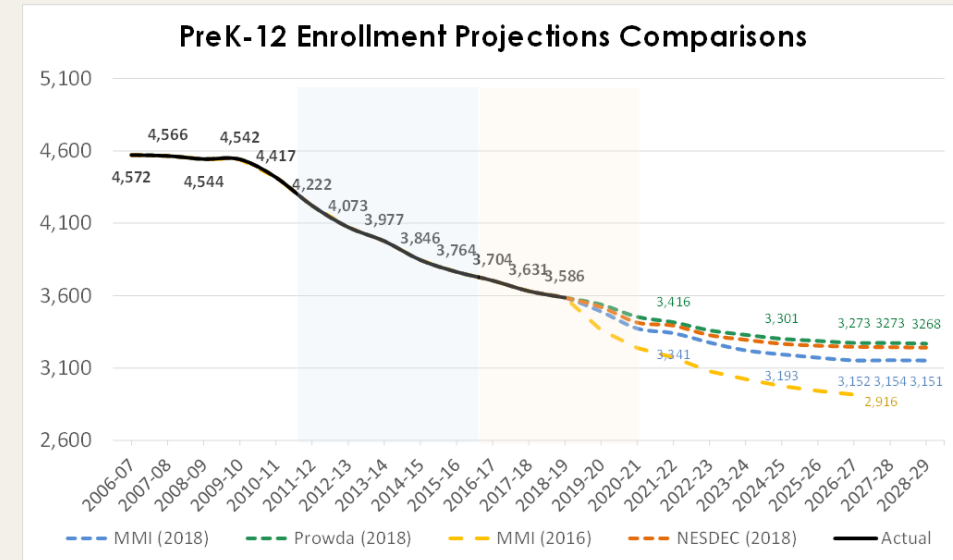
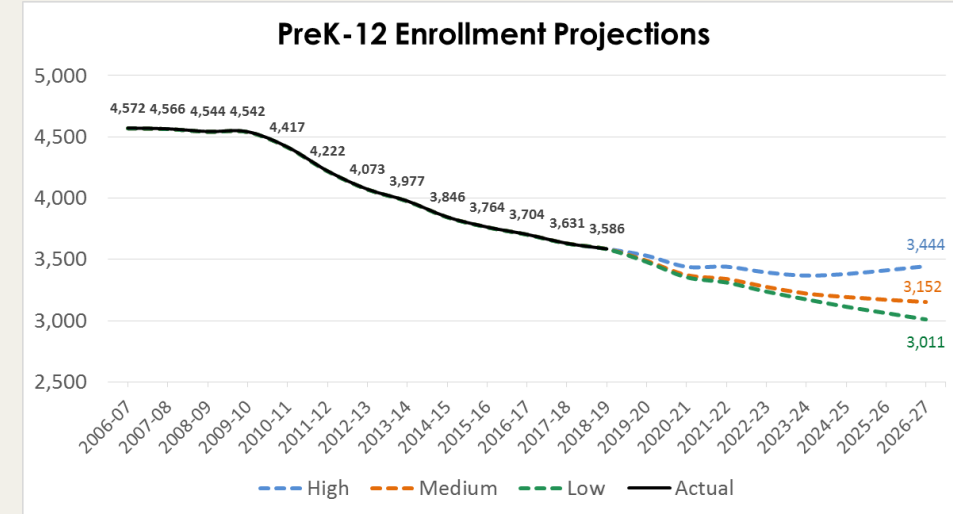
Sarah Walkup	Brenda M. Carter	Stacie Broden	Christopher Wermuth
William Stowell	George Bertram	Ed St. John	Michele Rowell Finn
Mandeline Hetzel	Jeff Manville	Heather Rodgers	Geralyn Hoerauf
Michael Bernardi	Joshua Smith	John Michaels	Jennifer Connelly

Enrollment Projection

- As part of the 2018 enrollment projection update, MMI prepared three sets of projections (low, med, high).
- The Med. Projections had been thought to be the most likely direction and was used in the utilization analysis and scenario planning.
- Preliminary K registrations at MES and PES for 2019-20 are trending higher than projected.

As of 5/22	Budget Projection
GES: 46	53
LMES: 58	60
MES: 63	51
PES: 65	55

School Year	Birth Year	Births	K
2001-02	1996	213	325
2002-03	1997	210	290
2003-04	1998	226	310
2004-05	1999	189	296
2005-06	2000	212	279
2006-07	2001	211	314
2007-08	2002	204	313
2008-09	2003	225	300
2009-10	2004	222	303
2010-11	2005	182	260
2011-12	2006	200	252
2012-13	2007	196	221
2013-14	2008	180	235
2014-15	2009	156	226
2015-16	2010	173	215
2016-17	2011	165	214
2017-18	2012	152	214
2018-19	2013	154	264



Enrollment Projection

- Early indications appear enrollment uptick experienced in 2018-19 will continue into this coming school year and potentially beyond.
- “Leading Edge” of potential uptick is 2018-19 Kindergarten Class
- Based on this recent trend, consideration should be given to the High Projection Model especially for elementary space planning

High Projection Model

School Year	Birth Year	Births	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	PK
2018-19	2013	153	264	223	216	241	241	267	275	291	300	298	282	321	306	61
2019-20	2014	149	230	271	226	223	250	248	274	276	297	267	296	284	328	60
2020-21	2015	141	218	236	275	233	231	258	255	275	281	264	266	298	290	60
2021-22	2016	174	268	223	239	283	242	238	265	256	280	250	263	268	305	60
2022-23	2017	152	234	276	226	247	294	249	244	265	261	250	249	264	274	60
2023-24	2018	144	222	241	279	233	256	303	256	245	271	232	248	251	270	60
2024-25	2019	168	259	228	244	288	242	264	311	257	250	241	231	250	256	60
2025-26	2020	168	259	266	231	252	299	249	271	312	261	222	240	233	256	60
2026-27	2021	170	262	266	270	238	261	308	256	272	318	233	221	241	238	60

School Year	PreK-5	6-8	9-12	K-12	PK-12
2018-19	1,513	866	1,207	3,525	3,586
2019-20	1,508	847	1,176	3,470	3,530
2020-21	1,510	811	1,119	3,380	3,440
2021-22	1,554	801	1,086	3,381	3,441
2022-23	1,586	771	1,037	3,333	3,393
2023-24	1,594	771	1,002	3,308	3,368
2024-25	1,585	817	978	3,321	3,381
2025-26	1,616	844	950	3,351	3,411
2026-27	1,665	846	933	3,384	3,444

Elementary & Middle Utilization (High Model)

- Should the “High Model” hold true for the 8-yr horizon the elementary schools as a whole would operate between 85%-94% utilization.

		Elementary Utilization (High Projection Model)								
		18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
Elementary Total	Enrollment	1513	1508	1510	1554	1586	1594	1585	1616	1665
	Capacity	1,770	1,770	1,770	1,770	1,770	1,770	1,770	1,770	1,770
	Seat Surplus	257	262	260	216	184	175	185	154	105
	% Utilization	85.5%	85.2%	85.3%	87.8%	89.6%	90.1%	89.6%	91.3%	94.1%

- *Approx. 10% increase over “Medium Projection Model”*

		Middle School Utilization (High Projection Model)								
		18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
Middle Total	Enrollment	866	847	811	801	771	771	817	844	846
	Capacity	1,305	1,305	1,305	1,305	1,305	1,305	1,305	1,305	1,305
	Seat Surplus	439	458	494	504	534	534	488	461	459
	% Utilization	66.4%	64.9%	62.2%	61.4%	59.1%	59.1%	62.6%	64.7%	64.8%

- Middle Schools Would operate at a 59% - 65% utilization
 - *Less than 5% increase over “Medium Projection Model”*

Committee Conclusions

Study Committee Findings:

- The Enrollment and Space Utilization Committee has been meeting since January of 2017 to analyze and discuss findings on enrollment projections, school utilization and potential reorganization options. Since the start of the study process, Region 15 has been experiencing an uptick in enrollment. Kindergarten and elementary school enrollment have been on the rise over the last year and early registrations for the 2019-20, indicate that the trend is continuing.
- In the Fall of 2018, Milone and MacBroom Inc. (MMI) updated their enrollment projections and housing analysis, and confirmed that the overall elementary school enrollment has flattened and K-5 enrollment is projected to slowly rebound to over 1,500 PreK-5 students over the next decade.
- Despite the uptick in enrollment largely driven by turnover in the housing market, middle school and high school enrollment are still projected to decline due to the matriculation of the smaller classes in the school system.
- The committee determined that for the purposes of this study total enrollment was not relevant because no scenario would impact the high school population. Therefore the recommendations and conclusions are focused only on the impact of space and the utilization of the district's K-8 schools.
- While the district has seen a significant drop in student enrollment since 2007, it is important to note that at the Region's peak enrollment, the schools were over 100% capacity and the district was in the early planning for new construction.
- Preliminary Registrations for Kindergarten, indicate K uptick likely to continue – leading to greater emphasis on the High Projection Model. Future enrollments likely to fall somewhere between the Medium and High Projection Models.

School Utilization Findings

- Based on the recent turnaround in elementary enrollment, the school utilization analysis was updated in the Spring of 2019.
- The elementary utilization analysis revealed a modest seat surplus of approximately 240-280 seats across the district's four elementary schools, yielding a projected utilization of about 85%. In the planning and research of schools in Connecticut, Milone and MacBroom have found that 85% utilization is the benchmark for neighborhood elementary schools.
- With no elementary school smaller than 370 students, it was determined that in the foreseeable future an elementary school could not be consolidated without a substantive addition to one of the buildings or a grade reconfiguration.
- Options for additions or scenarios that involved major construction/ renovation were discussed, however, they were not explored as it is not the charge of this Committee and will be left to the Board of Education to discuss.

Region 15 Middle Schools

- The Committee reviewed the analysis for the middle schools, which concluded that there is additional capacity in the current 6th to 8th grade buildings, with greatest excess space at Rochambeau Middle School where excess seats are expected to range from 350-410 over the next decade.
- The overall middle school utilization projects to have a surplus of 470-570 seats with an overall utilization from 56% - 64% for the foreseeable future.
- The Committee determined that there is not sufficient capacity in the larger Rochambeau Middle School to accommodate all future 6th to 8th enrollment without a building addition. Furthermore, the Committee felt that a single middle school at either existing site would be challenging due the geographic extent of both towns.
- The Committee explored a PK-4th/5th-8th grade arrangement and found that the addition of 5th grade could be accommodated at the middle schools; however, a redistricting would need to occur to balance out the enrollment between the two schools. Overall the system would operate between 75% to 85% utilization with a surplus of anywhere from 220-310 seats between the two middle schools. The overall utilization range in the remaining 3 elementary schools would increase to 92%-100%.

K-5 School Utilization

- With respect to the elementary schools, the Committee found that with a PreK-4th elementary configuration there is an excess 457-550 seats for the foreseeable future and an overall utilization of approximately 90%-95% using the medium enrollment projections.
- Under this scenario an elementary school could be consolidated, However when utilization was analyzed under the high projection model, the overall utilization range increased to 92%-100%.
- Any scenario that alters the grade level configuration at the elementary schools would require significant redistricting.
- From MMI's Experience, optimal building use trends are in the 85% range and once that rate is exceeded, there could be substantial impacts to class size and/ or building expansion needs.

Conclusions

- Based on the current space available and the recent enrollment trends, and geographical placement of the Region 15 Schools, there is not an ability to consolidate or close a building without incurring major renovation costs.
- With the recent uptick in student enrollment, the BOE should monitor student enrollment closely as it relates to the overall building utilization.
- While the 2 middle schools will continue to see a reduction in student population, they will not reach a level where they can absorb enough students to close an entire elementary school.
- The geographic layout of the communities and the schools prevent the middle schools from being consolidated.
- The threshold for considering elementary school consolidation with a PreK-5th configuration and current schools is approximately 1,400 students. Even prior to the more recent upward trend in enrollment, no projection has the Region declining to this level.
- Should the BOE decide to explore a major expansion or new construction option, we recommend they study the educational considerations of a PreK-4th/5th-8th system
- Should the BOE decide to evaluate available construction sites, the committee would recommend:
 - *A possible consolidation of the two elementary schools in Southbury, opening up space at LMES and MES*
 - *A possible consolidation of the two middle schools to one centralized location.*
- The Board of Education should explore potential program expansion, learning opportunities, or revenue sources that can take advantage of the potential unused space in each of the middle schools over the next few years.
- The BOE should consider updating the 2007 facility condition assessment to align facility investments and needs with the enrollment and space utilization trends identified as part of this process.