

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: September 6, 2017

SUBJECT: Amendment to the Fairfield Board of Education's Plan to Correct Racial Imbalance at McKinley School

Executive Summary

The Fairfield Board of Education ("Fairfield Board") submitted a proposed amendment to its plan to correct racial imbalance at McKinley Elementary School ("McKinley") for the State Board of Education's ("SBE") consideration at its January 2017 meeting. The proposed amendment ("original amendment") consisted of a strategic shift of preschool programming from one elementary school to another to attract McKinley students, who would be able to stay enrolled at the other school after completing preschool, and an expansion of open choice from 72 to 100 seats by the start of the 2018-19 school year. The Fairfield Board also informed the SBE that it was considering other steps designed to correct the racial imbalance in the long term.

At its January 2017 meeting, the SBE approved the Fairfield Board's original amendment with the following condition: the Fairfield Board was required to submit, within 120 days, a revised amendment including: (1) additional measures, beyond the prekindergarten and open choice measures described in its original amendment, that are reasonably calculated to correct the racial imbalance at McKinley and prevent its recurrence; (2) an action plan with a detailed timetable for meeting interim progress benchmarks toward full implementation of its plan, including the additional measures; and (3) interim reporting to the SBE on a periodic basis.

In response to the SBE's action, the Fairfield Board timely submitted a revised amendment, which includes a detailed timetable for completion of interim steps necessary to reach decisions concerning additional measures that the Fairfield Board is examining. The Fairfield Board presented its revised amendment to the SBE's Accountability and Support Committee at its meeting on June 12, 2017. Committee members engaged in productive discussion with the representatives of the Fairfield Board and provided feedback on the revised amendment.¹ Based

¹ The key documents are attached hereto as follows: the Fairfield Board's original amendment is Exhibit A; the SBE's January 4, 2017 resolution concerning the original amendment is Exhibit B; and the Fairfield Board's revised amendment and the document entitled *Supporting Information for the Racial Imbalance Plan* are Exhibit C.

upon this feedback, the Fairfield Board has included with its revised amendment a document entitled *Supporting Information for the Racial Imbalance Plan*, which addresses questions raised by the SBE's Accountability and Support Committee and Department staff.

I. Relevant Background

In considering the Fairfield Board's revised amendment, the SBE may find it useful to consider the legal and factual context in which this matter arises.

A. Overview of Connecticut Racial Imbalance Laws

Since 1969, Connecticut law has required every school district to take appropriate measures to prevent or eliminate the racial imbalance that occurs when the racial composition of one school is significantly different from that of the district as a whole.

Under the regulations adopted by the SBE to implement the racial imbalance laws, racial imbalance exists when the proportion of minority students for any school exceeds 25 percentage points more or less than the comparable proportion for the school district. For all grades of a given school, the total number of minority students enrolled in the same grades throughout the school district is divided by the district-wide total student enrollment in such grades, and the resulting percentage is the comparable proportion for the school district.

The SBE's role is to identify districts with racial imbalance issues, ensure that a district develops a legally sound and effective plan to correct the racial imbalance and, as appropriate, provide technical assistance to districts. The racial imbalance laws give districts flexibility in how they address racial imbalance, provided that their plans are approved by the SBE.

B. Racial Imbalance at McKinley and Prior Efforts to Correct It

McKinley was identified as racially imbalanced in April 2007, and the Fairfield Board was thus required to submit a plan to correct the imbalance to the SBE. Over the past ten years, the Fairfield Board amended its plan several times to address the ongoing racial imbalance.

In its original plan to address the racial imbalance at McKinley, the Fairfield Board proposed an opt-in/opt-out policy that gave McKinley parents the opportunity to transfer their children to one of three elementary schools identified by the Fairfield Board. However, this plan did not substantially reduce the racial imbalance, and as a result, in April 2010, former Commissioner Mark McQuillan directed the Fairfield Board to submit an amendment to its plan. In its amendment, which was approved by the SBE in February 2011, the Fairfield Board proposed to expand the pre-school program for low-income students at Burr Elementary School from twenty to thirty-six students. Second, the Fairfield Board planned to merge the McKinley pre-school program with the Early Childhood Center at Warde High School. This proposal was implemented in September 2011. The effect of these changes, however, did not substantially reduce the racial imbalance at McKinley. Therefore, former Commissioner McQuillan directed the Fairfield Board to amend its plan again in May 2012.

In February 2013, the Fairfield Board amended its plan again by expanding the opportunities for McKinley parents to enroll their children in preschool programs at other elementary schools. The racial imbalance at McKinley nevertheless increased. Because of this increase, Commissioner Wentzell asked the Fairfield Board, in May 2015, to review and amend its plan for the SBE’s approval. In July 2015, the Fairfield Board requested and received an extension of time to engage the community in a discussion regarding a more effective solution for the racial imbalance at McKinley. The Fairfield Board presented a summary of the status of its progress and proposed next steps at the SBE meeting on May 4, 2016.

Thereafter, the Fairfield Board was directed to submit a proposed amendment to its plan. As noted, at the January 4, 2017 SBE meeting, the Fairfield Board presented its amendment, which was approved with the condition that it submit a revised amendment within 120 days.

The table below shows the extent by which the minority enrollment percentage at McKinley exceeded the district-wide minority enrollment percentage for elementary grades in Fairfield since 2006. As noted, when this figure exceeds 25 percentage points, racial imbalance exists.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
28.74	27.40	25.45	28.70	25.81	26.81	24.41	26.48	28.56	27.18	30.02

II. The Original Amendment Conditionally Approved in January 2017

The Fairfield Board’s original amendment (Exhibit A) consists of the following two measures:

1. Preschool Option:

At the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year, the Fairfield Board will (a) eliminate the preschool program at Dwight Elementary School, which has had lower participation rates than the preschool program at Burr, and (b) offer a preschool program at Stratfield Elementary School, giving McKinley families priority in the enrollment process.

For the 2018-19 school year, the Fairfield Board will open a third preschool class at either Stratfield or Burr if there is sufficient demand and if there is available space. This addition should increase the capacity of the preschool program to 108 slots in the three schools. The Fairfield Board also will increase tuition by \$750.00 to \$4,250 and implement an annual increase of 3% per year but will continue granting tuition waivers and 50% reductions to eligible families.

The Fairfield Board believes that the foregoing steps will enable it to attract more McKinley families to send their children to other schools for pre-kindergarten and, thereafter, to keep their children enrolled at those schools. The Fairfield Board estimates that this will reduce the minority student population at McKinley by about 3% below what it would be absent this measure, based on estimates of projected enrollment of McKinley minority students in the preschool programs at other schools. (Exhibit C, pp. 5-6)

2. Open Choice:

To increase the number of minority students in elementary schools other than McKinley, the Fairfield Board plans to increase the total number of Open Choice students from the current level of 72 to 100 by the start of the 2018-19 school year. The Fairfield Board will accomplish this by adding 36 Open Choice students to the elementary grades – 18 in fall 2017 and 18 in fall 2018 – with an emphasis on kindergarten and first grade. (The net increase of 28 Open Choice students after two years is based on an estimated attrition rate of four Open Choice students per year). The Fairfield Board expects that the proposed expansion of Open Choice will increase the overall minority student population at the elementary level by ½%. (Exhibit C, p. 6)

In the written submission concerning its original amendment, the Fairfield Board recognized that neither the strategic shift in the district’s preschool programming nor the planned Open Choice expansion are likely to result in a long-term correction to racial imbalance in the district. (Exhibit A, pp. 1-2, 7-8). Thus, at the SBE’s January 2017 meeting, the Fairfield Board informed the SBE that it was considering additional steps to achieve long-term racial balance in the district, including establishing a magnet program at McKinley and redistricting after the completion of construction projects that would expand the capacity of two other elementary schools, Holland Hill and Mill Hill. (Exhibit A, pp. 7-8)

III. The Current Revised Amendment

The Fairfield Board’s revised amendment reaffirms the district’s intention to examine both the creation of a magnet program at McKinley and redistricting. (Exhibit C, pp. 6-7)

The Fairfield Board believes creating a magnet program at McKinley would enable the district to attract students from other attendance zones. The Fairfield Board anticipates that additional non-minority students could enroll in such a magnet program, resulting in a reduction of the school’s minority population by approximately two to three percentage points.

With regard to redistricting, the Fairfield Board reports that, upon completion of the Holland Hill and Mill Hill expansion projects, “according to the Milone & MacBroom consultants, we will be able to revise school attendance areas to balance enrollments and to reduce significantly the extent of the minority student disparity between the McKinley School and our other elementary schools.” (Exhibit C, p. 7) These projects will expand capacity at each of these schools by approximately 120 students.

In response to the SBE’s January 4, 2017 resolution, the Fairfield Board has added a detailed timetable consisting of interim progress steps concerning each component of its revised racial imbalance plan. (Exhibit C, pp. 9-12)

IV. SBE Action

A plan or amendment to a plan to correct racial imbalance must include “methods for eliminating the racial imbalance and for preventing its recurrence in the school district.” Regs. of Conn. State Agencies (“RCSA”) § 10-226e-6(c)(4).

The SBE has three options with respect to the Fairfield Board's revised amendment: it may approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the amendment. RSCA § 10-226e-6. A conditional approval involves approving a plan or amendment subject to certain conditions (which can include modifications to the plan/amendment), while a disapproval requires the local board to submit a new plan/amendment by a date set by the SBE. RSCA §§ 10-226-e-6(c), (d). Section 10-226e-7 of the Regulations requires that all approved and conditionally approved plans to correct racial imbalance be subject to continuing review and evaluation by the SBE. This review will include annual monitoring to assess the Fairfield Board's progress in its plan to eliminate racial imbalance, and such other actions as may be directed by the SBE.

Prepared by:

Attorney Laura L. Anastasio
Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

Approved by:

Peter Haberlandt, Director
Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

EXHIBIT A



Amendment to Racial Imbalance Plan

Fairfield Public Schools

Approved by the Board of Education
November 15, 2016

I. Background

In May of 2015, the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) notified the Fairfield Public Schools that McKinley School continued to be racially imbalanced. During the 2015-2016 school year, the Fairfield Board of Education (Board) studied the possibility of redistricting the student population to remedy this issue. The district engaged the consulting firm of Milone & MacBroom to study demographic patterns within the district and to recommend possible courses of action to reduce racial imbalance among the district's elementary schools. Milone & MacBroom presented its finding to the Fairfield Board of Education on February 16, 2016. The consultants concluded that, even with redistricting, no substantial improvement to the racial imbalance problem could occur until the renovations and additions to the Holland Hill and Mill Hill schools are complete. Specifically, the consultants stated that:

1. Racial Imbalance at McKinley and overcrowding at Holland Hill, Mill Hill and Sherman cannot be solved without school construction projects.
2. Pocket redistricting can mitigate racial imbalances at McKinley after the Holland Hill Construction Project is completed. However, it would result in Holland Hill becoming impending imbalanced (between 15% and 18% higher than district).
3. Following the completion of the Holland Hill and Mill Hill Construction Projects, the district can achieve racial imbalance objectives at McKinley.

On May 4, 2016, the Superintendent of Schools and Chairman of the Fairfield Board of Education presented this information to the State Board of Education. The CSBE, while pleased with the Board's efforts to address the matter, requested that the Board present an amendment to its racial imbalance plan at its December 7, 2016 meeting.

II. History of Racial Imbalance at McKinley

The CSBE has set a standard by which to judge whether or not a school district is in compliance with the statute. All schools must be within 25 percentage points of the district average of minority students at the same grade span. Chart 1 summarizes McKinley's data for the past six years.

*Chart 1:
History of Racial Imbalance at McKinley*

Year	McKinley % Minority	District % Minority	Absolute Imbalance
2010-11	43.47%	17.58%	25.89%
2011-12	45.70%	18.89%	26.81%
2012-13	43.41%	19.00%	24.41%
2013-14	45.85%	19.37%	26.48%
2014-15	49.10%	20.53%	28.57%
2015-16	47.90%	20.70%	27.20%

This chart indicates that McKinley School has exceeded the 25% standard in all but one of the last six years. Therefore, the Board is required to propose revisions to the district's current Racial Imbalance Plan that will move McKinley School under the 25 percentage point differential.

III. Current Arrangements

The following are the features of the current Plan, as approved by the CSBE in October of 2007 and amended in September of 2010:

1) Opt In to McKinley:

Students from other elementary schools in Fairfield may “opt in” to attend McKinley School. Once the opt-in students complete their elementary years, they attend middle and high school based on the feeder patterns that pertain to their place of residence. Currently, 24 students from elsewhere in Fairfield attend school at McKinley under this arrangement. However, thirteen of these students are minority children. Although the Opt In program has not contributed to greater racial balance among our elementary schools, participation in the program signals the interest of these families in taking advantage of the quality instruction and the cultural diversity available at the McKinley School.

2) Opt Out from McKinley:

For a few years, students who resided in the McKinley attendance zone were offered the choice of “opting out” to other Fairfield elementary schools. However, the “opt out” arrangement did not have a positive impact on racial balance and was therefore terminated following the 2012-13 academic year.

3) Pre-School Options:

Students who reside in the McKinley attendance area have the option of attending pre-school at either the Burr or Dwight elementary schools. These students have the option of continuing at either Burr or Dwight for their K-5 education. Once the pre-school children reach kindergarten, their siblings are able to enroll at Burr or Dwight as well. Once they complete their elementary years, these students attend middle and high school according to the feeder patterns that pertain to their place of residence. Enrollment in the pre-school programs are as follows in 2016-17:

Chart 2:
Pre-kindergarten Programs, 2016-17

<u>Pre-Kindergarten Program</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>McKinley Minority Enrollment</u>
Burr (AM and PM)	36	30	6
Dwight (AM and PM)	36	24	1
Totals	72	54	7

- a. Tuition of \$3,500 is charged to pre-kindergarten students. However, families unable to afford the tuition have the tuition either waived or reduced to 50 percent, depending on income.
- b. Transportation is provided for families in the pre-kindergarten programs only if they qualify for the tuition waiver or the tuition reduction. Families paying full tuition must provide their own transportation for the pre-kindergartens.

As a result of the Pre-kindergarten program, 17 minority students who would otherwise have attended McKinley School are currently enrolled in grades K-5 at either Dwight School or Burr School. This includes the siblings of former McKinley preschoolers who attend Dwight or Burr as the result of the program.

4) Open Choice:

Seventy-two students who reside in Bridgeport attend the Fairfield Public Schools under the Open Choice Program, under arrangements for Cooperative Education Services (CES). Of these, 51 are minority students enrolled in grades K through 5.

IV. Amendments

1) Pre-Kindergarten:

The district intends to modify the pre-kindergarten aspect of the Board's existing plan, as follows:

- a. While the pre-kindergarten programs have helped to address the racial imbalance issue, the Burr program has been the main contributor. Enrollment in the Dwight pre-kindergarten has been consistently lower than that at Burr. In addition, families electing the Dwight pre-kindergarten, and remaining there, are generally not having a positive impact on the racial imbalance issue. Thus the district will eliminate the Dwight pre-kindergarten program at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year and instead offer a new location at Stratfield School. We believe that, with space available at nearby Stratfield School, we can attract more McKinley families to attend pre-kindergarten and remain at Stratfield.
- b. In an effort to further enhance the impact of the pre-K program on racial balance, McKinley students will be given priority in the enrollment process.
- c. The district will open a third pre-kindergarten at either Stratfield or Burr for the 2018-19 school year, if demand is demonstrated and space is available. This would raise the capacity of the pre-kindergarten programs to 108 slots.
- d. Pre-kindergarten tuition has not been increased from the \$3,500 level for the past five years. Based on a market survey of comparable programs, we recommend raising the tuition to \$4,250 per year, with an annual increase of 3 percent each year thereafter. Tuition waivers would remain in place.

Chart 4:
Pre-kindergarten Programs, 2017-2018 through 2018-2019

<i>Proposed 2017-18</i>		
<u>Pre-K Program</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Projected McKinley Minority Enrollment</u>
Burr (AM and PM)	36	6
Stratfield (AM and PM)	36	8
Totals:	72	14

<i>Proposed 2018-19</i>		
<u>Pre-K Program</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Projected McKinley Minority Enrollment</u>
Burr (AM and PM)	36	6
Stratfield (AM and PM)	36	8
Site TBD* (AM and PM)	36	7
Totals:	108	21

**Based on demand, with site subject to the approval of the Board of Education. Could be added to Burr or Stratfield.*

2) Open Choice:

In an effort to increase the percentage of minority students in the elementary schools other than McKinley, we will increase the total number of Open Choice students enrolled in the Fairfield Public Schools from the current level of 72 to a total of 100 by the start of the 2018-2019 school year. This will be accomplished by adding 18 Open Choice students to the elementary grades in the fall of 2017, with an emphasis on kindergarten and grade 1. An additional 18 students will be added to the elementary grades in the fall of 2018. Assuming attrition of four Open Choice students each year, this would mean a net increase of 14 students per year, bringing the district's total Open Choice enrollment to 100 by 2018-19.

We project that 60 out of the district's 86 Open Choice students would be enrolled in the elementary grades in 2017-18, and 73 out of 100 in 2018-19. Because virtually all Open Choice students are minority students, the expansion of the Open Choice program would raise the overall minority student population at the elementary level by approximately 1/2 percent by 2018-19, thus reducing the difference between the proportion of minority students in the district and the proportion at McKinley School.

3) Projected Impact of Proposed Changes:

The district projects that the steps outlined above would have the following impact on racial balance among the district's elementary schools:

Pre-School Option:

We estimate that the number of K-5 McKinley minority students attending other schools as a result of the expanded pre-school option will increase by 25, from the current 17 to 42 (including former Pre-K students as well as siblings) by 2019-20. All else being equal, this would reduce McKinley's minority student population by about 3% below what it would otherwise be, and increase the minority proportion of the district's remaining elementary schools slightly.

Expanded Open Choice:

Increasing the number of K-5 Open Choice students from the current 51 to 73 is expected to increase the percentage of minority students in the district's elementary schools by approximately 1/2 percentage point over what it would have been by 2018-19.

V. Additional Steps

If the previous five years are a guide, we can expect the proportion of minority students at McKinley to increase at a higher rate than the proportion of minority students at the district's other ten elementary schools. Therefore, additional action will be required to address the issue of racial imbalance among our elementary schools over the long term. The following steps will be considered in that regard:

1. Magnet Program at McKinley School

Creation of a “magnet” program at McKinley School that would attract students from elsewhere in the district and thereby reduce the percentage of minority students at the school. Based on the building’s current capacity, a magnet program could accommodate approximately fifty additional students without new construction. We estimate that a magnet program at McKinley would reduce the school’s minority population by two to three percentage points.

2. Redistricting

A \$15 million renovation and expansion project is scheduled at the Holland Hill School, with completion expected by the fall of 2018. Also, a \$15 million renovation and expansion project is proposed the Mill Hill School between 2018 and 2020. These projects will expand capacity at these schools by approximately 120 students. At that point, according to the Milone & MacBroom consultants, we will be able to revise school attendance areas to balance enrollments and to reduce significantly the extent of the minority student disparity between the McKinley School and our other elementary schools.

EXHIBIT B

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:

January 4, 2017

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education has "general supervision and control of the educational interests of the state," pursuant to section 10-4 of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), and has jurisdiction to enforce implementation of the educational interests of the state, as set forth in section 10-4b of the C.G.S.; and

WHEREAS, The educational interests of the state include the statutory obligations of Connecticut school districts in regard to reducing racial isolation and correcting racial imbalance in public schools, as set forth in C.G.S. §§ 10-4a and 10-226a et seq.; and

WHEREAS, McKinley Elementary School ("McKinley") in Fairfield was identified pursuant to Section 10-226a et seq. of the C.G.S. as having racial imbalance in April 2007, and the Fairfield Board of Education implemented a plan to address such imbalance in the fall of 2008; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Board of Education has implemented numerous amendments to its plan since 2008, and such amended plans have not had a substantial impact on the racial imbalance at McKinley; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Board of Education was directed in May 2015 to amend its plan and received an extension of time in July 2015 to engage the community in a discussion regarding a more effective solution for the racial imbalance at McKinley; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Board of Education provided an update concerning its progress in regard to amending its plan at the State Board of Education meeting on May 4, 2016 and submitted the current proposed amendment to its plan on or about November 22, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Section 10-226c of the C.G.S. requires any board of education with a racially imbalanced school to "forthwith prepare a plan to correct such imbalance" for submission to the State Board of Education and Section 10-226e-5(c)(4) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies requires that any plan to correct racial imbalance must include, among other items, "The proposed methods for eliminating racial imbalance and for preventing its recurrence in the school district;" and

WHEREAS, the current proposed amendment submitted by the Fairfield Board of Education includes steps that may have some positive impact toward correcting racial imbalance at McKinley in the short term but do not appear likely to have a sufficient impact for fully correcting the racial imbalance and preventing its recurrence in the long term.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-226d of the C.G.S. and Section 10-226e-6 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, conditionally approves the Fairfield Board of Education's proposed amendment to its plan to correct racial imbalance at McKinley, as follows:

The proposed amendment is approved on the condition that, within 120 days of this resolution, the Fairfield Board of Education shall submit to the State Board of Education a revised amendment, approved by the Fairfield Board of Education, which shall include: (1) additional measures, beyond the prekindergarten and open choice measures described in section IV of its proposed amendment submission attached as Exhibit A to the Commissioner's Report, that are reasonably calculated to correct the racial imbalance at McKinley and prevent its recurrence; (2) an action plan with a detailed timetable for meeting interim progress benchmarks toward full implementation of its plan, including such additional measures; and (3) interim reporting to the State Board of Education on a periodic basis to be determined by the Commissioner.

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved, as amended, by a vote of 10:0, this fourth day of January, Two Thousand Seventeen.

Signed: Dianna R. Wentzell
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

EXHIBIT C



Amendment to Racial Imbalance Plan

Fairfield Public Schools

*Approved with Addition of Benchmark Timelines (p. 7 - 12)
April 6, 2017*

*Initial Fairfield Board of Education Approval of Plan:
November 15, 2016*

April 2017 Update

On January 4th, 2017 the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) approved this plan with the condition that a benchmark timeline would be added and address all Amendments and Additional Steps listed on pages 4-7. The Fairfield Board of Education approved the addition of Section VI, Benchmark Planning, on pages 7-12.

I. Background

In May of 2015, the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) notified the Fairfield Public Schools that McKinley School continued to be racially imbalanced. During the 2015-2016 school year, the Fairfield Board of Education (Board) studied the possibility of redistricting the student population to remedy this issue. The district engaged the consulting firm of Milone & MacBroom to study demographic patterns within the district and to recommend possible courses of action to reduce racial imbalance among the district's elementary schools. Milone & MacBroom presented its finding to the Fairfield Board of Education on February 16, 2016. The consultants concluded that, even with redistricting, no substantial improvement to the racial imbalance problem could occur until the renovations and additions to the Holland Hill and Mill Hill schools are complete. Specifically, the consultants stated that:

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2. Pocket redistricting can mitigate racial imbalances at McKinley after the Holland Hill Construction Project is completed. However, it would result in Holland Hill becoming impending imbalanced (between 15% and 18% higher than district).

3. Following the completion of the Holland Hill and Mill Hill Construction Projects, the district can achieve racial imbalance objectives at McKinley.

On May 4, 2016, the Superintendent of Schools and Chairman of the Fairfield Board of Education presented this information to the State Board of Education. The CSBE, while pleased with the Board’s efforts to address the matter, requested that the Board present an amendment to its Racial Imbalance Plan at its December 7, 2016 meeting.

II. History of Racial Imbalance at McKinley

The CSBE has set a standard by which to judge whether or not a school district is in compliance with the statute. All schools must be within 25 percentage points of the district average of minority students at the same grade span. Chart 1 summarizes McKinley’s data for the past six years.

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This chart indicates that McKinley School has exceeded the 25% standard in all but one of the last six years. Therefore, the Board is required to propose revisions to the district’s current Racial Imbalance Plan that will move McKinley School under the 25 percentage point differential.

III. Current Arrangements

The following are the features of the current Plan, as approved by the CSBE in October of 2007 and amended in September of 2010:

1) Opt In to McKinley:

Students from other elementary schools in Fairfield may “opt in” to attend McKinley School. Once the opt-in students complete their elementary years, they attend middle and high school based on the feeder patterns that pertain to their place of residence. Currently, 24 students from elsewhere in Fairfield attend school at McKinley under this arrangement. However, thirteen of these students are minority children. Although the Opt In program has not contributed to greater racial balance among our elementary schools, participation in the program signals the interest of these families in taking advantage of the quality instruction and the cultural diversity available at the McKinley School.

2) Opt Out from McKinley:

For a few years, students who resided in the McKinley attendance zone were offered the choice of “opting out” to other Fairfield elementary schools. However, the “opt out” arrangement did not have a positive impact on racial balance and was therefore terminated following the 2012-13 academic year.

3) Pre-School Options:

Students who reside in the McKinley attendance area have the option of attending pre-school at either the Burr or Dwight elementary schools. These students have the option of continuing at either Burr or Dwight for their K-5 education. Once the pre-school children reach kindergarten, their siblings are able to enroll at Burr or Dwight as well. Once they complete their elementary years, these students attend middle and high school according to the feeder patterns that pertain to their place of residence. Enrollment in the pre-school programs is as follows in 2016-17:

Chart 2:
Pre-kindergarten Programs, 2016-17

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<u>Dwight (AM and PM)</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	72	54	7

- a. Tuition of \$3,500 is charged for pre-kindergarten students. However, families unable to afford the tuition have the tuition either waived or reduced to 50 percent, depending on income.
- b. Transportation is provided for families in the pre-kindergarten programs only if they qualify for the tuition waiver or the tuition reduction. Families paying full tuition must provide their own transportation for the pre-kindergartens.

As a result of the pre-kindergarten program, 17 minority students who would otherwise have attended McKinley School are currently enrolled in grades K-5 at either Dwight School or Burr School. This includes the siblings of former McKinley preschoolers who attend Dwight or Burr as the result of the program.

4) Open Choice:

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IV. Amendments

1) Pre-Kindergarten:

The district intends to modify the pre-kindergarten aspect of the Board's existing plan, as follows:

- a. While the pre-kindergarten programs have helped to address the racial imbalance issue, the Burr program has been the main contributor. Enrollment in the Dwight pre-kindergarten has been consistently lower than that at Burr. In addition, families electing the Dwight pre-kindergarten, and remaining there, are generally not having a positive impact on the racial imbalance issue. Thus the district will eliminate the Dwight pre-kindergarten program at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year and instead offer a new location at Stratfield School. We believe that, with space available at nearby Stratfield School, we can attract more McKinley families to attend pre-kindergarten and remain at Stratfield.
- b. In an effort to further enhance the impact of the pre-K program on racial balance, McKinley students will be given priority in the enrollment process.

- c. The district will open a third pre-kindergarten at either Stratfield or Burr for the 2018-19 school year, if demand is demonstrated and space is available. This would raise the capacity of the pre-kindergarten programs to 108 slots.
- d. Pre-kindergarten tuition has not been increased from the \$3,500 level for the past five years. Based on a market survey of comparable programs, we recommend raising the tuition to \$4,250 per year, with an annual increase of 3 percent each year thereafter. Tuition waivers would remain in place.

Chart 4:
Pre-kindergarten Programs, 2017-2018 through 2018-2019

<i>Proposed 2017-18</i>		
Pre-K Program	Capacity	Projected McKinley Minority Enrollment
Burr (AM and PM)	36	6
Stratfield (AM and PM)	36	8
Totals:	72	14

<i>Proposed 2018-19</i>		
Pre-K Program	Capacity	Projected McKinley Minority Enrollment
Burr (AM and PM)	36	6
Stratfield (AM and PM)	36	8
Site TBD* (AM and PM)	36	7
Totals:	108	21

**Based on demand, with site subject to the approval of the Board of Education. Could be added to Burr or Stratfield.*

2) Open Choice:

In an effort to increase the percentage of minority students in the elementary schools other than McKinley, we will increase the total number of Open Choice students enrolled in the Fairfield Public Schools from the current level of 72 to a total of 100 by the start of the 2018-2019 school year. This will be accomplished by adding 18 Open Choice students to the elementary grades in the fall of 2017, with an emphasis on kindergarten and grade 1. An additional 18 students will be added to the elementary grades in the fall of 2018. Assuming attrition of four Open Choice

students each year, this would mean a net increase of 14 students per year, bringing the district's total Open Choice enrollment to 100 by 2018-19.

We project that 60 out of the district's 86 Open Choice students would be enrolled in the elementary grades in 2017-18, and 73 out of 100 in 2018-19. Because virtually all Open Choice students are minority students, the expansion of the Open Choice program would raise the overall minority student population at the elementary level by approximately ½ percent by 2018-19, thus reducing the difference between the proportion of minority students in the district and the proportion at McKinley School.

3) Projected Impact of Proposed Changes:

The district projects that the steps outlined above would have the following impact on racial balance among the district's elementary schools:

Pre-School Option:

We estimate that the number of K-5 McKinley minority students attending other schools as a result of the expanded pre-school option will increase by 25, from the current 17 to 42 (including former Pre-K students as well as siblings) by 2019-20. All else being equal, this would reduce McKinley's minority student population by about 3 percent below what it would otherwise be, and increase the minority proportion of the district's remaining elementary schools slightly.

Expanded Open Choice:

Increasing the number of K-5 Open Choice students from the current 51 to 73 is expected to increase the percentage of minority students in the district's elementary schools by approximately ½ percentage point over what it would have been by 2018-19.

V. Additional Steps

If the previous five years are a guide, we can expect the proportion of minority students at McKinley to increase at a higher rate than the proportion of minority students at the district's other ten elementary schools. Therefore, additional action will be required to address the issue of racial imbalance among our elementary schools over the long term. The following steps will be considered in that regard:

1. Magnet Program at McKinley School

Creation of a "magnet" program at McKinley School that would attract students from elsewhere in the district and thereby reduce the percentage of minority students at the school. Based on the building's current capacity, a magnet program could accommodate approximately fifty additional students without new construction. We estimate that a magnet program at McKinley would reduce the school's minority population by two to three percentage points.

2. Redistricting

A \$15 million renovation and expansion project is scheduled at the Holland Hill School, with completion expected by the fall of 2018. Also, a \$15 million renovation and expansion project is proposed the Mill Hill School between 2018 and 2020. These projects will expand capacity at these schools by approximately 120 students. At that point, according to the Milone & MacBroom consultants, we will be able to revise school attendance areas to balance enrollments and to reduce significantly the extent of the minority student disparity between the McKinley School and our other elementary schools.

VI. Benchmark Planning

Focus Tasks and Timelines

1.0 Community Engagement

- 1.1 Community Meeting with PTA on Relocating Preschool
- 1.2 Public Hearing on Racial Imbalance Plan
- 1.3 Present First Draft of Amended Plan to Fairfield BoE
BoE Public Discussion
- 1.4 Present Final Version of Amended Plan to Fairfield BoE
BoE Public Discussion
- 1.5 Site Visit to McKinley for State Officials
- 1.6 McKinley PTA Visit to gather feedback and share information
- 1.7 Exploring Options with a Town-wide Community Visioning Meeting
- 1.8 Community Survey of Program Options
- 1.9 BoE Town Hall Meeting April 2017
- 1.10 Site Visits to explore program models
- 1.11 Seek guidance from outside expert agencies on guidance for civil rights of children (i.e. ACLU, NAACP, Greater Bridgeport Latino Network, Ct. Hispanic Bar Association, Ct. Immigrant Rights Alliance...)
- 1.12 Conduct a Community Forum on Racial Imbalance updates to information, and recommendations for 2019-2020

2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus

- 2.1 Begin Enrollment for 2017-2018 Year
- 2.2 Move program from Dwight Elementary to Stratfield to make it more accessible for McKinley families
- 2.3 Evaluate status of enrollment for shifts or changes which support the program move from Dwight to Stratfield
- 2.4 Evaluate impact to Racial Imbalance
- 2.5 Evaluate financial impact for non-mandated Preschool

3.0 Open Choice

- 3.1 Identify Open Choice Placements Based on Zero Immediate Financial Impact
- 3.2 Conduct a cost analysis over the past ten years
- 3.3 Update Open Choice enrollment information
- 3.4 Analyze impact to Racial Imbalance

4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options

- 4.1 Technical Assistance from the Ct. State Department of Education
- 4.2 Study other communities and varied approaches to resolving the Racial Imbalance percentage
- 4.3 Research Intra-district magnet or other program options
- 4.4 Present Intra-district analysis information to the BoE and make recommendations for 2018-2019
- 4.5 Conduct cost analysis for Intra-district magnet and projections for minority enrollment shifts at McKinley
- 4.6 Conduct program review of McKinley Elementary student achievement, specifically minority achievement, as compared to other Fairfield elementary schools
- 4.7 Review unique program status in terms of resources, access, and equity for student achievement. Make recommendations to BoE in terms of resource allocations

5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield

- 5.1 Review Milone and McBroom redistricting study for additional follow-up questions
- 5.2 Seek approval for Holland Hill Construction, June 2017
- 5.3 Review building capacity and enrollment options PK-5- including unique programs which may impact building capacity in and around the district
- 5.4 Survey the community on redistricting options
- 5.5 Conduct a district public forum on redistricting
- 5.6 Update the current construction and renovation timelines
- 5.7 Planning for Mill Hill construction
- 5.8 Make a recommendation to the BoE on future redistricting options or alternate planning

Integrated Timeline of Action Steps

Focus	Task	Expected Target Completion Date	Completed Check
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.1 Begin PK Enrollment for 2017-2018 Year	January, 2017	X
1.0 Community Engagement	1.1 Community Meeting with PTA on Relocating Preschool 1.2 Public Hearing on Racial Imbalance Plan	March 2017	X
1.0 Community Engagement	1.3 Present First Draft of Amended Plan to Fairfield BoE BoE Public Discussion	March 2017	X
1.0 Community Engagement	1.6 McKinley PTA Visit to gather feedback and share information	March 2017	X
1.0 Community Engagement	1.4 Present Final Version of Amended Plan to Fairfield BoE BoE Public Discussion	April 2017	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.9 BoE Town Hall Meeting	April 2017	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.5 Site Visit to McKinley for State Officials	June 2017	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.2 Seek approval for Holland Hill Construction	June 2017	
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.2 Move program from Dwight Elementary to Stratfield to make it more accessible for McKinley families	June 2017	X
3.0 Open Choice	3.1 Identify Open Choice Placements Based on Zero Immediate Financial Impact	On or Before June, 2017	

Focus	Task	Expected Target Completion Date	Completed Check
1.0 Community Engagement	1.7 Exploring Options with a Town-wide Community Visioning Meeting	October 2017	
3.0 Open Choice	3.3 Update Open Choice enrollment information	October 2017	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.8 Community Survey of Program Options	December 2017	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.1 Review Milone and McBroom redistricting study for additional follow up questions.	December 2017	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.3 Review building capacity and enrollment options PK-5- including unique programs which may impact building capacity in and around the district.	December 2017	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.3 Research Intra-district programmatic options	December 2017	
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.3 Evaluate status of enrollment for shifts or changes which support the program move from Dwight to Stratfield	January 2018	
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.4 Evaluate impact to Racial Imbalance	January 2018	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.4 Present Intra-district analysis information to the BoE and make recommendations for 2018-2019	February 2018	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.5 Conduct cost analysis for Intra-district magnet and projections for minority enrollment shifts at McKinley	February 2018	

Focus	Task	Expected Target Completion Date	Completed Check
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.6 Conduct program review of McKinley Elementary student achievement, specifically minority achievement, as compared to other Fairfield elementary schools	February 2018	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.7 Review unique program status in terms of resources, access, and equity for student achievement. Make recommendations to BoE in terms of resource allocations	February 2018	
3.0 Open Choice	3.2 Conduct a cost analysis over the past ten years	March 2018	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.2 Study other communities and varied approaches to resolving the Racial Imbalance percentage	May, 2018	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.10 Site Visits to explore program models	May 2018	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.11 Seek guidance from outside expert agencies on guidance for civil rights of children (ie...ACLU, NAACP, Greater Bridgeport Latino Network, Ct. Hispanic Bar Association, Ct. Immigrant Rights Alliance...)	May 2018	
3.0 Open Choice	3.4 Analyze impact to Racial Imbalance	June 2018	
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.5 Evaluate financial impact for non-mandated Preschool	June 2018 Budget FY18 Preparations	

Focus	Task	Expected Target Completion Date	Completed Check
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.3 Survey the community on redistricting options.	June 2018	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.4 Conduct a district public forum on redistricting.	June 2018	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.5 Update the current construction and renovation timelines	June 2018	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.12 Conduct a Community Forum on Racial Imbalance updates to information, and recommendations for 2019-2020	May 2019	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.8 Make a recommendation to the BoE on future redistricting options or alternate planning	June 2019	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.1 Technical Assistance from the Ct. State Department of Education	June 2019	Periodic Checks 1. Phone Conference December 2017 2. Phone Conference January 2017 3. 4. 5.

Fairfield Public Schools



Supporting Information for the Racial Imbalance Plan

September 6, 2017

Questions from the Committee and/or Monthly Technical Assistance Call

I. *What type of magnet programs will Fairfield explore?*

a. Intra-District Magnet

The intent of an Intra-District Magnet would be to entice students from Fairfield to attend another school in Fairfield based on program options.

If McKinley housed an Intra-District Magnet Program the current enrollment would need to increase or decrease as follows based on 2016-2017 data:

2016-2017 Data

Total McKinley Enrolment 449

Total District Enrollment Elementary 4,424

McKinley Minority 53.23%

District Minority 23.21%

Absolute Imbalance 30.02%

2017-2018 30.02% *No update as of 9/6/17

2018-2019 20.00% increase non-minority by 105 students at McKinley

2019-2020 20.00% maintain

2020-2021 20.00% maintain

Table 1 New Caucasian Enrollment needed to reach 20%	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Expected Enrollment	449	444	451	453	453
Minority Percentage	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%
Minority Percentage Needed To Target 20%	43.21%	43.21%	43.21%	43.21%	43.21%
Needed Enrollment	553	547	556	558	558
Additional Caucasian enrollment needed to meet the target of 20% at McKinley if the minority percentage stayed constant	104	103	105	105	105

Table 2 New Caucasian Enrollment needed to reach 25%	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Expected Enrollment	449	444	451	453	453
Minority Percentage	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%
Minority Percentage Needed To Target 25%	48.21%	48.21%	48.21%	48.21%	48.21%
Needed Enrollment	496	490	498	500	500
Additional Caucasian enrollment needed to meet the target of 25% at McKinley if the minority percentage stayed constant	47	46	47	47	47

Table 3 New Caucasian Enrollment needed to reach 15%	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Expected Enrollment	449	444	451	453	453
Minority Percentage	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%	53.23%
Minority Percentage Needed To Target 15%	38.21%	38.21%	38.21%	38.21%	38.21%
Needed Enrollment	625	619	628	631	631
Additional Caucasian enrollment needed to meet the target of 15% at McKinley if the minority percentage stayed constant	176	175	177	178	178

b. Inter-District Magnet School

This option was explored and deemed not obtainable due to space constraints and funding. See II for more information in regards to the number of students it would take to balance the elementary schools to 15% desirable.

II. *Could Fairfield re-create the diversity and international ‘feel’ of McKinley at the other 10 Fairfield elementary schools?*

a. Establishing a Balanced K-5 Across the District

In order to balance FPS elementary schools (2016-2017 data) it would take:

945 additional minority students enrolled in our 10 elementary schools = 15% balance

Fairfield does not have the diversity in Fairfield elementary student enrollment, student seats available for an Inter-District program to balance all schools, or financial capacity to explore balancing the entire district by expanding all school facilities.

III. *Explain the Racial Imbalance Plan (Section IV, #2) when it says the [construction] projects will increase capacity at the schools by approximately 120 students?*

Fairfield aims to expand Mill Hill and Holland Hill to each become schools with a functional capacity of 504 students without relying on trailers. If each school is operating at 90% capacity, there will be room to enroll 453 students and all rooms will be utilized. Generally, the 10% allowance is for two classrooms to be utilized for students with unique needs and class sizes of 8-10 students.

Table 4 *Based on 2016-2017 Updated Information

<i>School Construction</i>	<i>Current Building Capacity 16-17 *no trailers</i>	<i>Current Enrollment *Oct 1, 2016 Count</i>	<i>After Construction Building Capacity *no trailers</i>
<i>Mill Hill Elem.</i>	<i>378</i>	<i>384 (over capacity)</i>	<i>504</i>
<i>Holland Hill Elem.</i>	<i>378</i>	<i>404 (over capacity)</i>	<i>504</i>

Mill Hill Expansion: Addition of 120 seats from current building capacity

Holland Hill Expansion: Addition of 120 seats from current building capacity

*All data is based on one point in time (2015, 2016) and will require on-going adjustments based on demographic changes in student population going forward

On February 6th, 2016, Milone and MacBroom determined that expansion for Holland Hill and Mill Hill would need to take place in order to have adequate seats available for redistricting to impact the racial imbalance.

IV. *Timeline for Construction before Re-districting would be a viable option to alleviate overcrowding and solve the racial imbalance.*

a. Construction Timeline

- Holland Hill was approved to move forward and construction is expected to be complete 2019-2020.
- Mill Hill will be on the capital planning list for initial approval in Spring 2018.

Estimated Timeline

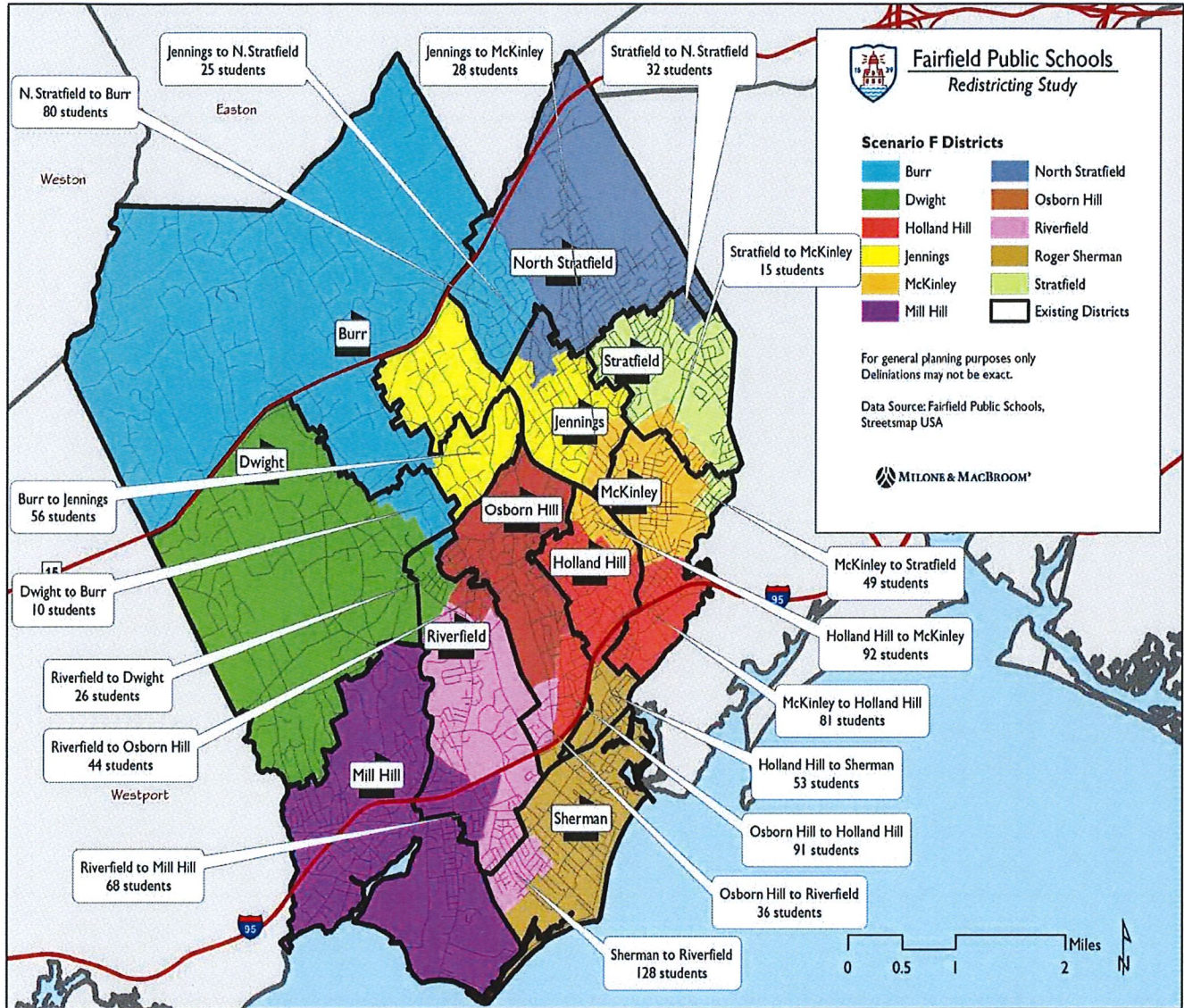
2018-2019	Planning
2019-2020	Engineering and Design
2020-2021	Phase I
2021-2023	Phase II

b. Redistricting Considerations

- Plan F Option from Milone and MacBroom allows all elementary schools to maintain 90% utilization for 7 years and balance McKinley between 20-22.1%.
- Plan F would move 773 K-4 students (20.9%) if implemented. *Based on 2016 data
- Bus travel time would be critical, especially since morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up are in high travel commuting periods for Fairfield County.
- Fairfield is 31.3 square miles with drastic changes in topography from beach climate to hills, which makes moving students to/from particular sites not feasible.

Plan F

Movement of 773 Students Across Fairfield



Fairfield will continue to monitor and refine the plan for 2017-2023 based on enrollment projections and demographic shifts across the school district.

*All data is based on one point in time (2015, 2016) and will require on-going adjustments based on demographic changes in student population going forward