

VII.F.

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford**

To Be Proposed:
September 6, 2023

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Sections 10-226a and 10-226b of the Connecticut General Statutes, accepts the Hamden Board of Education’s addendum to its racial imbalance plan, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____ this sixth day of September, Two Thousand Twenty-three.

Signed: _____
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford**

To: State Board of Education

From: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

Date: September 6, 2023

Subject: Consideration of Hamden Addendum to Racial Imbalance Plan

Executive Summary

Introduction

Pursuant to Section 10-223e-3 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (Regulations), attached as Exhibit A, is the Racial Imbalance Report for the 2022-23 school year, which lists the schools that are racially imbalanced and the schools that have impending imbalance, attached as Exhibit B. The Performance Office compiled the report based on school enrollments as of October 1, 2022. Church Street School in Hamden was one of the schools in Connecticut that was identified with a racial imbalance. The 2022-23 Racial Imbalance Report for Hamden Public Schools is attached hereto as Exhibit C.

The Hamden Board of Education (hereinafter, “Hamden Board”) currently has a racial imbalance plan in place for Church Street School, which was approved by the State Board of Education on December 4, 2019. Due to a change in leadership, concerns from community members, and changing circumstances, the Hamden Board wishes to modify its racial imbalance plan in the attached addendum, attached as Exhibit D.

Under Connecticut law, racial imbalance exists when the proportion of students of color¹ for any school exceeds twenty-five percentage points more than the comparable proportion for the school district. For all grades of a given school, the total number of students of color enrolled in the same grades throughout the school district is divided by the districtwide total student enrollment in such grades, and the resulting percentage is the comparable proportion for the school district. If a school is identified as racially imbalanced, the board of education must file a plan to correct the imbalance with the State Board of Education (SBE). Impending racial imbalance exists when the proportion falls outside a range from fifteen percentage points less to fifteen percentage points more than the comparable proportion for the school district.

History/Background

In 2012, Church Street School was identified as having a racial imbalance. In addition, Helen Street School had an impending imbalance. To address the imbalance at Church Street, the

¹ The statute and regulations use the term “minority students.” This report shall use the term “students of color” in lieu of “minority students.”

Hamden Board adjusted its attendance zones and redistricted students living on several streets. The Hamden Board agreed to monitor the racial imbalance in its schools and planned to adjust the attendance zones as necessary. While this plan lowered the racial imbalance of the school, it continued to be identified with impending imbalance.

In 2019, Church Street School was again identified as having a racial imbalance, and the Hamden Board submitted a revised plan to address the imbalance. Pursuant to the 2019 Racial Imbalance Plan, the Hamden Board proposed to balance its elementary schools by redefining its attendance zones, creating pre-Kindergarten opportunities in all elementary schools, including intra-district magnet themes to provide families with school choice, and adding 6th Grade to its middle school. Specifically, the Hamden Board originally planned to:

- move Grade 6 to Hamden Middle School (upon completion of school construction expansion);
- close and repurpose Church Street School;
- close and repurpose Shepherd Glen School;
- petition for the transfer of the Wintergreen facility to be incorporated back into Hamden Public Schools;
- develop proposals for intra-district magnet programs, to be approved by the Hamden Board; and
- develop a district-wide pre-Kindergarten program, to be approved by the Hamden Board.

Addendum to the Racial Imbalance Plan

The Hamden Board has encountered several obstacles to completing several of the elements planned in their 2019 racial imbalance plan. Due to the increase in transportation costs for Hamden students attending ACES, the Hamden Board has decided that it will delay moving the 6th Grade to the middle school. Due to community opposition, the Hamden Board has decided to keep Church Street and Shepherd Glen Schools open. In addition, the Town of Hamden decided to sell Wintergreen School back to ACES, which required the Hamden Board to move the programs it had housed at Wintergreen School to its other schools. As a result, the Hamden Board cannot offer a universal pre-Kindergarten program. Finally, due to the lack of available funding, the Hamden Board has decided not to pursue opening intra-district magnet school programs at this time.

The Hamden Board is now exploring the possibility of establishing “sister schools,” which will essentially reconfigure the grades in the elementary schools into (1) pre-K to Grade 2 and (2) Grades 3 to 5, with the 6th Grade moving to the middle school. It is proposing a contract with DMG, SLR International Corporation to analyze the demographics, housing, economic and enrollment trends in Hamden.

State Board of Education Action

Pursuant to Section 10-226e-6 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (“Regulations”), the CSBE shall determine whether a board of education’s plan meet the requirements of the

regulations and shall (1) approve, (2) conditionally approve or (3) disapprove the plan, as amended.

Prepared by:

Laura L. Anastasio, Attorney

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

Approved by:

Mike McKeon, Director

Division of Legal and Governmental Affairs

EXHIBIT A

*This document contains an excerpt from the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies that specifically concerns the Department of Education. This document is not the official version of the regulations. The official regulations are published by the State of Connecticut, Judicial Branch, Commission on Official Legal Publications in the Connecticut Law Journal. In the event there is inconsistency between this document and the regulations as published in the Connecticut Law Journal, the Connecticut Law Journal publication shall serve as the official version.

Regulations to Implement the Racial Imbalance Law

Sec. 10-226e-1. Definitions

As used in sections 10-226e-1 to 10-226e-8, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies:

(1) “Pupil” means an individual for whom instruction is provided in a public elementary and secondary school under the jurisdiction of a local or regional board of education.

(2) “School” means any public elementary or secondary school under the jurisdiction of a local or regional board of education, excluding a unique school.

(3) “Board of education” means the board of education of a local or regional school district.

(4) “Grade” means that portion of a school program which represents the work of one regular school term, identified either as kindergarten, grade one, grade two, etc., or in an ungraded school program, identified on the basis of educational need.

(5) “School district” means a school system under the jurisdiction of a local or regional board of education.

(6) “Jurisdiction” means the authority granted local and regional boards of education by statute to exercise control and supervision of pupils, schools and school districts.

(7) “Plan” means that document submitted by a board of education in compliance with Section 10-226c of the Connecticut General Statutes.

(8) “Racial minorities” means those groups listed under subsection (b) of Section 10-226a of the Connecticut General Statutes.

(9) “Diverse school” means a school, within a school district having a minority school population of fifty percent or more; which school has a minority population of at least twenty-five percent, *but less than seventy five percent*.

(10) “Unique school” means an interdistrict or intradistrict magnet, local or state charter, lighthouse, regional vocational agriculture, regional vocational-technical, alternative, or special education school or other school designated by the Commissioner which offers specialized programs or provides for the voluntary enrollment of students.

(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

Sec. 10-226e-2. School reports

Each board of education shall annually submit, in such manner and at such time as specified by the Commissioner of Education, information on the racial composition of each school by grade, the racial composition of the teaching staff of each school, and the number of pupils in each elementary school who are eligible to receive free or reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulation.

(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

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Sec. 10-226e-3. Determination of racial imbalance

(a) Reports submitted pursuant to Section 10-226e-2 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies will be reviewed annually by the State Department of Education. The proportion of pupils of racial minorities in each school will be compared to the proportion of pupils of racial minorities in comparable grades in the school district as a whole, as follows:

(1) Proportion for the school. The total number of pupils of racial minorities in the school, as reported pursuant to Section 10-226e-2 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, shall be divided by the total number of pupils in the school. The resulting percentage shall be the Proportion for the School.

(2) Comparable proportion for the school district. For all grades of a given school, the total number of pupils of racial minorities enrolled in the same grades throughout the school district shall be divided by the district-wide total pupil enrollment in such grades. The resulting percentage shall be the Comparable Proportion for the School District for such school.

(b) Any school in which the Proportion of the School falls outside of a range from 25 percentage points less to 25 percentage points more than the Comparable Proportion for the School District, shall be determined to be racially imbalanced.

(c) If the State Board of Education determines that one or more school in a school district is racially imbalanced, said board shall promptly notify the board of education having jurisdiction of such school or schools.

(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

Sec. 10-226e-4. Determination of impending racial imbalance

(a) Any school not previously cited for racial imbalance, in which the Proportion for the School falls outside a range of from 15 percentage points less to 15 percentage points more than the Comparable Proportion for the School District, shall be deemed to have impending racial imbalance.

(b) The State Board of Education shall notify, in writing, a board of education having jurisdiction of a school district which includes one or more schools with impending racial imbalance.

(c) Any board of education notified pursuant to subsection (b) of this section may be required to provide the Commissioner of Education with information concerning student building assignments, interdistrict educational activities and other evidence of addressing issues of racial, ethnic and economic isolation.

(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

Sec. 10-226e-5. Plans

(a) Any board of education which has received notification from the State Board of Education pursuant to Section 10-226e-3 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies shall submit to the State Board of Education a plan to correct racial imbalance in the school which has been determined to be racially imbalanced. All plans shall be subject to the requirements of this section; provided, however, that any school district so

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notified, which has a minority student enrollment of fifty percent or more may, in lieu of filing a plan, demonstrate that such racially imbalanced school is a diverse school.

(b) **Preparation of the plan.**

(1) Upon notification of a determination of racial imbalance, the board of education shall prepare a policy statement addressing racial imbalance in the school district.

(2) The board of education may, in writing, request technical assistance from the Commissioner of Education for the development of a plan. The Commissioner shall, within the limits of available resources, provide such assistance.

(3) The board of education shall conduct a public hearing on its plan prior to submission to the State Board of Education. Adequate notice of the time and place of such hearing shall be published and a complete record of such hearing shall be kept.

(4) A plan shall be submitted to the State Board of Education within 120 days following receipt of notification of a determination of racial imbalance, except that a school district may request an extension of time, not to exceed ninety days, if the number of students causing said imbalance in any school is fewer than five.

(c) **Content of the plan.**

A plan shall include at least the following items:

(1) The board of education policy statement addressing racial imbalance in the school district;

(2) A description of the process the board of education undertook to prepare the plan;

(3) Presentation and analysis of relevant data, including (A) projections of the racial composition of the public schools in the school district for the subsequent five-year period under the proposed plan, (B) analysis of conditions that have caused or are contributing to racial imbalance in the school district, and (C) analysis of student achievement in the cited school as compared to other schools in the district;

(4) The proposed methods for eliminating racial imbalance and for preventing its recurrence in the school district. These methods may include voluntary interdistrict and intradistrict enrollment plans acceptable to the State Board of Education as an alternative to mandatory pupil reassignment, provided any such voluntary enrollment plan addresses methods which will be used to increase student achievement;

(5) Identification of proposed school construction and school closings, if any, and an explanation of any impact on the plan;

(6) Specific proposals for minimizing any disruptive effects of plan implementation;

(7) Provisions for monitoring plan implementation and evaluating plan effectiveness, including procedures for revising and updating the plan, if necessary.

(8) A timetable for completion of each step in the plan and for implementation of the plan as a whole;

(9) Demonstration that school district resources have been equitably allocated among all schools within the district; and

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(10) Demonstration that any disparity in student achievement levels among schools is being addressed and a description of the methods being used to decrease the disparity.

(d) **Other plan requirements.**

(1) Any inconvenience caused by implementation of the plan shall not be borne disproportionately by any single racial minority nor disproportionately by racial minorities as a whole within the school district.

(2) Implementation of the plan shall not result in segregation within schools, or among or within programs. Any substantially disproportionate racial minority representation within school classes and programs shall (A) be justified solely on the basis of educational need and (B) occur less than a majority of the time during the school day with the exception of pupils enrolled in bilingual education.

(3) A plan shall not include reassignment of pupils whose dominant language is other than English and whose proficiency in English is limited if such reassignment is a denial of existing participation in a program of bilingual education.

(4) Upon submission of a plan, a board of education may request exceptions to one or more of the plan requirements pursuant to this section. The State Board of Education (A) may grant such exception when said board finds such exception shall otherwise contribute to the purposes of Sections 10-226a to 10-226e, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes; and (B) shall grant such exception when the plan is in compliance with a final order of a court of competent jurisdiction or federal administrative agency order which addresses the requirements of Sections 10-226a to 10-226e, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes and which addresses the current condition of racial imbalance found in accordance with Section 10-226e-3 of the Regulations of the Connecticut State Agencies.

(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

Sec. 10-226e-6. Approval of plans

(a) Upon receipt of a plan pursuant to Section 10-226e-5 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the State Board of Education shall determine whether the plan complies with the requirements of said section and shall (1) approve, (2) conditionally approve, or (3) disapprove such plan, within 60 days.

(b) If the State Board of Education approves the plan, said Board shall promptly notify the board of education submitting the plan, which board shall implement the plan in accordance with the timetable indicated in such plan.

(c) If the State Board of Education conditionally approves the plan, said board shall promptly give written notice to the board of education submitting the plan. Such notice shall specify the portions of the plan requiring revision and the date for submission of such revisions. Those portions of the plan which do not require revision shall be implemented by the board of education in accordance with the timetable indicated in such plan.

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(d) If the State Board of Education disapproves the plan, said board shall promptly notify the board of education submitting the plan. Such notice shall specify the reasons for disapproval and the date for resubmission of the plan.

(e) Upon receipt of a revised plan or portion thereof, the State Board of Education shall (1) approve, (2) conditionally approve, or (3) disapprove such revised plan or portion thereof in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b), (c), and (d) of this Section within 30 days following receipt of such revised plan or portion thereof.

(f) If a board of education submits a plan or a revision to such a plan which is not approved by the State Board of Education within one year of notification to the board of education of the existence of racial imbalance pursuant to Section 10-226e-3 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies or a board of education fails to submit a plan or revision within the required time limits, the State Board of Education may undertake such other actions as may be authorized by law to cause the board of education to be in compliance with the provisions of Sections 10-226a to 10-226e, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes and Sections 10-226e-1 to 10-226e-8 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

Sec. 10-226e-7. Review of plan implementation

(a) All approved and conditionally approved plans shall be subject to continuing review and evaluation by the State Board of Education. If the State Board of Education finds that the status of the plan is not in conformity with the timetable indicated in such plan, said board shall investigate the reasons for such discrepancy. If the State Board of Education finds that the board of education has failed to take substantial steps to implement the plan in accordance with the timetable therein, the State Board of Education shall notify the board of education of non-compliance with the provisions of Section 10-226a to 10-226e, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes and Sections 10-226e-1 to 10-226e-8, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies and may undertake such other actions as may be authorized by law to cause the board of education to be in compliance.

(b) A board of education may submit proposed amendment to an approved or conditionally approved plan. Such proposed amendment shall not take effect until after review and approval by the State Board of Education. Such proposed amendment shall be accompanied by written materials documenting the reasons for the amendment.

(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

Sec. 10-226e-8. Review of the decision of the State Board of Education

(a) Upon notification of disapproval of a plan, a board of education may file written notice with the Commissioner of Education requesting a review of such disapproval. Such request shall be submitted within 30 days following receipt of notification by the State Board of Education of such disapproval.

(b) Within 30 days following receipt of a request for review, a hearing shall be held in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 54 of the General Statutes.

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(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

Sec. 10-226e-9. Unique schools requirements

(a) Unique schools shall provide data in the same manner as required of all other schools pursuant to Section 10-226e-2 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(b) Unique schools shall report to the Commissioner on all activities undertaken to provide educational opportunities for students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds.

(c) The Commissioner may require the responsible authority of any unique school to appear before him to respond to inquiries concerning the racial, ethnic or economic diversity of students or teaching staff and the educational opportunities provided for students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds.

(Effective April 1, 1980; amended November 29, 1999)

EXHIBIT B

Connecticut State Department of Education

2022 Public School Enrollment by Racial Imbalance

Categories Excluding Unique and Diverse Schools

Imbalance is determined pursuant to §10-226e-3 and §10-226e-4 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, comparing school proportions with the district proportions of students in the same grade. ²

Note: The greater of the district or school minority percentage for each school will be in bold-faced type.

Reporting District	Facility Code	School	District Pct Minority ¹	District Total ¹	School Pct Minority	School Total	Absolute Imbalance
Imbalanced: 25% and greater imbalance							
Greenwich School District	0570611	New Lebanon School	38.20%	3898	70.83%	336	32.63%
Greenwich School District	0570511	Hamilton Avenue School	38.20%	3898	67.35%	294	29.15%
Fairfield School District	0510611	McKinley School	26.79%	4046	54.97%	433	28.17%
West Hartford School District	1550511	Charter Oak International Academy	45.18%	4212	73.24%	512	28.06%
Hamden School District	0620211	Church Street School	70.62%	2808	96.03%	277	25.41%

★ R.C.S.A. §10-226e-1(9): "Diverse school" means a school, within a school district having a minority school population of fifty percent or more; which school has a minority population of at least twenty-five percent, but less than seventy five percent.

1 The reporting districts include all students in schools, programs, and out-placed facilities.

2 R.C.S.A. §10-226e-1(10): "Unique school" means an interdistrict or intra district magnet, local or state charter, lighthouse, regional vocational agriculture, regional vocational-technical, alternative, or special education school or other school designated by the Commissioner which offers specialized programs or provides for the voluntary enrollment of students.

Source Data: Public School Information System (PSIS) October 2022

Connecticut State Department of Education

2022 Public School Enrollment by Racial Imbalance

Categories Excluding Unique and Diverse Schools

Imbalance is determined pursuant to §10-226e-3 and §10-226e-4 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, comparing school proportions with the district proportions of students in the same grade. ²

Note: The greater of the district or school minority percentage for each school will be in bold-faced type.

Reporting District	Facility Code	School	District Pct Minority ¹	District Total ¹	School Pct Minority	School Total	Absolute Imbalance
Impending Imbalance: Less than 25% and greater than 15% imbalance							
West Hartford School District	1551711	Smith School	45.18%	4212	70.06%	344	24.88%
Norwalk School District	1031511	South Norwalk Elementary School	74.12%	1082	96.97%	66	22.85%
Greenwich School District	0570911	Old Greenwich School	38.20%	3898	17.98%	406	20.22%
Milford School District	0840711	Meadowside School	33.90%	2248	53.90%	269	20.01%
West Hartford School District	1550611	Duffy School	44.54%	3938	25.89%	475	18.65%
Greenwich School District	0570311	Julian Curtiss School	38.20%	3898	56.43%	241	18.23%
Norwalk School District	1030711	Jefferson Marine Science Elementary School	75.69%	4796	93.88%	425	18.19%
Hartford School District	0644011	Renzulli Gifted and Talented Academy	93.82%	6050	75.63%	119	18.19%
Norwalk School District	1030811	Kendall College & Career Academy	75.86%	5086	93.55%	403	17.69%
Greenwich School District	0571111	Parkway School	37.72%	3698	20.16%	243	17.56%
West Hartford School District	1550411	Bugbee School	44.54%	3938	28.03%	371	16.51%
Greenwich School District	0570811	North Street School	38.20%	3898	21.96%	387	16.24%
Norwalk School District	1032311	Silvermine Dual Language Magnet School	75.69%	4796	91.81%	464	16.12%
Montville School District	0860111	Mohegan School	38.61%	891	54.25%	306	15.64%

★ R.C.S.A. §10-226e-1(9): "Diverse school" means a school, within a school district having a minority school population of fifty percent or more; which school has a minority population of at least twenty-five percent, but less than seventy five percent.

1 The reporting districts include all students in schools, programs, and out-placed facilities.

2 R.C.S.A. §10-226e-1(10): "Unique school" means an interdistrict or intra district magnet, local or state charter, lighthouse, regional vocational agriculture, regional vocational-technical, alternative, or special education school or other school designated by the Commissioner which offers specialized programs or provides for the voluntary enrollment of students.

Source Data: Public School Information System (PSIS) October 2022

Connecticut State Department of Education

2022 Public School Enrollment by Racial Imbalance

Categories Excluding Unique and Diverse Schools

Imbalance is determined pursuant to §10-226e-3 and §10-226e-4 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, comparing school proportions with the district proportions of students in the same grade. ²

Note: The greater of the district or school minority percentage for each school will be in bold-faced type.

Reporting District	Facility Code	School	District Pct Minority ¹	District Total ¹	School Pct Minority	School Total	Absolute Imbalance
Impending Imbalance: Less than 25% and greater than 15% imbalance (continued)							
Hamden School District	0620311	Dunbar Hill School	70.62%	2808	86.03%	272	15.41%
Greenwich School District	0571311	International School At Dundee	37.72%	3698	53.08%	341	15.36%
West Hartford School District	1550211	Braeburn School	44.54%	3938	29.19%	346	15.35%
Branford School District	0141511	Mary R. Tisko School	33.88%	1036	18.75%	352	15.13%
Stratford School District	1380411	Franklin School	73.80%	3237	88.93%	262	15.13%
Stratford School District	1381511	Stratford Academy - Johnson House	73.80%	3237	88.87%	557	15.07%

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1 The reporting districts include all students in schools, programs, and out-placed facilities.

2 R.C.S.A. §10-226e-1(10): "Unique school" means an interdistrict or intra district magnet, local or state charter, lighthouse, regional vocational agriculture, regional vocational-technical, alternative, or special education school or other school designated by the Commissioner which offers specialized programs or provides for the voluntary enrollment of students.

Source Data: Public School Information System (PSIS) October 2022

EXHIBIT C

Connecticut State Department of Education

2022 Public School Enrollment by Reporting District

Imbalance is determined pursuant to §10-226e-3 and §10-226e-4 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, comparing school proportions with the district proportions of students in the same grade. ²

Note: Bold-faced fonts indicate the greater of the district or school minority percentage figures for each school.

Reporting District	Facility Code	School	District Pct Minority ¹	District Total ¹	School Pct Minority	School Total	Absolute Imbalance
0620011	Hamden School District						
★	0621011	Spring Glen School	70.00%	2610	38.92%	370	31.08%
	0620211	Church Street School	70.62%	2808	96.03%	277	25.41%
★	0621211	Bear Path School	70.00%	2610	53.20%	406	16.80%
	0620311	Dunbar Hill School	70.62%	2808	86.03%	272	15.41%
	0620411	Helen Street School	70.62%	2808	84.31%	325	13.69%
	0620111	Shepherd Glen School	70.00%	2610	80.56%	288	10.56%
★	0621411	West Woods School	70.00%	2610	64.63%	294	5.37%
★	0621111	Ridge Hill School	70.62%	2808	69.39%	294	1.23%
★	0625211	Hamden Middle School	72.12%	832	72.01%	811	0.11%
★	0626111	Hamden High School	72.87%	1828	72.91%	1672	0.04%

★ R.C.S.A. §10-226e-1(9): "Diverse school" means a school, within a school district having a minority school population of fifty percent or more; which school has a minority population of at least twenty-five percent, but less than seventy five percent.

1 The reporting districts include all students in schools, programs, and out-placed facilities.

2 R.C.S.A. §10-226e-1(10): "Unique school" means an interdistrict or intra district magnet, local or state charter, lighthouse, regional vocational agriculture, regional vocational-technical, alternative, or special education school or other school designated by the Commissioner which offers specialized programs or provides for the voluntary enrollment of students.

Source Data: Public School Information System (PSIS) October 2022

EXHIBIT D

Dear Connecticut State Board of Education:

What follows is an addendum to Hamden Public Schools' Racial Balancing Plan. As discussed during my presentation on November 2, 2022, the need for an addendum arose due to significant changes to the original plan resulting from a change in priorities determined by a new Board of Education.

This document is organized into four parts. Part I provides the Board with an overview of the original plan. Part II provides an overview of my November 2, 2022 presentation. Part III provides a status update on the original plan. Part IV Identifies our emerging addendum plans.

Part I. A Timeline of Hamden Board of Education Work on the 3R Restructuring Plan

● September 2017

DMG Partnership Begun

District Management Group (DMG) was engaged to develop a blueprint to address changes needed to address the shift in demographics and funding while continuing to advance student academic performance, to ensure that our students and schools thrive. [DMG Presentation](#)

● Saturday, December 2, 2017

Board of Education Special Meeting

At this Board Workshop, the District Management Group (Sam Ribnick and Peter Riley) presented the variables impacting financial sustainability now and into the future. Among the trends include: declining enrollment; budgets that don't adequately maintain levels of programming and personnel; special education increases, and operational cost increases. This presentation sparked a sense of urgency for the Board to consider bold, strategic steps moving forward. With these bold steps, the Board took this opportunity to engage in developing a strategic vision that would more effectively racially balance the Town's elementary schools, ensure equity, and better prepare all students for the future.

● December 2017-January 2018

Development of Realignment Options

Following the December 2nd meeting, the Board asked Mike Zuba, from Milone and MacBroom to perform a demographic study that proposes scenarios that include the closing of elementary schools, adding Wintergreen Inter-district Magnet School back to the District, and racially balancing elementary schools according to State statutes.

● Friday, March 2, 2018

Board of Education Special Meeting

Mike Zuba, from Milone and MacBroom, presented Scenarios 1-7 as the first iteration examining what attendance zones could look like under these initial scenarios. [Milone and MacBroom Presentation](#)

● Wednesday, May 23, 2018

Board of Education Special Meeting

At this Special Meeting, Milone and MacBroom presented refined Scenarios 1-7 "Narrowing and Alternatives and Next Steps," responding to feedback provided at the March 2nd meeting.

In addition, the Board of Education approved to “re-acquire Wintergreen Magnet School from ACES for the September 2019 school year.” Upon this unanimously approved motion, the Superintendent drafted a letter to the ACES Executive Director expressing to Board’s intention.

Prior to this meeting, the Superintendent drafted Goals that would assist the Board of Education in determining a scenario that would best meet the needs of our educational community and the Town.

The District Restructuring Goals approved by the Board on November 29th follow (goal number six was added through consultation/discussions with Town leadership):

- 1. Move 6th grade to middle school** – To ensure Hamden students receive the broad offerings of a secondary experience, particularly in lab science and world language, our students will be better served by a 6-8 middle school, as is the practice in many Connecticut middle schools.
- 2. Scale use of facilities to address declining enrollment trends; Use resources more efficiently** – Some of our elementary schools are becoming underutilized resulting in the opportunity to consolidate. Shifting locations and resources will provide a greater chance to allocate existing resources for improved programming and services to students.
- 3. Incorporate Wintergreen School into Hamden Public Schools** – This beautiful building and property, owned by the Town of Hamden, could be a great asset for our school system. Some of our existing school buildings are not as modern in their design, which limits our use of them, and others currently require significant and costly structural improvements.
- 4. Create sensible attendance zones that more closely reflect our demographics and meet state regulations for diversity** – The current attendance zone map for Hamden elementary schools has had only minor changes in more than twenty years, while populations have shifted over this same period of time. As a result, our attendance zones no longer meet state requirements and our own benchmarks for diversity. In addition, more sensible attendance zones could reduce transportation costs.
- 5. Provide opportunities for greater financial sustainability** – The Hamden Board of Education is committed to proactively addressing the impact of declining enrollment, less State and Federal funding, and the higher level of needs of students and families. If we take the necessary steps to address these trends head-on, we will be in a position to allocate dollars to improve programs and buildings across the district.
- 6. Provide an opportunity for all children to have a Pre-K experience before attending kindergarten.** In collaboration with Legislative Council leadership and the Mayor’s Office, the Hamden Board of Education endorsed the recommendation for pre-K for all. As the achievement gap begins prior to the first day of kindergarten, we are committed

to ensuring a pre-K experience for all students, regardless of socio-economic status or race.

● **Tuesday, July 10, 2018** **Board of Education Meeting**

The Superintendent updated the Board of Education on the outcome of his District Management Group (DMG) and Thought Exchange meetings (to discuss the beginning planning stages of a district restructuring effort and the development of a town-wide opportunity for input.

● **Tuesday, August 14, 2018** **Board of Education Meeting**

The Superintendent updated the Board on district restructuring plans, an upcoming District Management Group meeting, the next Thought Exchange survey, as well as other meetings attended.

● **Monday, September 24, 2018** **Special Board Meeting (Public Hearing)**

Mike Zuba, from Milone and MacBroom, and John Ireland, from Silver Petrucelli, gave a presentation on scenarios 8, 9, and 10, for the Board to consider for a redistricting plan. These presentations explored schools considered for closing and redistricting and took into account feedback from the Board and administration related to the original seven Scenarios.

● **Tuesday, October 2, 2018** **Special Board Meeting (Public Hearing)**

Mike Zuba, from Milone and MacBroom, gave a presentation on scenarios 8, 9, and 10 for the Board to consider for a restructuring plan. This presentation in the Middle School auditorium focused primarily on enrollments and demographic studies. Following the presentation, members of the community shared their feedback. The feedback centered on the following themes: Parents and children love their schools; the Board should care more about maintaining the current number of schools and adding to what currently exists than financial sustainability; Wintergreen should remain an ACES inter-district magnet school; don't racially balance schools on the backs of the community's Title I schools – If the District is going to racially balance schools, have children from the northern schools attend schools in the southern part of the community.

● **Tuesday, October 9, 2018** **Board of Education Meeting**

John Ireland, from Silver Petrucelli, updated the Board on the West Woods School building project.

● **Tuesday, October 16, 2018** **Special Board Meeting (Public Hearing)**

Sam Ribnick, from District Management Group (DMG), gave a presentation on the financial aspects of scenarios 8, 9, and 10. Mike Zuba, from Milone and MacBroom, and John Ireland, from Silver Petrucelli answered questions from the Board regarding restructuring scenarios. John Ireland gave a presentation on scenarios 8, 9, and 10 for the Board to consider for restructuring. Similar comments were shared by community members attending this public hearing in the Middle School auditorium. In addition to the formal presentations, the

Superintendent shared with the community preliminary discussions related to intra-district magnet schools as a tool to assist the Board in its racial balancing efforts.

● **Thursday, October 18, 2018** **Special Board Meeting**

Karen Kaplan facilitated the workshop. Jody Goeler, Chris Melilo, Karen Kaplan, and John Ireland shared with the Board, additional information to consider as part of the restructuring plan.

● **Monday, October 29, 2018** **Special Board Meeting**

Karen Kaplan facilitated the workshop on the restructuring plan. The Board decided on Goals and reviewed the costs of building repairs and which schools would make the most sense to close.

● **Wednesday, November 28, 2018** **Special Board Meeting**

Sam Ribnick, from District Management Group (DMG), gave a presentation on the financial analysis of Scenario 9.

● **Thursday, November 29, 2018** **Special Board Meeting**

The Board voted unanimously on the following action items:

Move to approve the 3R Plan, which includes the following elements:

- Move 6th grade to the Middle School,
- Close and repurpose Church Street Elementary School,
- Close and repurpose Shepherd Glen Elementary School,
- Petition the Legislative Council for the transfer of the Wintergreen facility to be incorporated back into the Hamden Public School system,
- Direct the Superintendent to develop intra-district magnet programs and obtain Board approval for implementation,
- Direct the Superintendent to develop a district-wide universal pre-k program and obtain Board approval for implementation.

During this time, the Superintendent consulted with the State Attorney's office on matters related to racial balance and magnet schools and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) regarding updates related to the 3R Plan. In addition, the Superintendent consulted with members of the Administrative Council and Core Team to develop an intra-district magnet school plan (taking into account parent and principal input). The Board Chair and Board Secretary continued to meet with the Superintendent and Core Team members as well as attend meetings to update DAS officials in Hartford.

● **March 5, 2019** **Operations Committee Meeting: Building Improvements, Magnet School Considerations**

At the March 5 Operations Committee meeting, members viewed a [presentation by Silver Petrucelli on building improvements related to the 3R initiative and magnet schools](#). Discussion included questions about which schools would be the best equipped to be magnet schools and

what kinds of "magnet" topics/structures would attract parents to have their children attend different schools in Hamden. The administration explained that they are in the process of collecting information from parents and school principals in each school community.

● **Tuesday, March 26, 2019 Board of Education Meeting**

The Board voted unanimously to direct the Superintendent to continue the development of intra-district magnet schools at Helen Street School, Ridge Hill School, Dunbar Hill School, and Bear Path School with the following themes: Career Pathways, Global Studies and Citizenship, STEAM/STEM and Environmental Studies. Furthermore, move to approve a capital budget request of \$48,574,438 for Universal Pre-K, Church Street School, Dunbar Hill School, Helen Street School, and the Middle School. Furthermore, direct the Superintendent to develop the information required to complete the SCG-049.

Additional notes regarding the Tuesday, March 26, 2019 meeting:

The Superintendent presented an intra-district magnet school plan, which would provide choices for parents and a tool to help the Board racially balance district elementary schools.

With the State expressing support and encouragement for the Board's plan, renovating Dunbar Hill Elementary School and Ridge Hill Elementary School would not only provide additional magnet appeal to these schools (necessary for racial balance), the Town would receive significant State reimbursement for renovations it anticipates needing (now and in the near future).

● **April 11, 2019 Presentation to the Legislative Council and Community**

Information session on the 3R Initiative for the Hamden Legislative Council. View the April 11 Presentation

● **April 30, 2019 Equity Committee Meeting (First Meeting)**

The first meeting of the Board of Education's Equity Committee. This Committee was created by the Board of Education to provide a venue for discussion on district issues related to equity.

● **May 2019 Community Information Sessions**

Information sessions on the 3R Initiative progress and plans were held at two elementary schools (open to all schools). [View the Information Session presentation](#)

● **November 2019 Redistricting Scenario Update**

With new information related to funding from the state and Town, a [scenario update](#) was provided by consultants, Milone and MacBroom.

● **December 4, 2019 State Board of Education Presentation**

Superintendent of Schools Jody Goeler and Board of Education Chair Chris Daur presented to the State Board of Education its plan for meeting diversity requirements. View their [presentation](#) and [supporting materials](#).

● **January 2020** **HDAC Formed**

After the legislative council voted not to commit to additional bonding for creating magnet schools, the district regrouped to get more community support and direction. The Hamden Diversity Advisory Council was created and helmed by Sarah Camiscolli from Yale University's Education Studies Program at Yale Law School and the Superintendent. The group consisting of community members, district and town administrators, teachers, parents, and legislators, worked throughout 2020 to create its [committee report](#). HDAC proceeded to create two task forces to focus on racially balancing the schools through Controlled Choice and through Universal Pre-K.

● **March 13th – June 2020** **Schools Close Down as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic**
HDAC continues its work remotely during this time period.

● **June 28, 2020** **Acceptance into the Bridges Collaborative**

The Superintendent applied to and was accepted into The Bridges Collaborative. The Bridges Collaborative is an initiative of The Century Foundation. The Century Foundation is a progressive, independent think tank, which conducts research, develops solutions and drives policy change to make people's lives better. They pursue economic, racial, and gender equity in education, as well as health care. Being part of this collaborative afforded members of the two HDAC task forces the opportunity to team up with other communities engaged in the same work.

● **February/March 2021** **Community Input**

At the direction of the Board of Education, Parents at Church Street School and Shepherd Glen School were sent surveys regarding upcoming town halls to discuss the planned possible closing of these schools and what that would mean to these communities.

● **April 12, 2021 & April 27, 2021** **Community Input**

The Board and Church Street School / Shepherd Glen School administrators met with the families in town hall-style meetings at the respective schools. Parents and teachers shared their feelings about the recommended plans to close both schools and how these closures would impact their lives. The event was offered both by Zoom and in person.

● **October 19, 2021** **School Building Committee approved and recommended to the Legislative Council the selection of the Middle School Construction Project Architect**

The Town sent out RFQ's and then RFP's for architects and 7 proposals were submitted and shortlisted to 4 and after interviews it came down to TSKP (Tai Soo Kim Partners) Studio in Hartford, CT.

● **November 9, 2021** **New Board of Education Seated**

Prior to the new Board being seated, the Superintendent provided an overview of the 3R plan and timeline. The new Board of Education shared concerns over the disparate impact on the

Church Street and Shepherd Glen communities. Amplified by the pandemic, both communities experienced significant economic, health-related and social/emotional impacts from the pandemic and relied greatly on their neighborhood schools for food relief and professional support.

- **March 2, 2022**

The Board voted unanimously to keep open Church Street School & Shepherd Glen School, along with voting to sell the Wintergreen School to ACES.

- **July 2022**

With the removal of magnet schools from the district 3R plan, the HDAC Task Force tasked with recommending a balancing plan to the Board continues to meet to develop its recommendations. At this time, the Committee is pursuing a plan to re-organize its elementary schools into Pre-K-2 and 3-5 “sister-schools”. Before bringing this plan to the Board, the Task Force is in the process of developing a Thought Exchange survey to gather additional community input.

In the meantime, the School Building Committee is continuing to meet with the architect and engineer assigned to the Middle School project to build a sixth-grade extension to Hamden Middle School. Delays to this project have resulted from significant cost increases and requests from the Planning and Zoning Commission to update the land use survey.

Part II. Presentation to the State Board of Education on November 2, 2022

In addition to the aforementioned changes to the make-up of the Hamden Board of Education, I contextualized additional changes that were simultaneously occurring in the district. These district-based changes included, but were not limited to the following:

- I assumed the position as Superintendent of Hamden Public Schools on September 1, 2022
- I restructured the two Assistant Superintendent positions. In short, during my predecessor’s tenure, there were two Assistant Superintendents- one for Human Resources and one for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. My predecessor retired, and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment became Superintendent in another district. When I changed the design of the Executive Leadership in the district, that resulted in all three Executive Leadership positions being filled by people new to their positions.
- In addition to the leadership changes bulleted above, there were 9 changes in administration throughout the district for the 2022-2023 school year, including, but not limited to: A new Director of PPS, two new elementary principals, a new English

Language Arts Director, a new Math Director, and 2 new Special Education administrators

- Since the 3R Project was originally designed, there has been a high degree of turnover on the Board of Education which was accompanied by a new vision for our elementary schools, especially where issues concerning equity are involved
- Layer onto the challenges bulleted above the COVID-19 pandemic and the comprehensive, perhaps unprecedented challenges we faced should come into clearer view

What follows is a brief summary of the 6 areas that constituted the core of the original 3R plan.

- 1) At the time of my November 2nd presentation to the State Board of Education, the Hamden Board of Education was fully supportive of moving 6th grade to Hamden Middle School, despite a significant increase in the cost of doing so. HMS is currently grades 7 and 8 only. Aside from the academic benefits that moving the 6th grade to HMS would provide (i.e. 6th graders having access to science labs and world language instruction) moving the 6th grade to Hamden Middle was connected to much of the other work we need to do not just in terms of racially balancing our schools, but also as part of our plan to bring our IIC classrooms to our elementary schools (and one to the middle school and one to the high school), due to the closure of Wintergreen School. Moving the 6th grade to HMS is also connected to an expansion of our Pre-K program in that with 6th grade moved, that opens up classroom space to increase the number of Pre-K classrooms we currently have in the district. I will mention this a little later, but I want to emphasize here that it is not the district's goal to in any way compromise or compete with private pre-k businesses.
- 2) Closing and repurposing Church Street and Shepherd Glen schools (I have combined two bullets here).
- 3) Petition for the transfer of the Wintergreen facility to Hamden Public Schools.
- 4) Developing proposals for intra-district magnet programs, to be approved by the Hamden Board of Education.
- 5) Developing a district-wide pre-Kindergarten program to be approved by the Board. In an attempt to address this concern in a systematic way, the Hamden Diversity Advisory Council (HDAC) was created to engage community leaders in the process of reimagining and restructuring results for equity and diversity in Hamden Public Schools, with a goal of engaging across differences, to build relationships, analyze data. HDAC consisted of 70 people including parents, teachers, students, administrators, and community advocates. The group met first in February of 2020 and moved to a virtual platform due to the pandemic.

As you will discern from my overview, much has changed in the Hamden Public Schools since this plan was approved. There are two remaining members of the Board of Education who approved the plan in 2020. So here is where we are transitioning to:

- 1) Again, we remain committed to moving the 6th grade to Hamden Middle School and fully expect the Town to remain committed to the program as well so we are moving ahead with that.
- 2) We are now exploring the sister school concept, where the elementary schools become Pre-k- 2 and 3-5. Though we are in the early stages of this concept, one of our principals who is pursuing her doctorate has already done some extensive work in examining the possibilities of making this a reality. We are considering the feasibility of partnering with either DMG, SLR International Corporation (formerly Milone and MacBroom- they analyze demographic, housing, and economic trends, characteristics and forecasting, birth data, and historic trend enrollments), or others to do an even deeper dive into this potential because our initial thinking is that this is the most effect way to ensure that our elementary schools are racially balanced.
- 3) Hiring of a Director of DEI and Strategic Planning who can devote the majority of their time to researching, developing, vetting, overseeing, and serving as the point-person for our racial balancing efforts, as well as our efforts that all that we do is coherent across the district. Achieving more integrated elementary schools- especially within the borders of a diverse town- is such an important goal that it warrants having someone who can spend their time working on this on a daily basis.
- 4) We will continue to explore ways to increase the number of Pre-K classes in our district, while also working collaboratively with private providers so that we do not negatively impact their existing businesses. I am looking forward to us providing expanded opportunities for technical support to providers, and collaborating with them to increase the number of preschool slots available to the extent possible given our decreased classroom capacity.

Part III. Current Status of the Core of the Original 3R Plan

1) Hamden Middle School Renovations

Not unlike many districts across the state of Connecticut, Hamden Public Schools faced a significant fiscal cliff for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The amount we needed to simply maintain our current level of services and to meet contractual obligations was 8.9 million dollars more than the prior year's operating budget. In addition, subsequent to my budget recommendation to the Board, we were informed that we would be required to pay an additional \$500,000 in bus transportation costs associated with Hamden students who attend ACES, as ACES decided to move Wintergreen Magnet School back to its original Hamden location. The significant fiscal challenges we faced for the current year required the Board to make some difficult choices, one

of which was to not pursue the addition of the 6th grade to Hamden Middle School.

2) Closing two elementary schools

Subsequent to the Board's approval of the plan to close both schools, the Board revisited its decision due in part to a change in the composition of the Board's membership. After a number of public meetings on the matter, the Board then voted not to close either of the schools because of the testimony provided by various constituent groups at both schools. The constituent groups were clear and unambiguous about the important role each of the schools played in their various communities. The compelling public statements by these groups were the basis for a change in the Board's direction. Parents, students, and faculty at these schools wanted their schools to stay as they were, despite concern about racial imbalance.

3) Transfer of the Wintergreen facility so that it is incorporated into Hamden Public Schools

Wintergreen did come back for use by the Hamden School District. We used it to temporarily house our Hamden Early Learning Program (HELP), as well as our secondary alternative school program, Hamden Collaborative Learning Center (HCLC), and our IIC classes. IIC classes are an acronym for Instructional Intervention Centers which are smaller, supported settings designed to assist students who have diverse academic and social-emotional needs. In many instances, this population of students would be recommended for outplacement.

In the school year 2022-2023, the Town of Hamden decided to sell Wintergreen School back to ACES, effective July 1, 2023, which required us to move all existing programs from the school and find permanent educational settings for the programs within our existing district facilities.

4) Developing a proposal for intra-district magnet programs

The Hamden Board of Education, as well as then-Superintendent Goeler, determined that this option was not fiscally feasible- from either the Board's ability to pay or the State Department of Education's ability to provide financial support. As such, that proposal was no longer considered feasible.

5) Expand Pre-K

We currently have the HELP Program (90 slots) and Child Daycare contracts with Sleeping Giant Daycare (30 slots). The Hamden High Nursery School Laboratory School (which provides child care for 2-5 days a week, has one lead teacher, and our students take child development courses while working with the pre-K students, using the Emergent Curriculum). We have an integrated Pre-K program at Alice Peck Learning Center with certified teachers, students must

be 3.5 years old and potty trained. We have added an additional Pre-K classroom to one of our elementary schools at Ridge Hill School.

As mentioned earlier in this addendum, when Wintergreen School was sold to ACES, we were required to move the programming there to other schools in the district. When Wintergreen School was sold, we had to find ten (10) classrooms in our existing elementary schools for the IIC classes. We also had to relocate HCLC (our alternative secondary education program) which, when combined with the need to increase the number of preschool special education classrooms due to increased need in the district, made it impossible to find classrooms in order to expand traditional preschool classrooms in our district.

Part IV. Emerging Plans for the Addendum to the 3R Plan

1. Contract with DMG

In 2017, the Hamden Board of Education engaged the services of District Management Group (DMG) in order to develop a blueprint to address changes needed to address the shift in demographics and funding while continuing to advance student academic performance, to ensure that our students and schools thrive. Given that the study was conducted over 5 years ago, we will reengage the services of DMG and narrow the scope of their work to researching the feasibility of a [sister school model](#) (including the possibility of implementing this model if one of our elementary schools is closed at the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year), providing us with research from successful racial balancing plans from across the country, and working with administration to develop a comprehensive plan for racial balancing that is specifically suited for Hamden Public Schools. We were able to secure funding for this consultancy as part of an agreement with the Town of Hamden regarding the use of proceeds from the sale of Wintergreen School to ACES.

2. Use of Thought Exchange and Survey Monkey to gather more recent community attitudes regarding racial balancing efforts.

We currently contract with [Thought Exchange](#) and subscribed for a more expanded version of [Survey Monkey](#) in order to have the appropriate computer-based platforms to solicit community input regarding the development of a racial balancing plan. Community conversations throughout the district in regard to racial balancing are essential in order to inform the Board's decision-making regarding the development of an appropriate addendum to the racial balancing plan.

3. Hire a Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

Given the significant time and resource constraint already placed upon Executive Leadership in the district, it is imperative to have someone whose time is primarily dedicated to developing a racial balancing plan, serving as an accessible liaison for the community, and supporting the alignment of and creating coherence in all DEIA-centered initiatives in the district.

Summary

As noted throughout this memorandum, there was considerable leadership change throughout our school district this year. When coupled with the typical challenges that a district like Hamden faces each and every year, including unprecedented fiscal challenges requiring the elimination of 16 full-time positions, two of which were administrative positions, we simply did not have the capacity to give our full attention to the racial balancing plan.

However, when negotiating with the Town of Hamden governmental leadership regarding the use of proceeds from the [sale of Wintergreen School](#), we codified the importance of developing a racial balancing plan by writing into the agreement that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the school would be used to develop an addendum to our original plan.

Hamden Board of Education Chairperson Melissa Kaplan has been and continues to be a staunch advocate for racially balanced schools, and the Hamden Board of Education, as a body, remains committed to implementing a sensible and coherent plan.

As superintendent, I remain committed to working with all stakeholders in doing the incredibly challenging work of developing a coherent racial balancing plan in our elementary schools. We look forward to more fully engaging in this process during this school year, and we will undoubtedly benefit from the Connecticut State Department of Education's guidance and support.