

**Please Note: These minutes are pending Board approval.**  
**Board of Education**  
**Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on June 2, 2015 in the council chambers at 3 Primrose Street.

K. Alexander, Chair	J. Erardi
L. Roche, Vice Chair	L. Gejda
K. Hamilton, Secretary	R. Bienkowski
D. Leidlein	20 Staff
J. Vouros	approx. 70 Public
D. Freedman	2 Press
M. Ku	

Mr. Alexander called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

MOTION: Mrs. Ku moved that the Board of Education go into executive session to interview the candidate for the special education supervisor position and invited Dr. Erardi, Dr. Gejda, Julie Haggard and Maureen Hall. Mr. Freedman seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 1 – Executive Session

The Board exited executive session at 7:03 p.m.

Item 2 – Pledge of Allegiance

Item 3 – Action Regarding Special Education Candidate

MOTION: Mrs. Ku moved that the Board of Education appoint Maureen Hall supervisor of special education with salary per the administrators' contract. Mr. Vouros seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Mr. Alexander welcomed Mrs. Hall to the district and Dr. Erardi spoke about her career and how fortunate we are to have her with us.

Item 4 – Celebration of Excellence

Unified Sports Team:

Dr. Erardi said the Unified Sports program began last winter. Coaches, Kathy Davey and Margaret O'Callaghan, and student coaches, Nick Rubino, Nick Roche, Allie Morrill and Kira Flynn, have helped the program continue to flourish. This program was recognized by CIAC this year by receiving the Ann Malagronte Rookie School Award at the Unified Sports Banquet this April. Kathy Davey introduced the student members.

Retiring Teachers:

Dr. Erardi introduced the retiring administrator and teachers which included Kathy Boettner, Paula Greenfield, Leslie Gunn, Gael Lynch, Kate MacKinney, Gail Maletz, Lillian Martenson, Valerie Pagano-Hepburn, Judy Silverlight, Georgia Smith, Arlene Spoonfeather, Linda Sykes, and Jeanne Cavallaro who was unable to attend. These retirees worked 354 years in the Newtown school system. They were presented with a gift from the Board and a reception followed.

Item 5 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved that the Board of Education approve the consent agenda which includes the minutes of May 19, 2015, the donation of \$13,858.95 to Sandy Hook School from their PTA, and the resignation of Tiffany Cotroneo. Mrs. Ku seconded. Ms. Hamilton asked to add a second by Mr. Freedman to the first executive session motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 6 – Public Participation

Wolfgang Halbig, 25526 Hawks Run Lane, Sorrento, Florida, spoke about the celebration of excellence acknowledging the unified sports team members. He referred to the Sandy Hook School Chorus who sang at the Super Bowl and were not acknowledged by the Board.

Item 7 – Reports

Chair Report: Mr. Alexander met with the Sustainable Energy Commission with ideas on recycling.

Superintendent's Report: Last night attended the NHS National Honor Society banquet. Next year we will have nearly 200 members.

Friday, June 12 there will be a scholars' luncheon with the top 5% students in the high school cafetorium. We will have an honoree in the Teacher of the Year program with the recipient being announced the last day of school.

There is a conflict with the July 14 Board meeting as Dr. Erardi is involved with the NFT presentation.

Dr. Erardi shared books being used in the NPS Professional Learning Community.

Student Reports:

Rilind Abazi said Peer Leadership hosted their annual bone marrow donor drive.

Congratulations to the girls and boys golf team champions. He will be attending training on safe school climate.

Megan Milano congratulations to the *City of Angels* cast and crew that received three awards for this production. Finals will begin June 11. She thanked the Board for including her and Rilind at their meetings.

Mr. Alexander also thanked them for being part of the Board this year.

Committee reports:

Ms. Hamilton said the policy committee has discussed student dress code and she spoke to the high school PTA this morning. She asked the students to share their thoughts with her.

Item 8 – There was no old business.Item 9 – New Business

Facility Study Report:

Dr. Erardi presented the Facility Study Report which is attached.

Mr. Alexander thanked Dr. Erardi and opened the discussion to the Board.

Ms. Hamilton thanked the committee and said that regarding the Hawley trust the land is deeded to the town.

Mrs. Ku felt that this process shows we can close a school. The conclusion will be the best for education.

Mr. Freedman said it would be helpful to know the full capacity for each school and asked what the town would do with the building.

Dr Erardi said they have not had conversations with the town yet.

Mr. Freedman said Hawley was landlocked and not viable for the town to use. The middle school is more accessible. It's important to make the decision and then let the taxpayers decide how to use the building.

Mrs. Leidlein asked if there was any discussion regarding the transitions for student that have to move.

Dr. Erardi said the model has the same number of transitions. The committee looked at this through an instructional lens.

Mrs. Leidlein asked that regarding the cost due to the state if there would be any restriction on the educational use of the building.

Dr. Erardi said there needs to be a presence of some kind that the Board would still be involved with. The committee looked at waiting two more years. The middle school congestion goes away in the 2018-2019 school year.

Mr. Vouros said he would like the committee to look at a detailed closing of the middle school researched as thoroughly as for Hawley.

Dr. Erardi said we have that data. The district will be minus over 1,000 students the start of that year.

Mrs. Ku suggested looking at how sustainable closing the middle school would be seven or eight years out.

Ms. Hamilton said the committee also talked about the ability to keep our sixth graders with the younger grades. In 2016-17 we will lose the Serv Grant and the affordable health care act will come into play so not doing this has another affect.

Mr. Ku is convinced we can close a school. We have to see how this would fit into our community.

Mrs. Leidlein asked where the money would come from to pay the state.

Mr. Bienkowski said money for school building grants goes to the town so it would become a town obligation.

Mrs. Ku asked what would happen when we have to reopen a school when enrollment increases.

Dr. Erardi said there is a high level of confidence that this is a solid recommendation for the next 10 years and it allows us to feel strongly that the following 10 years we will return to increased enrollment. There will also be pockets of space in our district which will allow us to talk about the next 20 years. We will have information on costs of closing a school from Mr. Faeilla at the next meeting.

Mr. Freedman asked if the committee looked at moving the eighth grade to the high school.

Dr. Erardi said if we did that there would be a wing dedicated to eighth grade students.

Mr. Vouros feels we must explore all educational benefits to maintain and enhance the location with the best model for academic rigor. He asked if we are certain the Serv Grant will stop.

Dr. Erardi said it comes to a close in 2015-16 but we may get an extension for a lesser amount.

Mr. Vouros said were Hawley to close there has to be intent conversation on what impact it will have on Sandy Hook students socially and emotionally to be receiving more students. Also, we may have to deal with situations where parents who don't want their children attending a certain school.

#### Item 10 – Public Participation

Melanie O'Connell, 64 Butterfield Road, feels the emotional aspect will have to be addressed. She heard some people at Sandy Hook are having reservations going back there. We have to think about the children.

Carol Ann Davis, 28 Farm Field Ridge, feels it is premature to close a school with Sandy Hook School opening. We have to meet the needs of that school. We should wait and see how that move goes first before having the trauma of closing a school.

Sara Kelly, 71 Dodgingtown Road, is PTA President at Head O'Meadow. She wants a guarantee that the cost savings of closing a school be realized by our children. That money should go back to the schools. If it will not, then closing a school is not in the best interest of the district. If there is reconfiguration she prefers K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 and suggested closing the middle school. Class size will be a concern as well as longer bus rides with redistricting.

Mike Arbowski, 35 Boggs Hill Road, teaches in New York with 30 students in a classroom. Creating larger elementary schools comes down to money. Safety in large elementary schools is a problem. Moving eighth grade students to the high school causes extreme developmental issues. Also, portable classrooms will never leave.

Kinga Walsh, 21 Horseshoe Ridge Road, suggested a joint meeting of the Board of Education Legislative Council and Board of Finance to share information to reach the bottom line as a town.

Deanna Pearson, 2 Windy Woods Circle, is a teacher in Newtown. A school is a family and Hawley is a unique and historical building. Moving students will need to be considered.

Michelle Hankin, 16 Greenleaf Farms Road, said reducing transitions is critical. She prefers children being in one building for a longer period of time. There is anxiety with redistricting. She would support closing the middle school.

Casey Ragan, 12 Meadow Road, said we are trying to rebuild the community and should hold off and rebuild Sandy Hook School first. It won't look good closing a school after getting money to build a new one.

MOTION: Mrs. Leidlein moved to go into executive session regarding the 2015-2016 non-union wages, the central office contractual employees, and the superintendent's evaluation and invited Dr. Erardi. Mrs. Roche seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 11 – Executive Session

Executive session began at 9:30 p.m.

Dr. Erardi left at 10:15 p.m. and Mr. Vouros left at 10:30 p.m.

MOTION: Mrs. Ku moved that the meeting adjourn. Mr. Freedman seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Item 12 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

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Kathryn Hamilton  
Secretary

Sandy Hook School Parent Teacher Association  
375 Fan Hill Road  
Monroe, CT 06468

May 19, 2015

Newtown Board of Education  
3 Primrose Lane  
Newtown, CT 06470

Dear Newtown Board of Education Members,

The Sandy Hook School Parent Teacher Association is pleased to provide Sandy Hook School with a donation in the amount of \$13,858.95, for the purchase of an iPad Cart and 20 iPads.

Please accept this donation as the SHS PTA's continuing effort to enhance the teaching and learning of Sandy Hook School students.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Burns". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Stephanie Burns  
President, Sandy Hook School PTA

CC: Dr. Kathleen Gombos, SHS Principal

May 22, 2015

Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Newtown Public Schools  
12 Berkshire Road  
Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Dear Dr. Erardi,

Please accept this letter as notice of my resignation from my position as Library Media Specialist at Newtown High School, effective at the end of my current contract, Wednesday, June 24, 2015.

My husband has accepted a job position in Boston and we will be moving our family to the Boston area. I have enjoyed being a Library Media Specialist at the high school for the past seven years and I have appreciated the opportunities that have been given to me by Newtown Public Schools. I will do my best to hand off my current responsibilities prior to June 24th. Please let me know if you need my help in any other way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tiffany Cotroneo', written in a cursive style.

Tiffany Cotroneo

cc:Lorrie Rodrigue

## Administrative Report

Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>

1. Newtown High School – National Honor Society (Attach #1)
  
2. Scholars' Luncheon – Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>
  
3. NPS / SDE – Teacher of the Year Program
  
4. BOE Meeting – July 14<sup>th</sup> - Conflict with NFT Presentation
  
5. NPS Professional Learning Community
  - a. On the Edge – Alison Levine
  - b. Leaders of Their Own Learning – Ron Berger

*Joseph V. ...*  
4/2/25

## The Newtown Chapter of the National Honor Society

### *Third Annual Honors Ceremonies*

*June 1, 2015*

*The Inn at Villa Bianca, Seymour, Connecticut*

### Order of Recognition

Welcome- Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr., Superintendent of Schools

Opening Remarks- Mr. Tom Brant, National Honor Society Advisor

### Presentation of Service

UNICEF: Children's Right and Emergency Relief Organization- Ms. Anita Luxkaranayagam

Chapter Accomplishments- Ms. Emily Campbell and Ms. Anita Luxkaranayagam

The Jones Foundation- Ms. Megan Weber

### Dinner

### Officer Recognition

Ms. Anita Luxkaranaygam, President & Ms. Marissa Thill, President Elect

Ms. Emily Campbell, Vice President & Ms. Celia Gold, Vice President Elect

Ms. Nicole O'Leary, Secretary & Ms. Emily Newman, Secretary Elect

Ms. Megan Weber, Treasurer & Mr. Andrew Pirner, Treasurer Elect

Mr. Ryan King, Historian & Ms. Julia Preszler, Historian Elect

Mr. Akash Ahuja, Parliamentarian & Mr. Rilind Abazi, Parliamentarian

Ms. Hannah Grant, Public Relations & Mr. Forrest Weatherby, Public Relations

### Class of 2014 Member Recognition

Dr. Erardi, Mr. Rivera, & Officers-Elect

Awarding of Certificates

Awarding of Cords

Announcement of College/University and Major

### Class of 2016 Member Recognition and Closing Remarks

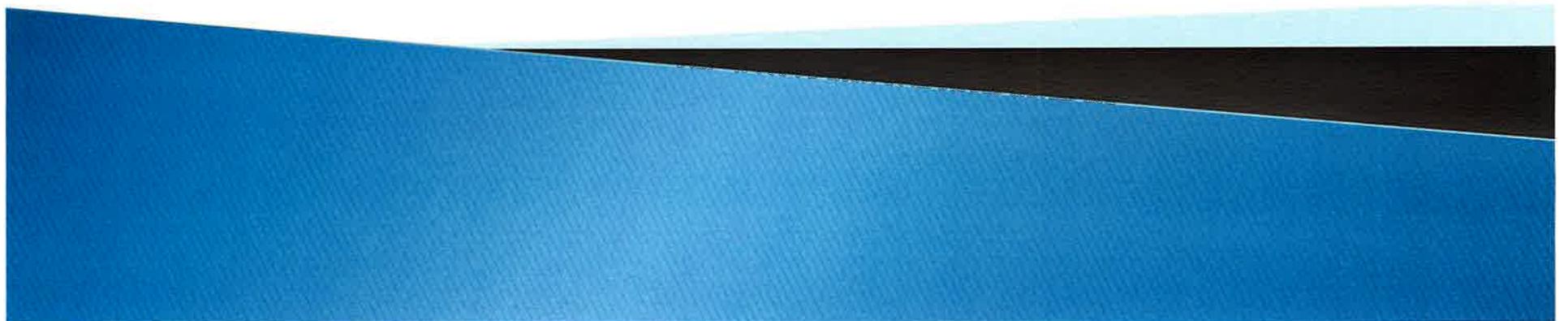
Mr. Tom Brant, Advisor

Mr. Matthew Mossbarger, Immediate Past President; University of Delaware

Ms. Tess Murray, Immediate Past Vice President; University of Southern California

# Facility and Enrollment Study

June 2, 2015



# Committee Members

## Board of Education

Kathy Hamilton – Secretary  
Michelle Ku – Member

## Central Office

Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr., – Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Linda Gejda, – Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Ron Bienkowski  
Director of Business

Tanja Vadas  
Financial Assistant

Gino Faiella  
Director of Facilities

## Principals

Barbara Gasparine, Principal  
Head O'Meadow

Dr. Kathy Gombos,  
Principal  
Sandy Hook

Anne Uberti, Principal  
Reed Intermediate

Thomas Einhorn, Principal  
Middle School

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Principal  
High School

# Problem of Practice

To examine present and projected enrollment and how this study will influence facility needs



# Assumptions and Projections

Sandy Hook, Newtown High School, Reed Intermediate

The committee took the following information into consideration:

- Sandy Hook Elementary School will open in 2016-17
  - Newtown High School will not be considered for school closing
  - Reed Intermediate School will not be considered for school closing
  - November 2014 recently completed Enrollment Study represents the most accurate information for the committee to make decisions pertaining to the Problem of Practice
  - Projections within the enrollment study were based on the “medium growth” longitudinal data
  - Decisions pertaining to facilities were based on “best for students.” The opportunity to maintain and/or enhance education must be present in addition to realized cost savings.
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# K-3 Options

3 Elementary	RIS	MS	HS
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- ▶ K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12
- ▶ K-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12
- ▶ K-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-12



# K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12

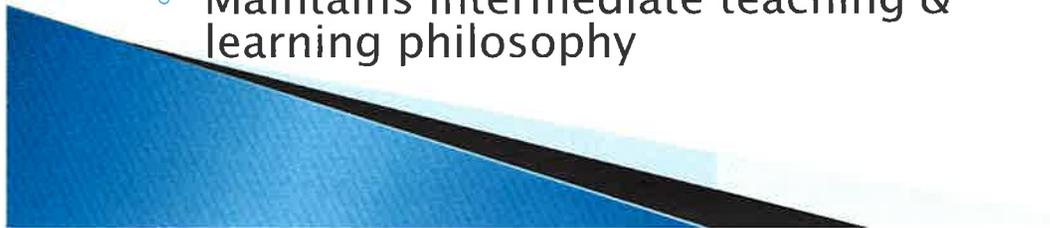
## Eliminates one elementary school

### ▶ Positive:

- Early assembly of cohort grade-level
- 2016-17 projecting 923 students at RIS; attainable without compromising teaching & learning and without the use of portable classrooms (*largest enrollment in 2005-06; 915 students*)
- Projected space constraints are non-existent
- Offers more student opportunity to one of the district's premier school buildings
- Maintains intermediate teaching & learning philosophy

### ▶ Negative:

- Reconfiguration will require redistricting
- Reconfiguration will close an elementary school



# K-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-12

## Eliminates one elementary school

### ▶ Positive:

- Early assembly of cohort grade-level
- 2016-17 projecting 579 students at RIS; attainable without compromising teaching & learning and without the use of portable classrooms

### ▶ Negative:

- Offers fewer students the opportunity to be housed in one of district's premier school buildings (*RIS would be at approximately 60% capacity*)
- Reconfiguration will require redistricting
- Reconfiguration will close an elementary school
- Certification concerns grades 6-8
- 2016-17 grade 6-8 enrollment at NMS; 1,089 requires portable classrooms to appropriately support teaching & learning (*largest enrollment in 2007-08; 930 students*)



# K-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-12

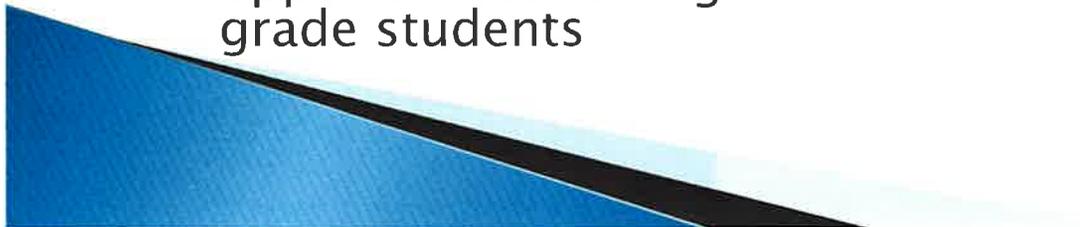
Eliminates one elementary school

## ▶ Positive:

- Early assembly of cohort grade-level
- 2016-17 projecting 579 students at RIS and 694 students at Newtown Middle School; attainable without compromising teaching & learning and without the use of portable classrooms
- Possible enhanced opportunities for eighth-grade students

## ▶ Negative:

- Reconfiguration will require redistricting
- Reconfiguration will close an elementary school
- Certification concerns for grades 6-7
- 2016-17 grade 8-12 reconfiguration will increase enrollment to near capacity; 2,057 (*largest 4-year cohort in 2012-13; 1,764 students*)



# K-4 Options

3 Elementary

RIS

MS

HS

▶ K-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-12

4 Elementary

RIS

HS

▶ K-4, 5-7, 8-12



# K-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-12

Eliminates elementary school

## ▶ Positive:

- Recognizes declining enrollment
- Greater student capacity at new SHS to consolidate four elementary schools to three

## ▶ Negative:

- This configuration does not support present enrollment projections
- Reconfiguration will require redistricting
- Reconfiguration will close and elementary school
- Immediate space concerns in three existing elementary schools



# K-4, 5-7, 8-12

## Eliminates Middle School

### ▶ Positive:

- Maintains integrity of four elementary schools
- Fewer transitions within the district
- Possible enhanced opportunities for eighth-grade students

### ▶ Negative:

- Projected 2016-17 grade 5-7 enrollment; 989 students which causes instructional concern and the need for portable classrooms
- Certification concerns pertaining to 5-7 reconfiguration
- 2016-17 grade 8-12 reconfiguration will increase enrollment to near capacity; 2057 (largest 4-year cohort in 2012-13; 1764 students)
- Potentially compromises state-funded, school-based health center
- Limited flexibility for future expansion



# K-5 Options

4 Elementary	RIS	HS
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▶ K-5, 6-7, 8-12

4 Elementary	RIS	HS
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▶ K-5, 6-8, 9-12



# K-5, 6-7, 8-12

## Eliminate middle school

### ▶ Positive:

- Eliminates redistricting
- Fewer transitions within the district
- Possible enhanced opportunities for eighth-grade students

### ▶ Negative:

- Certification concerns for grades 6-7
- Grade 8-12 reconfiguration will increase enrollment to near capacity; 2057 (*largest 4-year cohort in 2012-13; 1,764 students*)
- Delays assembly of grade-level cohort
- Potentially compromises state-funded, school-based health center



# K-5, 6-8, 9-12

Eliminates middle school

## ▶ Positive:

- Maintains integrity of four elementary schools
- Eliminates redistricting
- Fewer transitions within the district

## ▶ Negative:

- 2016-17 projected enrollment grade 6-8; 1089 requires portable classrooms to appropriately support teaching & learning
- Certification concerns grades 6-8
- Delays assembly of grade-level cohort
- Potentially compromises state-funded, school-based health center



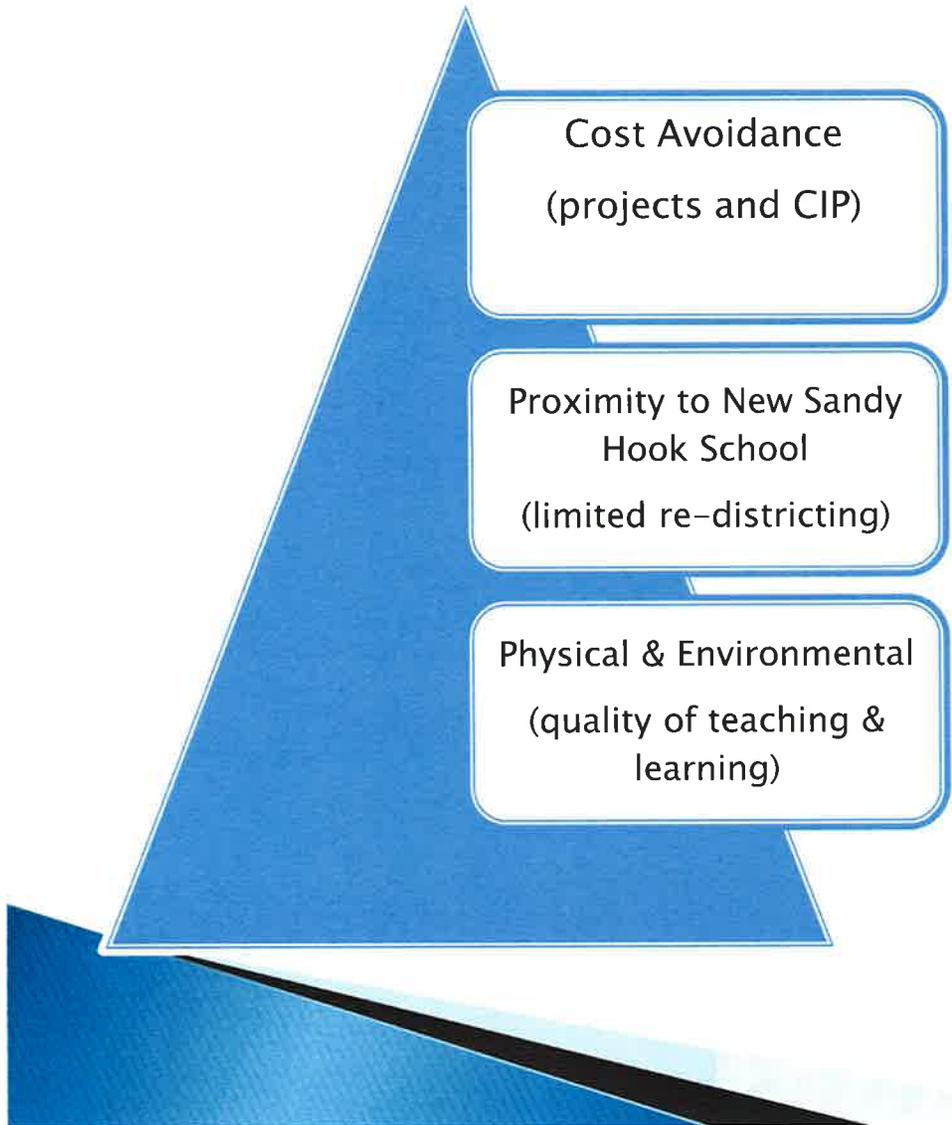


# COST SAVINGS/COST AVOIDANCE

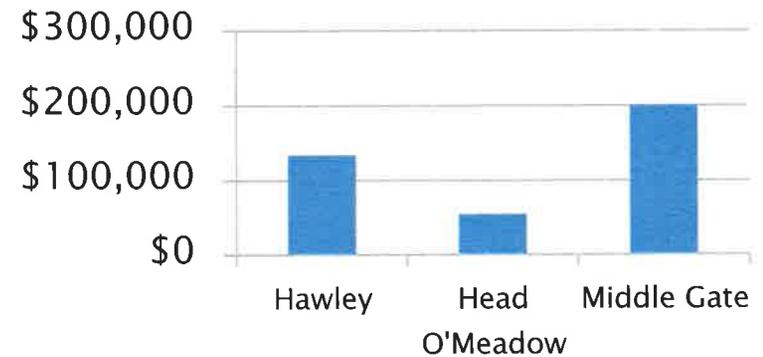
IF there was to be a school closing, THEN the following information represents the BOE completely relinquishing the property back to the Town.



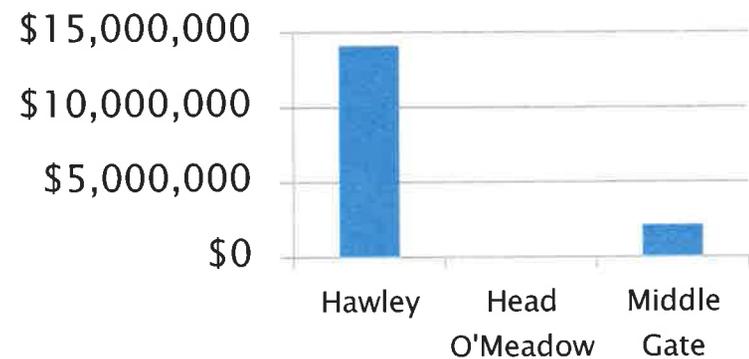
# Elementary School Closing Considerations



2016-17 Projects



CIP



# Hawley Elementary School

## ▶ Cost Savings/Cost Avoidance

### Cost Savings

- Instructional
  - 7.0 FTE classroom savings  
\$514,079
  - 2.6 FTE specialists savings  
\$179,679
- Non-Certified Salaries
  - \$199,772
- Purchased Services & Plant Operation
  - \$219,050
- Transportation
  - Limited potential to reduce vehicles due to HS/NMS combination

### Cost Avoidance

- 2016-17 Projects
  - \$134,500
- CIP Projects
  - 2017/18
  - Roof Replacement
    - \$800,000
  - 2019/20
  - HVAC Phase II
    - \$3,700,000
  - Phase III A
    - \$2,650,000
  - Phase III B
    - \$6,990,000



*\$332,474 will be due to the State if closed and building is not re-purposed. (addition project)*

# Newtown Middle School

## ▶ Cost Savings/Cost Avoidance

### Cost Savings

- Instructional
  - 2.00 FTE classroom savings  
\$146,880
  - 6.10 FTE specialists savings  
\$458,179
- Non-Certified Salaries
  - \$591,637
- Purchased Services & Plant Operation
  - \$619,030
- Transportation
  - Potential to reduce vehicle(s)  
\$62,200

### Cost Avoidance

- 2015-16 Projects
  - \$56,000
- 2016-17 Projects
  - \$177,000
- CIP Projects
  - 2017/18
  - Professional services, new boilers & re-piping
    - \$2,200,000
  - 2019/20
  - Ventilation renovations
    - \$4,805,000



*\$855,861 will be due to the State if closed and building is not re-purposed. (roof project)*

# Conclusions

- ▶ Committee endorsement with instructional alignment: (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12)
- ▶ Committee endorsement with enrollment projection: (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12)
- ▶ Committee endorsement with projected capital needs: (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12)



# Next Level of Work

- ▶ Continued BOE Conversation/Costs Associated to School Closing
  - ▶ Shared Conversation: Town Officials
  - ▶ Shared Conversation: Municipal Building Strategic Plan Committee
  - ▶ Community Forums
  - ▶ Hawley Fund Fiscal Impact
  - ▶ Further Investigation: Hawley Redistrict
  - ▶ Further Investigation: Transportation
  - ▶ Further Investigation: School Start Time
- 