School District Redesign Participants

- Middletown Public Schools School Committee
- Middletown Public Schools Administrative Staff (including Central Office & Building Administrators)
- Middletown's Educational Future Core Committee (comprised of staff, parents, and community members)
- FY2010 Budget Subcommittee (comprised of staff, school committee members, town council member, community member)
- Middletown Public Schools Staff
- Fielding Nair International (a consulting firm who helped design a reconfiguration of the school district that will dramatically transform Middletown’s classrooms for the next generation of learners)
- Transition Team Summit Members (a team of parents who will make recommendations to the MPS Administrators and provide volunteer support to make the upcoming school reorganization seamless, supportive, and positive)
Guiding Principle

The Statewide budget crisis has provided an impetus for us to review our educational programs, services and organizational structure for efficacy and cost effectiveness. We are committed to maintaining excellence in our schools and accountability to our community. We recognize the outstanding quality of our staff and strive to continue supporting their work with students and their role in the Middletown Public Schools. As a result, we will consider ways to restructure, including reorganizing grades and adjusting schedules and services to maximize the education process for the entire Middletown school community.
Middletown Public Schools

Critical Choices:
Responding to a New Fiscal Reality

School District Redesign
Recommendations
Phase I Overview

A report to explain the rationale of the redesign recommendations for phase I, the process to date and what the next steps are.

http://www.mpsri.net/page.cfm?p=1350
School District Redesign Phase I

Report Contents

- Rationale for Redesign
- Core Committee Facility Master Plan
- Meeting Schedule
- Recommendations & Grade Modifications
- Gaudet Planning for Grade 4
Rationale for Redesign

- Potential $2 million budget shortfall for the 2009 - 2010 year (between local, state and impact aid).
- Utilize our school buildings for improved efficiencies and programs.
- Implementation of our Core Facilities Committee Master Plan and small learning communities.
About the Core Committee Facility Master Plan
(presented in 2008)

FACILITY MASTER PLAN
The Core Committee developed planning Options by brainstorming a long list of existing and potential school sites, grade configurations, and community asset adjacencies. This list was organized into the seven formal options, which was evaluated and prioritized by the Core Committee. Core Committee members, in seven separate small groups, evaluated each option and established priorities by ranking the options in order of preference. Without exception, all seven groups chose Option C as their most preferred and the Option Base as their least preferred. This option creates an upper school campus and a lower school campus on the existing middle school and high school sites, respectively.

View the Master Plan:
http://www.mpsri.net/page.cfm?p=1283
### Process: Discussing the Escalated Redesign & Master Plan with Our Community 2008 -2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 17</td>
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<td>JFK Staff Meeting</td>
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<td>JFK Parent Meeting</td>
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<td>School Committee Budget Workshop</td>
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<td>March 11</td>
<td>Grade 4 Teacher Meeting</td>
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<td>Forest Avenue Teacher Meeting</td>
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<td>March 31</td>
<td>Aquidneck Staff Meeting</td>
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<td>Aquidneck Parent Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Forest Avenue Parent Meeting</td>
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</table>
During the March 2009 School Committee Meeting, J.F. Kennedy Elementary School was closed which allowed for our new fiscal reality of an (approximate) $850,000 savings. JFK students in grades K – 3 will be reassigned to Aquidneck Elementary School or Forest Avenue Elementary School based upon residence. Current Forest Avenue Elementary and Aquidneck Elementary School students will remain in their schools. Grade 4 students will attend J. H. Gaudet Middle School. Pre K students will attend Aquidneck Elementary School. One (JFK) elementary special education behavior support program will be relocated to Forest Avenue Elementary. One (JFK) special education behavior support program will be relocated to J. H. Gaudet Middle School. The JFK Multiage Program will move to Forest Avenue Elementary School.
## Grade Modifications

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>FY 2009</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aquidneck Elementary School</td>
<td>PreK - 4</td>
<td>PreK - 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest Avenue Elementary School</td>
<td>PreK - 4</td>
<td>K - 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. H. Gaudet Middle School</td>
<td>5 - 8</td>
<td>4 - 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middletown High School</td>
<td>9 - 12</td>
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J. H. Gaudet Middle School
Planning for Grade 4

Gaudet students have access to:

• A newly renovated library designed to support small learning communities
• Art rooms
• Suite of music rooms, band and chorus
• Four computer labs with an integrated model of technology literacy (K-12 model)
• Large gym with fields, track and tennis courts
• Cafeteria / auditorium with a stage
• Outdoor garden/courtyard
• Planetarium
• Family Consumer Science
• Technology Education
• World Languages
• Playground (coming summer 2009)
Two of three possible models for the 4th and 5th grade wing.
School District Redesign Phase II

Report Contents

- Redesign Research
- Elementary Model vs. Middle School Model
- Small Learning Communities
- Frequently Asked Questions & Answers
- Letter from Fielding Nair International to RI Department of Education
- Contact Information
In the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year the Middletown Public School district recognized the worsening economic conditions and began to consider an acceleration of Middletown’s Educational Future Core Facilities Master Plan. This Master Plan recommends school consolidation and would help us address the issue of some areas of our existing schools that are underutilized while focusing on the addition of small learning communities. With the support of Fielding Nair International Consultants, the Middletown Public Schools’ Core Facilities Committee met to reassess the plan in light of the fiscal challenges. A financial gap of 2 million dollars needed to be closed. The Core Facilities Committee reviewed eight options:

1. Do nothing. *This option provided a status quo of all buildings with no fiscal savings to the district unless significant reductions were made in staff and programs (see list below)*
   - Full Day Kindergarten reduced to half day
   - School Nurse Teachers reduced
   - Grade Leaders eliminated
   - Alternate Learning Program eliminated
   - Literacy Support reduced
   - Career Education Program eliminated at middle school and reduced at high school
   - Family Consumer Science Program eliminated
   - Foreign Language Program eliminated at middle school and reduced at high school
   - English Language Learners Support reduced
   - Library Program reduced
Options (continued)

2. Close Oliphant Administration Offices and relocate to empty space at Aquidneck School. Move the Alternate Learning Program to Middletown High School. **This option actually would cost the district approximately $200,000 (does not include WAN reconfiguration costs) because the space at Aquidneck would need to be retrofitted to accommodate office space. In addition, the head end of the wide area network along with all district wide servers would need to be relocated to another facility.**

3. Close Kennedy School and move all grades to Forest Avenue School and Aquidneck School. **Forest Avenue and Aquidneck Schools could not accommodate the nineteen (19) classes from Kennedy School, even if we eliminated the Music room, Art room and Computer lab at both Forest Avenue School and Aquidneck School.**

4. Close Kennedy School and move grades PreK-2 to Aquidneck School and Grades 3 and 4 to Forest Avenue School. **Thirty-two (32) classrooms are need for the PreK-2 grades and 17 classrooms needed for grades 3 and 4, including a Behavior Support classroom. Forest Avenue’s capacity is 17 classrooms and Aquidneck’s capacity is 20 classrooms, without eliminating the Music rooms, Art rooms and Computer labs at each of the schools. Additionally, the entire elementary student body would need to be redistricted. This option would increase the number of transitions (from one school to another) for our students...two transitions before they would reach the Gaudet School.**
Options (continued)

5. Close Kennedy School and move grades PreK-2 to Forest Avenue School and grades 3-4 to Aquidneck School. *The same reasoning expressed for option 4 applies to option 5.*

6. Close Kennedy School and move grades PreK to 3 to Aquidneck and Forest Avenue Schools and grade 4 to Gaudet and grade 8 to the high school. *This grade configuration could have been accommodated at all the schools in this option.*

7. Close Kennedy School and move grades PreK to 3 to Aquidneck School and Forest Avenue Schools, move grade 4 to Gaudet and keep grade 5-8 at Gaudet. *This option held the strongest hope especially if we maintained grade 4 as an elementary school at the Gaudet campus with the ultimate goal of creating a “learning academy” (or small learning community) that could ultimately evolve to include grade 5.*

8. Rent/buy portable classrooms to house four (4) grades at the Aquidneck site and Forest Avenue site. Each of those elementary schools would remain PreK-4. *This option would cost $618,000 (purchase) or $187,000 (annual – rental). Additionally, the portable classrooms would not provide an optimum learning environment as we identified in our work with the Core Facilities Committee.*
K – 8 Grade Configuration Research

In Support of Our Redesign Efforts

All of these options were carefully reviewed by Fielding Nair International to determine which provided the optimum learning environment consistent with best practice and research, safety, educational appropriateness and aligned with the overall Facilities Master Plan - the consolidation of schools was recommended after an 18 month process of evaluation.

After three months of study and several workshops, the Core Facilities Committee endorsed Option #7: Close Kennedy School and move grades PreK to 3 to Aquidneck School and Forest Avenue School, move grade 4 to Gaudet and keep grades 5-8 at Gaudet. This option develops a grade 4 & 5 small learning community located in an area of the existing Gaudet School that has its own entry and there is access to a green courtyard. Just as grades 5-6 students now occupy separate spaces within Gaudet School, Grade 4 students will do so under the new scenario. Additionally, younger students would NOT change classes, like students in 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades do.
What does the research and personal experience tell us about grade configuration?

Research was reviewed on grade configurations. The Rhode Island Department of Education endorsed the plan. Several of our administrators shared their personal experiences to supplement the research. In addition, Fielding Nair International provided an abundant amount of research on grade configuration.

A web search and review of grade configuration literature and grade span organization in U.S. public schools shows that research on this topic indicates that a building’s grade configuration is not as important as what is happening within the building; that is, instruction, culture, commitment to students and their developmental needs, and parent involvement. Focusing on the positive impact the staff and families have on their students and their school community is the BEST way to ensure any grade configuration will be successful.
A review of the literature and research on grade configuration suggest some key points for consideration. Following this summary of key points are links to various full studies on the topic of grade configuration.

- Rural schools are most likely to have unusual grade configurations. Very little research attempts to determine cause and effect on grade configuration.
- Some of the studies focus on the impact of transition on learning when students move from one school to another. These studies suggest that transitions may have a negative impact on students and should be minimized.
- No particular sequence of grade spans is perfect or guarantees student achievement and social adjustment.
- 5,000 elementary schools in the U.S. (8%) serve K-3 or K-4 students.
- 12,500 middle schools (18.5%) serve grades 4-8 or 5-8.
There is no clear indication that any grade configuration is more successful than any other.

To address Middle Childhood education, the National Board Certification developed a certificate specifically designed for middle childhood ages. This certification recognized that teachers who teach students ages 7-12 have a specialized skill set and know the range of the middle-grades curriculum.

Cluster schools are gaining in popularity. Cluster schools include grade groupings such as K-3 lower elementary, 4-5 upper elementary, 6-8 middle school.
Factors that school districts need to consider when making grade configuration decisions include:

- The cost and length of student travel
- A possible increase or decrease in parent involvement
- The number of students at each grade level in a school
- The impact of school setting on student learning and achievement
- The impact on neighborhood schools
- The number of school transitions (moving to a new school) for each student
- The opportunities for interaction among age groups
- The influence of older students on younger students
- The design of the school building
Again, research has provided no definitive answer on the most effective grade configuration. What is strongly implied by broader educational research is that the classroom teacher and the teaching and learning processes used in the classroom on a daily basis have the greatest impact on student learning and achievement.

A K-3 grade configuration can allow for all of a building’s resources to be dedicated to a primary program. It offers a staff and parent community to create the entire school culture based on the specific needs of younger children. There is no pressure from older grades on the younger students. Third graders become role models for the younger students, a role that allows them to build their self-esteem. Having a 4-5 grade configuration, separate from the middle school, but housed in the same facility, allows for “the IN-betweens” (Phi Delta Kappan, February 2009) to be supported and nurtured in an environment. “Upper elementary teachers can make the difference for students who are teetering between success and failure, acceptance and rejection and engagement and disengagement.” (Phi Delta Kappan, February, 2009).
Upper Elementary Students:

- Possess enthusiasm for learning and will contribute energy and invest themselves completely in worthwhile projects
- Are ready to engage in and embrace higher level challenges
- Work with a greater sense of future purpose
- Can develop enduring habits of mind and character—especially significant are those aiding students’ ability to form and maintain strong friendships

Research- In Support of Our Redesign Efforts

- The National Board For Professional Teaching Standards, Middle Childhood Generalists Certification.
Research- In Support of Our Redesign Efforts

Following are links to several full reports and studies on grade configuration:
http://www.nwrel.org/request/july97/article3.html
http://peterli.com/archive/spm/1094.shtml
http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/poptopics/gradeconfig.html
http://www.nwrel.org/request/july97/textonly.html
http://www.aasa.org/publications/saarticledetail.cfm?ItemNumber=2672
http://edfacilities.org
http://www.oshkosh.k12.wi.us/aboutus/K_3_4_8_grade_config.cfm
http://www.newobserver.com/146/v-print/story/547649.html
http://www.lausd.net/SLC_Schools/index.html
http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos069.htm#nature

Please visit our website for additional research - http://www.mpsri.net/page.cfm?p=1350
For the 2009-2010 school year, Middletown Public Schools will continue to use an elementary school model in grades PreK – 3 in our elementary schools. We will also use this elementary model in the grade 4 learning community at the Gaudet School.

What does it mean to use an elementary school model?

In most elementary schools the elementary school teachers instruct one class of children in several subjects. In some schools, two or more teachers work as a team and are jointly responsible for a group of students in at least one subject. In other schools, a teacher may teach one special subject—usually music, art, reading, science, arithmetic, or physical education—to a number of classes. A small but growing number of teachers instruct multilevel classrooms, with students at several different learning levels.
Program Clarifications

The Middle School Model

For the 2009-2010 school year, Middletown Public Schools will continue to use a middle school model for grades 5 – 8 at the Gaudet School.

What does it mean to use a middle school model?

• An effective middle school program is designed around the unique developmental needs of early adolescents. Because the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional needs of this age group are different from either elementary or high school students, a customized educational program is necessary. The middle school is a bridge between elementary school and high school. It is not an exaggerated elementary school nor a miniature high school, but a blend of the two.

• A group or cluster of students is taught by a team of teachers. This team of teachers have the same group of students every day. Their classrooms are clustered together in the same wing of the building. The team consists of anywhere from two - five teachers. Together, teams teach science, language arts, social studies, and mathematics. A special education teacher also works with the teams.

• There are many advantages of clusters. Classrooms which are contiguous make it easier for students to get back and forth to class on time, especially since lockers are located in the team area of the wing. Since team teachers have the same planning period, they are able to plan for curriculum integration, interdisciplinary units, field trips and special activities for their students. Communication and support among teachers is much greater with this approach. Parent conferences and special education meetings are made easier by the fact that all of a student’s basic skills teachers are available at the same time of the day. Students also feel like they are part of a group when on a team. It creates a "school within a school." The team helps provide the child (who is accustomed to elementary school) an atmosphere which is similar to that in his elementary school.
The attributes below are the foundation of small learning communities which the core committee work with Fielding Nair International is based upon:

1. **Unifying Vision/Identity:** A shared vision created by a group of educators, support staff, students, parents, and community who comprise the small learning community and who assume responsibility for the learning of every student through a distinctive and focused standards-based curriculum.

2. **Rigorous Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment:** A standards-based educational program embodies high expectations for every student so that they achieve grade-level standards, use appropriate technology, district-adopted resources, and materials to support instruction.

3. **Personalization:** A demonstration of sustained and mutually respectful personal relationships where every student is well known by a group of educators who advise/advocate for them and work closely with them and their families over time. The size of the Small Learning Community is appropriate to its vision and mission.

4. **Accountability and Distributed Leadership:** Members of the Small Learning Community work together, share expertise, and exercise leadership to ensure that student achievement is the intended result of all decisions. They retain primary responsibility, appropriate autonomy, and are accountable for making decisions affecting the important aspects of the small learning community.

5. **Collaboration/Parent and Community Engagement:** All members of the Small Learning Community are viewed as critical allies and are significantly included in the school community (i.e., students, teachers, support staff, parents, administrators, business, and community partners). An ongoing partnership is aimed at supporting continuous improvement of student achievement. Authentic engagement leads to sustained participation in critical school decisions and implementation of school efforts.

6. **Professional Development:** Small Learning Communities demonstrate implementation of central and local district training and resources. Continuous professional learning is focused on improving practice and performance as a vehicle for school improvement and program coherence. This is accomplished through collaboration, reflection, the analysis of student work and data, and a review of pedagogy. Common planning time is provided for teachers to gain in-depth knowledge of their content standards to work on lesson design and review student work and performance data. Professional development is monitored and assessed regularly for effectiveness and implementation to ensure continuous school improvement.
Can you provide additional information about the Fielding Nair International consultants and why they were selected to work with Middletown Public Schools?

Fielding Nair International is an award-winning, globally leading planning and architectural design firm. Considered much more than planners and architects, they help clients define the future of education in their communities and then provide the services to successfully implement Change Management Strategies as part of their overall School Reform Agenda.

Fielding Nair International describes themselves as architects and change agents for education. Fielding Nair was selected to work with Middletown Public Schools because they design school facilities for today and tomorrow with one primary goal in mind — to improve learning. With consultations in 26 countries on 5 continents, dozens of important publications, and numerous industry awards for excellence, they are the global leader for innovative school architecture. Underlying all the architectural design, planning and educational change management work they do is their strong belief in diversity, high performance, technology infusion, global connections and personalization. Learn more about Fielding Nair International at http://www.fieldingnair.com

Please visit a recent article by Prakash Nair of Fielding Nair International on Reinventing Schools -

http://www.fieldingnair.com
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

- **Will grade 4 function as a middle school or an elementary school?**
  Grade 4 will function as an elementary school.

- **Will grade 4 have recess?**
  Grade 4 will have recess with a playground as well as the opportunity to use the Gaudet School fields and track. Half of grade 4 will have recess before lunch and half of grade 4 will have recess after lunch.

- **Grade 5 students currently do not have recess. Will grade 5 have recess next year?**
  We have had many requests for grade 5 students to have recess. This recommendation is currently under review and a decision will be made in the next couple of months.

- **What will lunch be like for grade 4?**
  All of grade 4 will all eat lunch together. Half of grade 5 will also eat lunch with grade 4. As requested by the grade 4 teachers, grade 4 will eat during the last lunch period of the day.

- **Will grade 4 have access to the same co-curricular (special subjects) classes that they do now?**
  Grade 4 will have their usual special subjects, Art, Music, PE/Health and Library.

- **Will grade 4 have a band? Will grade 4 have a chorus?**
  Grade 4 will not have a band. Grade 4 will have a chorus.

- **Will grade 4 have foreign language?**
  Grade 4 will not have foreign language.
Will grade 4 have access to tech ed or family consumer science?
There is a possibility that grade 4 will have access to a modified version of family consumer science or tech ed (ie – a robotics program is being examined for grade 4)

Will grade 4 special education students be supported?
Grade 4 students that have Individual Education Plans will receive the supports that are outlined in their IEP as they do now.

Will class size stay the same?
We will maintain our current class size limits (grade K – 2, 20 students; grades 4 – 12, 25 students)

Will teachers have common planning time?
We are working to support a daily common planning time for all of the grade 4 teachers.

Will there be a lead teacher for grade 4?
This decision has not been made yet. Teachers have indicated that a traditional lead teacher or grade leader may not work for this model but they will need a “go-to” support person at Gaudet.

Will grade 4 students be “mixed” together at Gaudet (JFK, Forest and Aquidneck students)?
Yes, all students will be mixed together and will be a part of the Gaudet School Learning Community.

Will there be volunteers at Gaudet?
Individuals that are interested in volunteering can contact the COZ office. They will then be matched with the teachers that have requested support.
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

- **How many grade 4 teachers will we have?**
  We will have eight 4\textsuperscript{th} grade teachers, most will be the current 4\textsuperscript{th} grade teachers that are based at Aquidneck, Forest Avenue, and Kennedy.

- **Will guidance support be increased at Gaudet?**
  We are trying to increase the guidance program at Gaudet.

- **Will grade 4 have access to the planetarium?**
  Yes, grade 4 will have access to the planetarium.

- **When will Kennedy families receive their new school assignments?**
  They will receive their assignments in May but preliminary information is available in the phase I report.

- **Will Aquidneck and Forest Avenue School students be reassigned?**
  No, they will remain in the schools that they are assigned today.

- **Will we have school nurse teachers?**
  Yes, each school will have an assigned full time school nurse teacher.

- **When will we know what teacher our student will have for next year?**
  Families will be notified of their teacher assignment for next year as soon as possible. Please note that (each year) before class assignments can be made we need to have a finalized budget so that any uncertainty with positions in the district will be known. The town council budget vote normally takes place in mid June. Once the budget is finalized and enrollment is clearer, we will have our job fair that will determine any uncertain teacher assignment. We can then develop class rosters for all teacher assignments.
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

- **Will grade 4 begin school each day at the same time as grades 5 - 8?**
  The start time for grade 4 has not yet been determined. We are working with our Transition Team and will use their recommendations as guidance. (Please note: The transition team is open to all parents and community members. Please contact our COZ office if you would like to be a member.)

- **Will grade 4 students ride the elementary bus or ride the middle school bus?**
  This has not yet been determined. The Transition Team will also provide guidance for us here.

- **If grade 4 rides the middle school bus then can we have additional monitors?**
  This has not yet been determined. The Transition Team will also provide guidance for us here.

- **Will there be full day kindergarten and multiage?**
  Yes, all day kindergarten and multiage classes will be maintained. Multiage students will remain with their same class. J.F. Kennedy multiage students will stay together and move to Forest Avenue.

- **Will parents and the community be able to help with the transition?**
  A transition team has convened to assist in the process by providing recommendations to the school administration and volunteer supports to make these moves seamless, supportive, and positive. (Please contact our COZ office if you would like to be a member.)

- **How will we know what progress the facilities department has made for the school district redesign?**
  Monthly reports will be given at the School Committee Meetings and will be posted on the web site. These reports will be found on the Facilities section of the web site and the District Redesign section of the web site.
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<td>Gaudet Grade Leaders &amp; leadership model meeting</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Gaudet Staff Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Grade 3 &amp; 4 Parents visit Gaudet</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Gaudet schedule meeting</td>
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<td>Letters sent home to all parents – general information</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 8th or April 18th</td>
<td>Transition Team Meeting I</td>
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<td>Spring Break (April)</td>
<td>Facilities Team begins work at Gaudet</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Letters sent home to JFK parents – assignment information</td>
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<td>May/June</td>
<td>Forest Open House (Parent Night)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May/June</td>
<td>Aquidneck Open House (Parent Night)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Grade 4 (from FA, Aquidneck and JFK) visit Gaudet</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>FA Grade 3 visit Gaudet</td>
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<td>JFK K – 2 visit FA</td>
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<tr>
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<td>JFK K – 2 visit Aquidneck</td>
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March 18, 2009

Joseph DaSilva
Finance & Administrative Services
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: The Planned Closing of Kennedy Elementary School
Establishment of a 4th grade Upper Elementary School
Environment at Gaudet Middle School,
Middletown Public Schools

Dear Mr. DaSilva:

As you are aware, Middletown Public Schools (MPS) is planning to close the Kennedy Elementary school effective the 2009-10 school year. This closure is part of the Town’s School Facilities Master Plan, albeit somewhat accelerated by the cut in State aid to Cities and Towns, as announced by the Governor last fall.

In November 2007 Fielding Nair International produced a Facilities Master Plan entitled "Middletown’s Educational Future – A Strategy for Change". This was the culmination of an 18-month process of evaluation of the existing school facilities in Middletown and how they could be adapted for the emerging learning patterns of the 21st Century. During that time we met extensively with all school officials and administration and conducted numerous community workshops with a Core Committee of over 40 individuals.

The resulting Master Plan calls for the eventual shut down of the three existing K-4 elementary schools (Kennedy, Aquidneck and Forest Ave,) consolidating them in a heavily refurbished high school building. The existing high school site will then become the new Lower School Campus. In this plan the existing Middle School site would become the new Upper School Campus. This would be accomplished by the construction of a new high school on the abutting "drive-in" site allowing for shared facilities between the schools and access to the far superior recreational facilities available at the middle school site.

Overall the master plan speaks to sustainability issues, with less intensive transportation to bus children to only two centrally located campuses, and opens the opportunity for collaboration between the two campuses since that would be located only a few blocks apart.
Fielding Nair International Letter to RI Department of Education on the closing of Kennedy Elementary School (continued)

The phasing of the Master Plan includes a series of goals identified as “Soon, Now and Later”. The “Soon” phase (1-3 years) calls for the establishment of several “Pilot Projects” to establish 21st century Small Learning Communities throughout the school community so a new educational culture of collaboration and multiple modality learning can grow in anticipation of new school buildings. Since 2007 we have completed the “Internet Café” at the Middle School Library and the K-2 Small Learning Community at the Forest Elementary School. Both have met with acclaim from students and educators.

With the announcement of the cuts in school aid, MPS requested that we examine if there was a way to commence some of the consolidation earlier in the overall process so savings in operating costs could be realized for the next school. An integral part of their goal was to improve the educational experience for all the children who would be affected by this closing. After some discussions it became apparent that the closing of the Kennedy School should be accelerated.

In keeping with our schedule for the next Pilot Project we recommended the creation of a 4th grade upper elementary Small Learning Community at the Gaudet Middle School. This will be the next Small Learning Community to be developed in Middletown. The remaining elementary schools; Aquidneck and Forest Avenue, would become K-3 lower elementary schools.

After three months of study and several workshops with the Core Committee we have determined that there is ample space at Gaudet to develop this new Small Learning Community (SLC). The proposed 4th Grade SLC would be located in an area of the existing Gaudet School that has its own entry and access to a green courtyard for recess activities. The proposed SLC would share the wing of the school with the current 5th grade population. In addition the 4th graders would have access to the enrichment programs available at Gaudet including Art, Tech-ed (robotics), Family Consumer Science, and the Planetarium.

We look forward to working with RIDE in the development of this next important step in the development of a 21st century school system in Middletown.

Very Truly Yours,

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