Critical Choices: Responding to a New Fiscal Reality

School District Redesign Recommendations
Phase I

April 2009

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 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
School District Redesign Report Contents

• Introduction
• Guiding Principle
• Rationale for Redesign & Considered Options for a Balanced Budget
• Core Committee Information (basis of redesign)
• Process – Community Meetings (to date)
• Future – Meetings and Important Information
• Recommendations & School Modifications
• Reassigned Schools for JFK Addresses
• Enrollment Information
• Maintained Programs
• I WANTS.....
• Frequently Asked Questions & Answers
• Frequently Asked Questions - under review
• Letter from Superintendent
• Contact Information
In the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, the Middletown Public Schools recognized the worsening economic situation and began to consider an acceleration of the Middletown’s Educational Future Core Committee Master Plan. This master plan recommends school consolidation and would help us to address the issue of some areas of our existing schools that are underutilized while focusing on the addition of small learning communities.

The District’s approach to redesign included two goals:

- Strengthen the overall education program
- Maintain services and programs through efficacy and cost effectiveness

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.
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.
Budget Reduction Options from Budget Proposal

- Closing J. F. Kennedy Elementary School
- Eliminate late buses
- Reduction of Gaudet English Language Arts Staff
- Eliminate Coordinator of Standards
- Eliminate High School Academic Dean
- Reduction of Sports
- Restructure Alternate Learning Program
- Restructure Grade Leaders
- Eliminate English Language Learner Position
- Eliminate 1 Librarian
- Eliminate 4 School Nurse Teachers (replace with LPN’s)
- Eliminate Family Consumer Science and Career Education at Gaudet
- Eliminate 1 Literacy Teacher
- Reduction of World Languages
- Reduction of All Day Kindergarten to Half Day
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

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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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### Forest Avenue Elementary School

#### Potential Space

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## Aquidneck Elementary Potential Space

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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.
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J.F. Kennedy Elementary School Address Reassignments

The addresses below have been assigned to:
Aquidneck Elementary School

(subject to change)

- 3rd Beach
- Admiral
- Bailey
- Balsam
- Bayview
- Beacon
- Beechland
- Bliss
- Bliss Mine
- Boulevard
- Briarwood
- Chases
- Compton View
- Connecticut
- Constellation
- Constitution
- Donald
- Ellery
- Fenner
- Green End
- Harbor Village
- High
- Hilltop
- Ichabod
- King
- Lake Erie
- Lawrence
- Lexington
- Linden
- Ludlow
- Maple
- Miantonomi
- Murphy
- N Fenner
- Niagara
- Nicholson
- North Beacon
- Oak
- Orville
- Paquin
- Paradise
- Phelps
- Restmere
- Rosa
- Rosedale
- Shangri La
- Sherman
- Sherwood
- South Crest
- South Dudley
- Stockton
- Sundown
- Sunset Lawn
- Tuckerman
- Vernon
J.F. Kennedy Elementary School Address Reassignments

The addresses below have been assigned to:
Forest Avenue Elementary School

(subject to change)

- Admiral Luce
- Admiralty
- Algonquin
- Burton
- Colony
- Commerce
- Corporate
- East Main
- Fairview
- Fairway
- Gravely
- Harvest
- High Meadow
- Jean
- Jones
- Judith
- Kennon
- Lattu
- Maffit
- Marshall
- Mayflower
- Namquid
- North
- Oak Forest
- Old Farm
- Oliphant
- Osage
- Pequot
- Phillips
- Pocahontas
- Puritan
- Read
- Rogers
- Roosters
- Roy
- Semmes
- Squantum
- Taylor
- Unity
- West Main
- West View
# Enrollment Information

## Actual & Projections

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- Actual: Oct 1
- Projected: birthrates
Enrollment Information
Actual & Projections

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October 1 Data
Birthrates based upon RI census data
Rhode Island data on the number of school-aged children has steadily declined over the last several years. Along with this data, it is interesting to compare Middletown’s overall enrollment trends with the loss of military families due to base realignment and the sale of the Anchorage Housing units.

*October 1 Data
## Current Enrollment 2008 - 2009

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October 1, 2008
Programs that will be maintained as a result of this redesign

- Full Day Kindergarten
- School Nurse Teachers
- Grade Leaders (redesign)
- Alternate Learning Program (redesign)
- Literacy
- Career Education
- Family Consumer Science
- Foreign Language
- English Language Learners
- Library
Middletown Public Schools
Leadership
I Wants...

• I want the quality of education to be sustained and improved.
• I want to provide a safe, nurturing and vibrant educational experience for our students.
• I want our students and their achievement to continue to drive our goals.
• I want quality programs to be maintained.
• I want to continue to provide a wide range of programs available to our special education students.
• I want teachers, staff, students and parents to be valued.
• I want to effectively and efficiently manage the budget.
• I want to maintain a positive school environment to ensure student success.
- Maintain integrity of learning community
- My children isolated from rest of the middle school
- Maintain qualities @ forest during transition and Special Ed support
- Maintain Sped Ed budget and continue to have all supports for special education
- Same grade 4 experience and special awards, terrific kids, music/recorders
- Understanding of 4/5 academy
- Meeting to explain
- Managed dismissal – safety
- Supported playground activity
- Scheduled recess and snack time
- Library books that are right level reading
- Reasonable class size
- Report cards to be the same
- Space @ gaudet
- Sense of safety on bus
- Maintain elementary school concept
- Eat lunch with 4th and 5th
- Can we balance population – gr 8 to HS
- After school programs – ymca after school
- Speak to the students about this transition
Aquidneck Elementary School
Meeting Notes
Parent I Wants......

- Grade 4 and 5 advisory
- Want elem classroom setting
- Special ed budget to remain, ot, speech, TAs, etc
- Physical space – smaller classrooms – possible classroom size
- Date for parents
- Greeting from staff/principal
- Class size concerns
- Grade 4 teachers @ gaudet (transfer)
- Classrooms – sizes, lockers
- Small classroom community learning
- Students vs. square footage
- Curriculum challenges all – students performances high
- Security from 7th and 8th grade
- Lockers vs. cubbies
- Navy plus?
- Teacher plans?
- Report card grade
- ELL
- Playground
- My students to have familiar teachers

- Monitor lavatory @ lunch
- Budget workshop – list of options
- Safety dropping off and picking up
- Grade 4 insulated
- Learning Academy grade 4+5 with recess and everything else it contains
- Elementary curriculum
- Specials 6 day rotation all year long
- Bus monitors – do they need training
- Time on the bus – same or less
- Research on grade level that is appropriate
- Bus enforcement
- Multiage integrity here
- Orientation for new teachers
- Class assign early
- Short days not to be shorter
- Transition team – want to have a say
- Better understanding or decoding
- Data around closing Kennedy
- Later start time
- Fire codes met
- Volunteers @ gms
- Grade 4 leader @ gms
J.F. Kennedy Elementary School
Meeting Notes
Parent I Wants....... 

- I want to keep MA students together
- I want stability for my child.
- I want the transition to go smoothly and the children to learn flexibility
- I want my child to have a JFK teacher
- I want classroom size to stay manageable
- I want TA’s to support the classrooms in school
- I want a school nurse ALL day EVERY day
- I want bus monitors
- I want to maintain existing programs at Gaudet
- I want to maintain special education services and programs
- I want Full day K
- I want recess for 4th graders no matter where they are
- I want students to be involved in their transition (see their new school, etc)
- I want to maintain special education TA’s
- I want ELL program
- I want buildings that are handicap accessible
- I want 4th grade night and events
- I want to engage the students in the dialogue
- I want safety on the bus and in school

- I want everyone to be fiscally responsible
- I want my kids not to be lost in the shuffle
- I want bus rules to be modified
- I want to create new specialized programs for special education
- I want our kids to be academically and socially successful
- I want to know where my child will be placed well in advance
- I want Middletown to maintain its identity
- I want to know when it is going to happen
- I want to know if we are going to have a choice
- I want to maintain a nurturing, caring environment for my child
- I want to be proud of Middletown Public Schools and that my daughter is going there
- I want to know the student to teacher ratio
- I want performance based selection
Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

• Will grade 4 function as a middle school or 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 fields and track.
• Will grade 4 have access to the same co-curricular (special subjects)?
  Grade 4 will have their usual special subjects, Art, Music, PE/Health and Library. They will also continue with their traditional fourth grade activities (chorus, etc)
• 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.
• Will class size stay the same?
  We will maintain our current class size limits (grade K – 2, 20 students; grades 4 – 12, 25 students)
• How many grade 4 teachers will we have? 
We will have eight 4th grade teachers, most will be the current 4th grades teachers that are based in Aquidneck, Forest Avenue and Kennedy.

• When will Kennedy families receive their new school assignments? 
They will receive their assignments in May but preliminary information is available in this 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 school nurse teacher.

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

• Will parents and the community be able to help with the transition? 
A transition team will convene to assist in the process by providing recommendations to the school administration and volunteer supports to make these moves seamless, supportive and positive. The first meeting will be Wednesday, April 8, 2009, 6:00 p.m., Oliphant Administration. If you cannot make that meeting then please try to join us April 18, 2009, 10 a.m. Please join us.
Frequently Asked Questions Under Immediate Review for Phase II

• Will grade 4 begin school each day at the same time as grades 5 - 8?
• Will grade 4 students ride the elementary bus or ride the middle school bus?
• If grade 4 rides the middle school bus then can we have additional monitors?
Dear Parents and Guardians:

At the March 19th School Committee meeting, the School Board voted to close J.F. Kennedy School effective at the end of the 2008-2009 school year. This decision was based on the current budget crisis in the state of Rhode Island. This means that significantly fewer dollars will be provided to the school district.

For these reasons, the School Committee considered every cost savings measure, including all school operations, all staffing and all programs. It is heartbreaking to close a school. We know that students, staff, parents and community members love their schools.

On Thursday, April 2, 2009, we concluded our first round of parent and staff meetings regarding the closure of Kennedy School and the relocation of our current third graders to Gaudet School this September 2009. We have compiled all the “I WANTS” from every group. We will post them all on our website for you to view (www.mpsri.net). Updates will be provided periodically.

We have made several significant cuts to our budget already this school year, and will face yet another major reduction for 2009-10. Our priority is to continue delivering a quality education for each Middletown student. We want to provide the greatest amount of school district funds possible directly to our schools. Closing J.F. Kennedy School saved approximately $835,000. We are trying not to lose any more necessary staff positions and/or successful instructional programs.
We want to reassure you of several critical items you have raised in our meetings that are absolutes:

- 4th grade will be housed at Gaudet School, BUT will function as an elementary school.
- 4th grade will have recess with a playground as well as the opportunity to use the Gaudet fields and track.
- 4th grade will have their usual special subjects, Art, Music, PE/Heath and Library and continue with the traditional fourth grade activities.
- 4th graders who have Individual Educational Plans (IEP) will continue to receive the supports they have outlined in the IEP.
- We will maintain our current class size limits (grade K-2, 20 students; grades 4-12, 25 students).
- We will have eight (8) 4th grade teachers; most, if not all, will be the current 4th grade teachers at Aquidneck, Forest Avenue, and Kennedy Schools.
- Current Forest Avenue and Aquidneck School students (grades K, 1 and 2) will remain in their schools.
- One full-time nurse teacher will be assigned to every building.
- All-Day Kindergarten and Multiage classes will be maintained.
- Kennedy School families will receive their new school assignments by mid-May.
- English Language Learning (ELL) service will be mainstreamed.
- A transition team will convene to assist in the process by providing recommendations to the school administration and volunteer supports to make these moves seamless, supportive and positive. Please consider attending one of the two meetings: Wednesday, April 8, 2009, 6:00 p.m. or Saturday, April 18, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

Sincerely,
Rosemarie K. Kraeger, Superintendent of Schools
School District Redesign
Contact Information

Middletown Public Schools
Oliphant School
26 Oliphant Lane
Middletown, RI
p. 401.849.2122

Rosemarie K. Kraeger
Superintendent of Schools
rkraeger@mpsri.net

Linda F. Savastano
Assistant Superintendent
lsavastano@mpsri.net

Edward Collins
Director of Facilities Management
ecollins@mpsri.net

http://www.mpsri.net/page.cfm?p=1350