

July 22, 2015  
Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee  
Wednesday, July 22, 2015

**Present:** Patricia Charles, Ava Hart, Sean King, Caryn Sesta, Amy Waterman, Janice Pawlak, Vinnie Loffredo, Geen Thazhampallath, Richard Henderson, Tom Cannata, Sheila Daniels, Rebecca Augur, Patrick

**Absent:** James Gadreau, Enza Macri, Colleen Fitzpatrick

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM.

Committee members introduced themselves and shared the constituent groups they represented.

Rebecca Augur and her colleague, Patrick Gallagher, led the group through a PowerPoint presentation containing information gathered to help the group in their task to redistrict the Middletown elementary schools.

**CT Racial Balance Law** - Ms. Augur discussed the CT Statute 10-226 to ensure the committee understands the state requirements for racial balance in our schools. She highlighted the distinction between the general requirements for districts with less than 50% minority and the changes when the district exceeds 50%. Middletown surpassed 50% minority in K-5 in 2014 and is likely to remain at that level. Diverse Schools must maintain a minority composition of between 25% and 75% regardless of the district composition.

**Existing Conditions** – Moody School and Macdonough School are in impending imbalance status as they are close to being out of racial balance. Snow school uses a different district average due to the placement of the preschool at that school.

Middletown saw a 4.6% total population gain from 2000-2010. Population density is greatest in the downtown area and in Westfield near I91. A slight decline in population was noted in the Wesley and Bielefield areas. School population gains were identified at Moody and Macdonough. The number of child bearing females declined by 5.6%. Births are projected to be relatively flat and below the preceding years. Births are greater in the Lawrence attendance zone and outpace all other school zones. Many young families and apartments are located in that attendance area. The total births declined from 539 in 2013 to 520 in 2014. Overall, Middletown population is projected to have a modest increase in the next 10 years as reported by the State Data Center and CT DOT.

K enrollments are likely to increase in the City center and in the apartment complexes. Population growth is noted to continue, but not necessarily in school age students.

Housing growth is noted near I91, near Durham, Carlie Court (5 Units), off of Higby Road (20 Units), Mile Lane (13 Units) and Poplar Estates (15 Units). A permit was taken for 400 Unit on Newfield Street. It has

been on hold for almost 5 years. Rentals in Westlake and downtown are noted. Home sales are still down.

**Student Enrollment Trends** – 8.9% decline over the past 5 years. The closing of parochial schools and migration to magnet schools were cited as reasons. 25% of Middletown students are enrolled in private schools. Mr. Loffredo asked about the number of home schooled students. Dr. Charles will get the specific data, but did not believe the number would be great.

We are losing students as they move along in the grades. The Lawrence persistency rate is around 40%. Across the district 67% of the students born in Middletown attend school in Middletown. Retention rates at grade 8 and 10 increase due to grade retentions and transfers.

Mr. Thazhampallath shared concern around this trend as a city wide issue wondering what reasons are behind it.

**Facility Utilization and Capacity** – The capacity of the schools was identified regarding the number of regular classrooms and the number of additional rooms used for other purposes. An uneven distribution of program space was noted for art, music, SPED, and special programs. Utilization assumptions were based on K sizes at 20, Grades 1-2 at 22 students, and Grades 3-5 at 25 students. Additional programming assumptions will be added.

**Redistricting Process** – The group will identify the criteria the committee will follow to guide the redistricting process. Goals will be set at the August meeting. Each member was encouraged to go back and speak with their constituents to ensure the process reflects the thinking of the full committee and those they represent.

**Timeline** - The timeline and agenda for the next 6 meetings were outlined:

Goal setting – August

Generate potential redistricting alternatives – September/October

Seek Public Input – October/November

Draft Recommendations to be presented to the Board of Education - November

Reserve date in December if needed.

A question was raised about whether there will be opportunities for questions from the public that would impact the work of the committee. Dr. Charles stated that all meetings are opened to the public. Individual members should encourage the public to attend or share their perspective with a committee member.

Suggestions were made to invite someone from planning and zoning, or housing development to the meetings and to do an article with the Hartford Courant to get information about the work of the committee.

The public meetings will be held in an auditorium. Dates for the public meetings will be set at the next meeting in August.

Sheila asked the group to think as broadly about possible extending consideration beyond the scope of the goals in the 2009 redistricting. Rebecca Augur stated that they will get the group the info they need to understand the impact of alternatives. Sheila Daniels and Ava Hart complimented the Milone & MacBroom presentation and remarked that it was much more complete than past data received in the last redistricting effort.

Ideas suggested to get input on goals for the redistricting process from the community included discussion with community groups, sports teams and other groups organizations to which each member might have a connection.

**Future Meeting Dates –**

Tuesday, August 11,

Monday, September 14,

Tuesday, Oct 6,

Monday, November 9,

Monday, December 14 (hold)

**Adjourn** - The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.