

**Middle School Consolidation Update/Report  
To Board of Education  
January 6, 2018**

**Purpose of Update/Report:** This update provides further information in preparation for the Board of Education discussion and action related to the potential consolidation of the two middle schools.

**Purpose of Consolidation:** The purpose of consolidation is to improve the quality of educational and extra-curricular offerings for all middle school students. One larger school allows for students to have equitable access to new and existing programs and affords efficiencies that cannot happen with two small schools. Consolidation will bring consistent and coherent programs to improve student performance and growth outcomes. Consolidation also brings an opportunity for students at the middle school level to strengthen their sense of community before transitioning to the high school.

The concept of consolidation has been discussed for years at the Board level, by the K-12 Building Committee, in the Middle School Task Force, and in other venues. With the building of the new elementary schools and the transition of 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the elementary level, this is the opportune time to consolidate the two schools.

**Superintendent's Recommendation:** The Superintendent, with unanimous support of the district administrative Leadership Team, recommends consolidation of the two middle schools into one new 6-7-8 middle school to be located on the Mystic Middle School (MMS) site beginning in the fall of 2018.

**Busing:** There has been much discussion about the impacts of busing students who currently attend Pawcatuck Middle School (PMS). Approximately 35 students who currently walk to PMS would need to ride buses to the new middle school. In addition, a study was completed that indicated that riders on the five bus routes that currently serve PMS would ride an additional 12-15 minutes each way to the new school. With the transition of 5<sup>th</sup> grade to the elementary level and potential route adjustments, this may be reduced. It should be noted that the five routes would take less time than some of the current MMS routes and are well under the Board established maximum ride times. Lastly, additional late buses would be added to provide students with transportation home after clubs, sports and other extracurricular offerings.

Similar decisions in the past (closing of the Borough school and Mystic elementary school) resulted in a change in transportation ride times for some students. There will be additional bus time for some students. However, there are positive trade-offs that benefit all students with consolidation including enhanced academic and enrichment programs and additional extracurricular programs.

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