



Educational Considerations: Westport's Middle Schools

Presentation Date: August 26, 2019
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Purpose:

The Board of Education has made the decision to maintain two 6-8 grade middle schools. The goal of this presentation is to detail an educational and pragmatic analysis of the four options that have been proposed.



Agenda:

- Recap BOE Guiding Criteria
- Recap Middle School Enrollment Projections
- Middle School Concept and Westport's History
- Educational Analysis of Potential Options



The BoE's primary goal for redistricting is to improve the enrollment balance at both middle schools so that it can ensure the viability of each school and equity for all students.

Guiding Criteria

- ❖ Instructional Model: maintain a minimum of 2 teams per grade with 4 teachers per team at each of the middle schools.
- ❖ Utilization: promote reasonable balancing of enrollment of schools to avoid over-utilization or under-utilization of facilities.
- ❖ Proximity: keep distances traveled by students as short as possible. This may result in students going to first or second nearest school.
- ❖ Equity: provide access to the same resources and programming for all students.
- ❖ Sustainability: ensure long-term sustainability of plan – 5 & 10 years.
- ❖ Disruption: minimize impact to families by not having a split feeder pattern at any of the Els.

Redistricting options are guided by and weighed against these criteria to evaluate their viability.

MILONE & MACBROOM ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS



School	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29
Total:	1,401	1,363	1,370	1,334	1,316	1,304	1,257	1,240	1,179	1,183	1,178	1,200	1,201	1,200	1,192

Middle School Concept



- The middle school concept took a stronghold in the later part of the 20th century.
- Young adolescents experience rapid physical, emotional, and intellectual growth at a level only matched by first 3 years of life.
- Strengthen the academic core of middle schools and establish caring, supportive environments that value adolescents.
- The formation of interdisciplinary teams was proposed as a way of reducing student alienation and increasing students' sense of belonging.

Middle School Teaming



- Teaming remains one of the hallmarks of the middle school model, creating smaller learning communities.
- Teaming provides students with a greater sense of belonging and support (Jackson & Davis, 2000; Caskey, 2007).
- Interdisciplinary teams tend to consist of anything between two – six teachers per team (Ellerbrock et al, 2018).
- Some research suggests, the odds of students connecting with peers and teachers decreases in large team configurations (Caskey, 2007).

Westport



- Coleytown and Bedford transitioned from junior high schools to middle schools in 1983, over 30 years ago (source Dan Woog 06880, posted on August 26, 2014)
- For more than 20 years, both schools have employed four-teacher teams, two at Coleytown and three at Bedford.
- Four teacher teams are comprised of one mathematics teacher, one social studies teacher, one science teacher, and one language arts teacher.
- This configuration allows teachers with single subject certifications to teach on one team e.g. Social Studies 7-12.

Current Options



- **Option I** - Grades 6-8 return to Coleytown Middle School, without redistricting or redirecting
- **Option II** - Grades 6-8 return to Coleytown Middle School, pre-school moves to LLS, pocket redistricting occurs (previously referred to as scenario 8)
- **Option III** - Grades 6-8 return to Coleytown Middle School, pre-school moves to LLS, pocket redistricting occurs (previously referred to as scenario 8a)
- **Option IV** - Grades 6-8 return to Coleytown Middle School, modified feeder pattern occurs to increase enrollment at CMS (previously referred to as scenario 12) LLS and CES feed into CMS

Educational Considerations



- **Stable Enrollment at Each School/Grade** - Primary Goal
(ensure viability of each middle school)
- **Impact on Staff and Staffing Levels** – Sustainability/Instructional Model
- **Class Size** – Equity
- **Teaming** – Instructional Model

Option I - Grades 6-8 return to Coleytown Middle School, without redistricting or redirecting

Academics	Culture and Climate	Operations	Talent/Staff	Budget
<p>The current configuration would allow for one (6 teacher team) per grade level in most grades at CMS and one (6 teacher team) and one (4 teacher team) per grade level at Bedford. This would be a modification from the long standing 4 teacher teams in Westport.</p>	<p>Teacher collaboration is constrained by this model because there would only be 1 ½ FTE's in each content area at each grade level at CMS</p>	<p>The relatively low enrollment at CMS will allow for the possibility of repurposing unneeded space for other programmatic needs</p>	<p>There are notable fluctuations in the teaming structure at each grade level, potentially creating staffing and certification challenges</p>	<p>Budget neutral</p>
<p>Maintains the current number of student transitions in the district.</p>	<p>Maintains two relatively smaller middle schools</p>	<p>Redistricting is not required Policy reflects 4 teacher teams</p>	<p>The number of core teachers needed is consistent with the currently level of staffing. This decreases overtime but increases back to current levels in subsequent years</p>	<p>Staffing levels will remain the same, making this option budget neutral</p>
<p>Pros: --maintains two middle schools in Westport --does not increase the number of transitions for students --maintains two relatively smaller middle schools --Budget neutral --Class sizes relatively consistent from year-to-year</p>		<p>Cons: --6 teacher teams at the middle schools --inconsistent teaming models from year-to-year, creating staffing challenges --one team per grade level at CMS</p>		

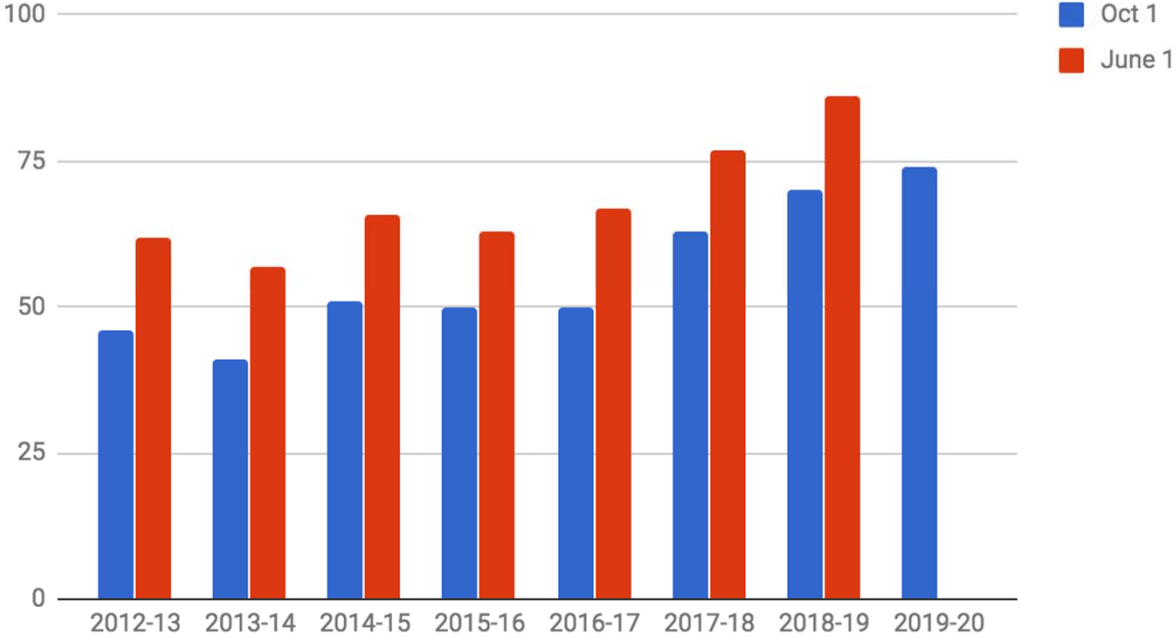
Option II - Grades 6-8 return to Coleytown Middle School, pre-school moves to LLS, pocket redistricting occurs (previously referred to as scenario 8)

Academics	Culture and Climate	Operations	Talent/Staff	Budget
This configuration would likely maintain 2 (4-teacher teams) at CMS and for the most part one (6 teacher team) and one (4 teacher team) at Bedford. This would be a modification from the long standing 4 teacher teams in Westport.	Maintains two teams per grade level at CMS	This option requires redistricting	Based on enrollment projections, starting in 2022-23, the overall staffing levels will be consistent overtime	Potential increase of in core teaching staff: 4 teachers 2020-21 2 teachers 2021-22
Maintains the current number of student transitions	Maintains two relatively smaller middle schools	Moving pre-school requires significant planning and space		Pre-school move would likely require significant renovations to LLS
Pros: --does not increase the number of transitions for students --maintains two relatively smaller middle schools school --after first two years, the teaming models at each school will likely remain consistent overtime --maintains two teams at CMS		Cons: --6 teacher teams at BMS --in first two years of implementation there will likely be the need for additional teachers --requires redistricting --budgetary impact of moving preschool --additional space is likely needed at LLS in order to house the pre-school		

Pre-School Considerations



Stepping Stones Enrollment



Pre-School Considerations Continued



Current Classrooms: 7 (one additional classroom is anticipated for 2020 due to enrollment: Total 8)	3 have bathrooms	Notes: 1 bathroom is required in the intensive resource classroom
Current Service Providers Rooms/Offices Total: 10 additional spaces	1 OT/PT room	Notes: Sensory Equipment needed so room must accommodate installation of a sensory swing
	4 SLP rooms	Notes: one of which is shared with our psychologist
Additional Offices	1 Social Worker Office 1 Nursing Office 1 Staff Workroom 1 Coordinator's Office 1 Conference Room	Notes: Conference room must accommodate a minimum of 12 individuals for Planning and Placement team meetings.
Other Considerations	Developmentally Appropriate Playground	Notes: Recess area must be fenced in for safety reasons, and include an area that is shaded.

Option III - Grades 6-8 return to Coleytown Middle School, pre-school moves to LLS, pocket redistricting occurs (previously referred to as scenario 8a)

Academics	Culture and Climate	Operations	Talent/Staff	Budget
This configuration would likely maintain 2 (4-teacher teams) at CMS and for the most part one (6 teacher team) and one (4 teacher team) for each grade level at Bedford. This would be a modification from the long standing 4 teacher teams in Westport.	Maintains two teams per grade level at CMS	This option requires redistricting	Based on enrollment projections, starting in 2023-24, staffing levels will be consistent overtime	Potential increase in core teaching staff: 2 teachers 2020-21 2 teachers 2021-22
Maintains the current number of student transitions.	Maintains two relatively smaller middle schools	Moving pre-school requires significant planning and space (See attached)	Overall teaming model and staffing needs remain consistent overtime	Pre-school move would likely require significant renovations
Pros: --maintains two middle schools in Westport --does not increase the number of transitions for students --maintains two relatively smaller middle schools --teaming model remains relatively consistent overtime ---class sizes remain relatively consistent overtime and from school to school --maintains two teams at CMS		Cons: --there will be 6 teacher teams at BMS --in first two years of implementation there will likely be the need for additional teachers --requires redistricting --budgetary impact of moving preschool --additional space is likely needed at LLS in order to house the pre-school		

**Option IV - Grades 6-8 return to Coleytown Middle School, modified feeder pattern occurs to increase enrollment at CMS (previously referred to as scenario 12)
LLS and CES feed into CMS**

Academics	Culture and Climate	Operations	Talent/Staff	Budget
This configuration would largely support two (4 teacher teams) per grade at CMS and one (4 teacher team) and one (6 teacher team) at Bedford. This would be a modification from the long standing 4 teacher teams in Westport.	Maintains two teams per grade level at CMS	Redistricting needs to occur	CMS would maintain two (4 teacher teams) for the foreseeable future BMS would experience some fluctuations in the teaming model overtime, but would remain relatively stable	Potential increase in core teaching staff: 2 teachers 2020-21 2 teachers 2021-22
Maintains the current number of student transitions	Maintains two relatively smaller middle schools	Transportation routes will need to be adjusted	Overall teaming model and staffing needs remain relatively consistent overtime	

<p>Pros: --does not increase the number of transitions for students --maintains two relatively smaller middle schools --after first two years, the teaming models at each school will remain relatively consistent overtime --maintains two teams at CMS</p>	<p>Cons: --there will be 6 teacher teams at BMS --in first two years of implementation there will likely be the need for additional teachers --requires redistricting</p>
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References

- Caskey M.M. (2007) *Effects of Interdisciplinary Teaching Team Configuration upon the Social Bonding of Middle School Students*. National Middle School Association: RMLE Online.
- Davis, G.A., Jackson, A. (2000) *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescent in the 21st Century*: Teacher College Press.
- Ellerbrock, C.R., Falbe, K., & Franz, D.P., & Main K. (2018) *An Examination of Middle School Structures in the United States and Australia*. Education Science