



Jody Ian Goeler, Superintendent
Christopher C. Melillo, Assistant Superintendent

August 30, 2018

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Other Members of the Hamden Community:

In an era of reduced state and federal funding and declining enrollment, the Hamden Board of Education and administration are exploring options to ensure a sustainable and strong public education system for Hamden's children. In order to achieve this future, we must consider how we might utilize resources differently, including closing buildings and changing school attendance zones, to more effectively meet our academic goals and address our fiscal challenges.

The Hamden Board of Education is considering a range of redistricting scenarios and is working to build consensus around a plan that best meets our district's goals. We understand that the prospect of adjusting attendance zones, even for the best of reasons, may be concerning to families. The administration and Board of Education are making every effort to ensure we make the best decisions for our entire district, while maintaining a high quality and enriching education for all students. In addition, our outstanding staff will be informed and prepared to assist throughout the process.

The process for determining the best move forward will also involve thoughtful discussions with our community, always focusing on the best interest of all students and families. In an effort to gain input from our community members, we are using an online tool called ThoughtExchange, which allows us to collect thoughts and ideas on this initiative. We are pleased to see so many people have shared their thoughts through this process, and if you haven't, there is still time. You can follow the ThoughtExchange link on our district website, www.hamden.org We look forward to reading your comments.

Our goals for this initiative are as follows:

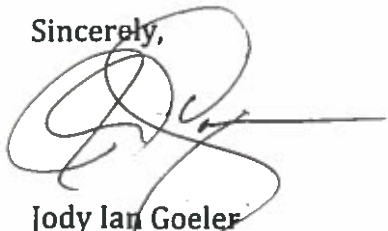
- 1. Move 6th grade to middle school** – To ensure Hamden students receive the broad offerings of a secondary experience, particularly in lab science and world language, our students will be better served by a 6-8 middle school, as is the practice in many Connecticut middle schools.
- 2. Scale use of facilities to address declining enrollment trends; Use resources more efficiently** – Some of our elementary schools are becoming underutilized resulting in the opportunity to consolidate. Shifting locations and resources will provide a greater chance to allocate existing resources for improved programming and services to students.

3. **Incorporate Wintergreen School into Hamden Public Schools** – This beautiful building and property, owned by the Town of Hamden, could be a great asset for our school system. Some of our existing school buildings are not as modern in their design, which limits our use of them, and others currently require significant and costly structural improvements.
4. **Create sensible attendance zones that more closely reflect our demographics and meet state regulations for diversity** – The current attendance zone map for Hamden elementary schools has not had significant changes in more than twenty years, while populations have shifted over this same period of time. As a result, our attendance zones no longer meet state requirements and our own benchmarks for diversity. In addition, more sensible attendance zones could reduce transportation costs.
5. **Provide opportunities for greater financial sustainability** – The Hamden Board of Education is committed to proactively addressing the impact of declining enrollment, less State and Federal funding, and the higher level of needs of students and families. If we take the necessary steps to address these trends head on, we will be in a position to allocate dollars to improve programs and buildings across the district.

We will keep you updated as the Board continues its work on this initiative. Please look for information on the *RETHINK, RESTRUCTURE, RESULTS* link on the Hamden Public Schools website (Hamden.org/3R). We will continue to have thoughtful and respectful dialogue with families, staff, and community. In addition to sharing your thoughts through the ThoughtExchange process, you will have an opportunity to listen, ask questions, present ideas, and express concerns at Board of Education meetings when the item is on the agenda. Board of Education and committee meetings, with agendas are posted on the district website, www.hamden.org

Hamden is an outstanding community, proud of its diversity and exceptional schools. We look forward to the opportunity to *RETHINK, RESTRUCTURE* and see great *RESULTS* through our strategic efforts.

Sincerely,



Jody Ian Goeler
Superintendent of Schools



Christopher Daur
Board of Education Chair