



Amendment to Racial Imbalance Plan

Fairfield Public Schools

*Approved with Addition of Benchmark Timelines (p. 7 - 12)
April 6, 2017*

*Initial Fairfield Board of Education Approval of Plan:
November 15, 2016*

April 2017 Update

On January 4th, 2017 the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) approved this plan with the condition that a benchmark timeline would be added and address all Amendments and Additional Steps listed on pages 4-7. The Fairfield Board of Education approved the addition of Section VI, Benchmark Planning, on pages 7-12.

I. Background

In May of 2015, the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) notified the Fairfield Public Schools that McKinley School continued to be racially imbalanced. During the 2015-2016 school year, the Fairfield Board of Education (Board) studied the possibility of redistricting the student population to remedy this issue. The district engaged the consulting firm of Milone & MacBroom to study demographic patterns within the district and to recommend possible courses of action to reduce racial imbalance among the district's elementary schools. Milone & MacBroom presented its finding to the Fairfield Board of Education on February 16, 2016. The consultants concluded that, even with redistricting, no substantial improvement to the racial imbalance problem could occur until the renovations and additions to the Holland Hill and Mill Hill schools are complete. Specifically, the consultants stated that:

1. Racial Imbalance at McKinley and overcrowding at Holland Hill, Mill Hill and Sherman cannot be solved without school construction projects.
2. Pocket redistricting can mitigate racial imbalances at McKinley after the Holland Hill Construction Project is completed. However, it would result in Holland Hill becoming impending imbalanced (between 15% and 18% higher than district).

3. Following the completion of the Holland Hill and Mill Hill Construction Projects, the district can achieve racial imbalance objectives at McKinley.

On May 4, 2016, the Superintendent of Schools and Chairman of the Fairfield Board of Education presented this information to the State Board of Education. The CSBE, while pleased with the Board’s efforts to address the matter, requested that the Board present an amendment to its Racial Imbalance Plan at its December 7, 2016 meeting.

II. History of Racial Imbalance at McKinley

The CSBE has set a standard by which to judge whether or not a school district is in compliance with the statute. All schools must be within 25 percentage points of the district average of minority students at the same grade span. Chart 1 summarizes McKinley’s data for the past six years.

Chart 1:
History of Racial Imbalance at McKinley

Year	McKinley % Minority	District % Minority	Absolute Imbalance
2010-11	43.47%	17.58%	25.89%
2011-12	45.70%	18.89%	26.81%
2012-13	43.41%	19.00%	24.41%
2013-14	45.85%	19.37%	26.48%
2014-15	49.10%	20.53%	28.57%
2015-16	47.90%	20.70%	27.20%

This chart indicates that McKinley School has exceeded the 25% standard in all but one of the last six years. Therefore, the Board is required to propose revisions to the district’s current Racial Imbalance Plan that will move McKinley School under the 25 percentage point differential.

III. Current Arrangements

The following are the features of the current Plan, as approved by the CSBE in October of 2007 and amended in September of 2010:

1) Opt In to McKinley:

Students from other elementary schools in Fairfield may “opt in” to attend McKinley School. Once the opt-in students complete their elementary years, they attend middle and high school based on the feeder patterns that pertain to their place of residence. Currently, 24 students from elsewhere in Fairfield attend school at McKinley under this arrangement. However, thirteen of these students are minority children. Although the Opt In program has not contributed to greater racial balance among our elementary schools, participation in the program signals the interest of these families in taking advantage of the quality instruction and the cultural diversity available at the McKinley School.

2) Opt Out from McKinley:

For a few years, students who resided in the McKinley attendance zone were offered the choice of “opting out” to other Fairfield elementary schools. However, the “opt out” arrangement did not have a positive impact on racial balance and was therefore terminated following the 2012-13 academic year.

3) Pre-School Options:

Students who reside in the McKinley attendance area have the option of attending pre-school at either the Burr or Dwight elementary schools. These students have the option of continuing at either Burr or Dwight for their K-5 education. Once the pre-school children reach kindergarten, their siblings are able to enroll at Burr or Dwight as well. Once they complete their elementary years, these students attend middle and high school according to the feeder patterns that pertain to their place of residence. Enrollment in the pre-school programs is as follows in 2016-17:

Chart 2:
Pre-kindergarten Programs, 2016-17

<u>Pre-Kindergarten Program</u>	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>McKinley Minority Enrollment</u>
Burr (AM and PM)	36	30	6
<u>Dwight (AM and PM)</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	72	54	7

- a. Tuition of \$3,500 is charged for pre-kindergarten students. However, families unable to afford the tuition have the tuition either waived or reduced to 50 percent, depending on income.
- b. Transportation is provided for families in the pre-kindergarten programs only if they qualify for the tuition waiver or the tuition reduction. Families paying full tuition must provide their own transportation for the pre-kindergartens.

As a result of the pre-kindergarten program, 17 minority students who would otherwise have attended McKinley School are currently enrolled in grades K-5 at either Dwight School or Burr School. This includes the siblings of former McKinley preschoolers who attend Dwight or Burr as the result of the program.

4) Open Choice:

Seventy-two students who reside in Bridgeport attend the Fairfield Public Schools under the Open Choice Program, under arrangements with Cooperative Education Services (CES). Of these, 51 are minority students enrolled in grades K through 5.

IV. Amendments

1) Pre-Kindergarten:

The district intends to modify the pre-kindergarten aspect of the Board's existing plan, as follows:

- a. While the pre-kindergarten programs have helped to address the racial imbalance issue, the Burr program has been the main contributor. Enrollment in the Dwight pre-kindergarten has been consistently lower than that at Burr. In addition, families electing the Dwight pre-kindergarten, and remaining there, are generally not having a positive impact on the racial imbalance issue. Thus the district will eliminate the Dwight pre-kindergarten program at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year and instead offer a new location at Stratfield School. We believe that, with space available at nearby Stratfield School, we can attract more McKinley families to attend pre-kindergarten and remain at Stratfield.
- b. In an effort to further enhance the impact of the pre-K program on racial balance, McKinley students will be given priority in the enrollment process.

- c. The district will open a third pre-kindergarten at either Stratfield or Burr for the 2018-19 school year, if demand is demonstrated and space is available. This would raise the capacity of the pre-kindergarten programs to 108 slots.
- d. Pre-kindergarten tuition has not been increased from the \$3,500 level for the past five years. Based on a market survey of comparable programs, we recommend raising the tuition to \$4,250 per year, with an annual increase of 3 percent each year thereafter. Tuition waivers would remain in place.

Chart 4:
Pre-kindergarten Programs, 2017-2018 through 2018-2019

<i>Proposed 2017-18</i>		
Pre-K Program	Capacity	Projected McKinley Minority Enrollment
Burr (AM and PM)	36	6
Stratfield (AM and PM)	36	8
Totals:	72	14

<i>Proposed 2018-19</i>		
Pre-K Program	Capacity	Projected McKinley Minority Enrollment
Burr (AM and PM)	36	6
Stratfield (AM and PM)	36	8
Site TBD* (AM and PM)	36	7
Totals:	108	21

**Based on demand, with site subject to the approval of the Board of Education. Could be added to Burr or Stratfield.*

2) Open Choice:

In an effort to increase the percentage of minority students in the elementary schools other than McKinley, we will increase the total number of Open Choice students enrolled in the Fairfield Public Schools from the current level of 72 to a total of 100 by the start of the 2018-2019 school year. This will be accomplished by adding 18 Open Choice students to the elementary grades in the fall of 2017, with an emphasis on kindergarten and grade 1. An additional 18 students will be added to the elementary grades in the fall of 2018. Assuming attrition of four Open Choice

students each year, this would mean a net increase of 14 students per year, bringing the district's total Open Choice enrollment to 100 by 2018-19.

We project that 60 out of the district's 86 Open Choice students would be enrolled in the elementary grades in 2017-18, and 73 out of 100 in 2018-19. Because virtually all Open Choice students are minority students, the expansion of the Open Choice program would raise the overall minority student population at the elementary level by approximately ½ percent by 2018-19, thus reducing the difference between the proportion of minority students in the district and the proportion at McKinley School.

3) Projected Impact of Proposed Changes:

The district projects that the steps outlined above would have the following impact on racial balance among the district's elementary schools:

Pre-School Option:

We estimate that the number of K-5 McKinley minority students attending other schools as a result of the expanded pre-school option will increase by 25, from the current 17 to 42 (including former Pre-K students as well as siblings) by 2019-20. All else being equal, this would reduce McKinley's minority student population by about 3 percent below what it would otherwise be, and increase the minority proportion of the district's remaining elementary schools slightly.

Expanded Open Choice:

Increasing the number of K-5 Open Choice students from the current 51 to 73 is expected to increase the percentage of minority students in the district's elementary schools by approximately ½ percentage point over what it would have been by 2018-19.

V. Additional Steps

If the previous five years are a guide, we can expect the proportion of minority students at McKinley to increase at a higher rate than the proportion of minority students at the district's other ten elementary schools. Therefore, additional action will be required to address the issue of racial imbalance among our elementary schools over the long term. The following steps will be considered in that regard:

1. Magnet Program at McKinley School

Creation of a "magnet" program at McKinley School that would attract students from elsewhere in the district and thereby reduce the percentage of minority students at the school. Based on the building's current capacity, a magnet program could accommodate approximately fifty additional students without new construction. We estimate that a magnet program at McKinley would reduce the school's minority population by two to three percentage points.

2. Redistricting

A \$15 million renovation and expansion project is scheduled at the Holland Hill School, with completion expected by the fall of 2018. Also, a \$15 million renovation and expansion project is proposed the Mill Hill School between 2018 and 2020. These projects will expand capacity at these schools by approximately 120 students. At that point, according to the Milone & MacBroom consultants, we will be able to revise school attendance areas to balance enrollments and to reduce significantly the extent of the minority student disparity between the McKinley School and our other elementary schools.

VI. Benchmark Planning

Focus Tasks and Timelines

1.0 Community Engagement

- 1.1 Community Meeting with PTA on Relocating Preschool
- 1.2 Public Hearing on Racial Imbalance Plan
- 1.3 Present First Draft of Amended Plan to Fairfield BoE
BoE Public Discussion
- 1.4 Present Final Version of Amended Plan to Fairfield BoE
BoE Public Discussion
- 1.5 Site Visit to McKinley for State Officials
- 1.6 McKinley PTA Visit to gather feedback and share information
- 1.7 Exploring Options with a Town-wide Community Visioning Meeting
- 1.8 Community Survey of Program Options
- 1.9 BoE Town Hall Meeting April 2017
- 1.10 Site Visits to explore program models
- 1.11 Seek guidance from outside expert agencies on guidance for civil rights of children (i.e. ACLU, NAACP, Greater Bridgeport Latino Network, Ct. Hispanic Bar Association, Ct. Immigrant Rights Alliance...)
- 1.12 Conduct a Community Forum on Racial Imbalance updates to information, and recommendations for 2019-2020

2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus

- 2.1 Begin Enrollment for 2017-2018 Year
- 2.2 Move program from Dwight Elementary to Stratfield to make it more accessible for McKinley families
- 2.3 Evaluate status of enrollment for shifts or changes which support the program move from Dwight to Stratfield
- 2.4 Evaluate impact to Racial Imbalance
- 2.5 Evaluate financial impact for non-mandated Preschool

3.0 Open Choice

- 3.1 Identify Open Choice Placements Based on Zero Immediate Financial Impact
- 3.2 Conduct a cost analysis over the past ten years
- 3.3 Update Open Choice enrollment information
- 3.4 Analyze impact to Racial Imbalance

4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options

- 4.1 Technical Assistance from the Ct. State Department of Education
- 4.2 Study other communities and varied approaches to resolving the Racial Imbalance percentage
- 4.3 Research Intra-district magnet or other program options
- 4.4 Present Intra-district analysis information to the BoE and make recommendations for 2018-2019
- 4.5 Conduct cost analysis for Intra-district magnet and projections for minority enrollment shifts at McKinley
- 4.6 Conduct program review of McKinley Elementary student achievement, specifically minority achievement, as compared to other Fairfield elementary schools
- 4.7 Review unique program status in terms of resources, access, and equity for student achievement. Make recommendations to BoE in terms of resource allocations

5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield

- 5.1 Review Milone and McBroom redistricting study for additional follow-up questions
- 5.2 Seek approval for Holland Hill Construction, June 2017
- 5.3 Review building capacity and enrollment options PK-5- including unique programs which may impact building capacity in and around the district
- 5.4 Survey the community on redistricting options
- 5.5 Conduct a district public forum on redistricting
- 5.6 Update the current construction and renovation timelines
- 5.7 Planning for Mill Hill construction
- 5.8 Make a recommendation to the BoE on future redistricting options or alternate planning

Integrated Timeline of Action Steps

Focus	Task	Expected Target Completion Date	Completed Check
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.1 Begin PK Enrollment for 2017-2018 Year	January, 2017	X
1.0 Community Engagement	1.1 Community Meeting with PTA on Relocating Preschool 1.2 Public Hearing on Racial Imbalance Plan	March 2017	X
1.0 Community Engagement	1.3 Present First Draft of Amended Plan to Fairfield BoE BoE Public Discussion	March 2017	X
1.0 Community Engagement	1.6 McKinley PTA Visit to gather feedback and share information	March 2017	X
1.0 Community Engagement	1.4 Present Final Version of Amended Plan to Fairfield BoE BoE Public Discussion	April 2017	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.9 BoE Town Hall Meeting	April 2017	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.5 Site Visit to McKinley for State Officials	June 2017	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.2 Seek approval for Holland Hill Construction	June 2017	
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.2 Move program from Dwight Elementary to Stratfield to make it more accessible for McKinley families	June 2017	X
3.0 Open Choice	3.1 Identify Open Choice Placements Based on Zero Immediate Financial Impact	On or Before June, 2017	

Focus	Task	Expected Target Completion Date	Completed Check
1.0 Community Engagement	1.7 Exploring Options with a Town-wide Community Visioning Meeting	October 2017	
3.0 Open Choice	3.3 Update Open Choice enrollment information	October 2017	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.8 Community Survey of Program Options	December 2017	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.1 Review Milone and McBroom redistricting study for additional follow up questions.	December 2017	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.3 Review building capacity and enrollment options PK-5- including unique programs which may impact building capacity in and around the district.	December 2017	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.3 Research Intra-district programmatic options	December 2017	
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.3 Evaluate status of enrollment for shifts or changes which support the program move from Dwight to Stratfield	January 2018	
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.4 Evaluate impact to Racial Imbalance	January 2018	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.4 Present Intra-district analysis information to the BoE and make recommendations for 2018-2019	February 2018	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.5 Conduct cost analysis for Intra-district magnet and projections for minority enrollment shifts at McKinley	February 2018	

Focus	Task	Expected Target Completion Date	Completed Check
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.6 Conduct program review of McKinley Elementary student achievement, specifically minority achievement, as compared to other Fairfield elementary schools	February 2018	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.7 Review unique program status in terms of resources, access, and equity for student achievement. Make recommendations to BoE in terms of resource allocations	February 2018	
3.0 Open Choice	3.2 Conduct a cost analysis over the past ten years	March 2018	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.2 Study other communities and varied approaches to resolving the Racial Imbalance percentage	May, 2018	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.10 Site Visits to explore program models	May 2018	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.11 Seek guidance from outside expert agencies on guidance for civil rights of children (ie...ACLU, NAACP, Greater Bridgeport Latino Network, Ct. Hispanic Bar Association, Ct. Immigrant Rights Alliance...)	May 2018	
3.0 Open Choice	3.4 Analyze impact to Racial Imbalance	June 2018	
2.0 Pre-Kindergarten Focus	2.5 Evaluate financial impact for non-mandated Preschool	June 2018 Budget FY18 Preparations	

Focus	Task	Expected Target Completion Date	Completed Check
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.3 Survey the community on redistricting options.	June 2018	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.4 Conduct a district public forum on redistricting.	June 2018	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.5 Update the current construction and renovation timelines	June 2018	
1.0 Community Engagement	1.12 Conduct a Community Forum on Racial Imbalance updates to information, and recommendations for 2019-2020	May 2019	
5.0 Redistricting Elementary Schools in Fairfield	5.8 Make a recommendation to the BoE on future redistricting options or alternate planning	June 2019	
4.0 Magnet or Other Program Options	4.1 Technical Assistance from the Ct. State Department of Education	June 2019	Periodic Checks 1. Phone Conference December 2017 2. Phone Conference January 2017 3. 4. 5.