

May 18, 2023

Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker
CT State Department of Education
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker,

This is to provide an update on Fairfield Public Schools' Racial Imbalance Plan, as requested at the November 2, 2022, State Board of Education meeting. We continue to make progress on the components of our plan as outlined below. There has been little to update on the plan, but we anticipate a more significant update heading into the summer months because of the SLAM recommendations which will be presented to the Fairfield Board of education on June 13, 2023.

There are many factors that contribute to the current demographic enrollment at McKinley Elementary School. These include current housing and development, affordability, and the positive climate and culture that students and families experience at McKinley School. I cannot stress enough how much I have heard from families about how the school's culture has contributed to them seeking to move into the district specifically to enroll their children at McKinley. Families do not see a racially imbalanced school but rather an inclusive school community where their children are learning and growing.

The timeline below is a chronological account of the actions taken to date by the Fairfield Board of Education to begin the process of redistricting:

November 2, 2022: Fairfield Board Finance Committee: Costs/savings estimates from closing an elementary school, as discussed in September

November 15, 2022: Fairfield Board Discussion of Updated Facilities Planning Principles from 2010

November 29, 2022: Fairfield Board First Reading of Revised Facilities Planning Document

December 13, 2022: Fairfield Board adopts revised Facilities Planning Document. Review of 2019 Charge to Milone and MacBroom (SLAM) and Discussion of Updates, Timeline and Associated Budget

December 15, 2022: Fairfield Board holds Community Conversation regarding racial balance, academic excellence, and facility utilization in person.

December 21, 2022: Board Facilities Committee follow up on seating needs capacity for special programming and ECC, review of November enrollment and capacity data report from SLAM.

January 4, 2023: Fairfield Board held a Facility Planning Workshop. Review of Specialized Programming Request, First Reading of 2023 Board of Education Charge to Consultant, Timeline related to Facilities.

January 5, 2023: Fairfield Board holds Community Conversation regarding racial balance, academic excellence, and facility utilization virtually.

January 10, 2023: Fairfield Board meeting discussion on facilities capital planning, board follow up questions and amendments on the draft charge from January 4th the board voted to postpone the vote on the charge to the consultant to the January 24, 2023, Board meeting.

January 24, 2023: Fairfield Board Meeting: Board adopts charge to the consultant to assist in identifying redistricting scenarios to balance elementary school utilization and resolve racial imbalance.

Looking ahead, the district and Board of Education will be receiving the recommended scenarios from the SLAM consultants on June 13, 2023. The district will hold a public meeting as well as provide an online option to solicit input from the entire school community. The Board will participate in the first of a series of training opportunities around our district's equity work on May 24, 2023. I have made a significant investment in increasing our school climate initiatives, and ongoing community engagement efforts beginning this summer.

Our next update to you will be provided in November. Please feel free to contact with me questions on our progress or any of the details above.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Testani
Superintendent of Schools