

In 2003/2004, student enrollment in Regional School District 13 reached a historical high point of approximately 2,180 students. Since that time there has been a progressive decline in enrollment. In response, the Board of Education commissioned an initial demographic study in order to get a better sense of long term enrollment trends based on a formal analysis of demographic, census, economic and other data.

The initial demographic study was completed by H.C. Planning Consultants, Inc. in May 2012. A follow-up study was commissioned by the Board of Education and was completed in 2014. This study further confirmed the findings of the H.C. Planning Consultants, Inc. study with a continued pattern of declining enrollment. Both studies confirmed the trend of declining enrollment in Regional District 13 from a high of 2,180 students in 2003/2004 to approximately 1,200 in 2024, a decline of nearly 55%.

Declining enrollment prompted a more deliberate look at building use and the associated impact on future budgets. As a result the approved 2013-2014 budget included funding to commission a facilities utilization study. The firm Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc. (DRA) was selected and the Board of Education appointed a facilities utilization subcommittee to oversee the process and make recommendations to the Board of Education.

The utilization study provides a comprehensive review of existing building conditions, enrollment projections, educational space needs, and planning options. The study is a valuable resource as next steps are considered. All elementary school options currently under consideration by the Utilization Committee provide for both the Integrated Day and Contemporary programs to be in separate buildings. The options included in the report are those suggested by DRA but will not necessarily be the final recommendations of the Utilization Committee or the Board of Education. Any decisions regarding the closing and/or repurposing of buildings will be done as part of a larger plan which must incorporate our common vision for the educational changes necessary to best prepare our students for the future and will be completed in consultation with the two communities as appropriate. The final recommendation is a Board of Education responsibility.

The projected enrollment numbers provide an opportunity not only to determine the best use of our existing space, but also to plan for progressive programming and support for students. One positive outcome of reallocation of resources is the opportunity to enhance our common vision for the educational future of our students. Regional School District 13 will continue to examine program opportunities to promote 21st century learning skills including innovation, communication, collaboration, analytical thinking and problem-solving. We will continue to develop programs in science, technology, engineering, math, and the arts.

Building renovations are not likely to occur before the 2017/2018 school year due to the lengthy process required by Connecticut statutes and the State Department of Education for building reimbursement grants. Consequently, there will be ample opportunities for continued public dialogue and input.

The Utilization Committee will continue to post meeting dates at our Town Halls and on the district website. The public is welcomed and encouraged to attend these meetings. Among the items the Utilization Committee is continuing to work on are completing a building cost analysis, integrating our educational vision, and developing a recommendation for the Board of Education.

Questions and comments about this report can be directed to the Utilization Committee via email to UtilizationCommittee@rsd13.org or sent to Utilization Committee, Regional School District 13, 135A Pickett Lane, P.O. Box 190, Durham, CT 06422. Your written communication will be reviewed and considered by the Utilization Committee.