

# *Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District*

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Good Evening HWRSD Community,

As you are perhaps aware, the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District has created a Middle School Task Force to develop a set of recommendations for the HWRSD School Committee that will shape the District's strategic response to declining enrollment. This 13-member Task Force has been charged with developing recommendations that will respond to the educational and financial challenges associated with enrollment decline and that will also improve middle level education in HWRSD. As a District, we want to ensure that we have a strategy to ensure that we are operating effectively educationally and fiscally at the middle level.

Over the course of several meetings the Task Force has:

- toured both Thornton W. Burgess and Wilbraham Middle School in an effort to understand the educational capacity, the configuration and the condition of each building.
- engaged in a discussion of the "Middle School Model" with an emphasis on how exemplary practices relating to teaming, common planning time and a strong related arts program can meet the academic and social/emotional needs of adolescents.
- been provided with an "educational snapshot" of TWB and WMS by Principals Peter Dufresne and Noel Pixley. Each principal reviewed his schools' educational programs and described staffing and scheduling arrangements.

- studied enrollment trends and operating costs and to learn more about the sites and physical plants of Thornton W. Burgess and Wilbraham Middle School.
- studied the cost and educational implications of staffing patterns under our current configuration and under a combined middle school configuration.

This evening, after considerable open deliberation, the Task Force formally and unanimously voted to “express its opinion” to the HWRSD School Committee that the District should move toward “a one school building option for a Regional Middle School.” The vote expressed the directional opinion of the Task Force. As Superintendent I am pleased that the Task Force has taken this important step forward and I, too, am confident that, educationally and financially, HWRSD can best meet the academic, social, physical and emotional needs of HWRSD young adolescents in a single middle school.

It is important to note that the Task Force has not yet taken a specific position on a timeline or how this can be tactically achieved. The Task Force will formally present its position to the HWRSD School Committee at the School Committee meeting on Tuesday, December 16 at 7:00 p.m.. The Task Force will reconvene in January to consider its next strategic steps forward.

For additional information please [review information on the Task Force](#) that has been posted to our District website. In addition, if you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Marty O’Shea  
Superintendent of Schools