

Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District

M. Martin O'Shea
Superintendent
moshea@hwrSD.org



621 Main Street
Wilbraham, MA 01095
Phone: (413)596-3884
FAX: (413)599-1328

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Good Evening,

I am writing this evening with another update on the status of the HWRSD Middle School Task Force.

Tonight the Task Force met again as part of its mission to develop recommendations that will respond to the educational and financial challenges associated with enrollment decline and that will also improve middle level education in HWRSD. If you have not taken the opportunity, I encourage you to [review information on the Task Force](#) posted to our District website. On the HWRSD website you will find information that will help you

- understand the educational capacity, configuration and condition of each middle school.
- learn about the **“Middle School Model”** that represents our educational vision. The presentation shows 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.
- become familiar with existing educational programs, staffing and scheduling arrangements.
- learn more about enrollment and demographic trends.
- study the cost and educational implications of staffing patterns under our current configuration and under a combined middle school configuration.
- familiarize yourself with the reason the Task Force 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.”
- review both the short and long term feasibility of moving toward a regional middle school.

Tonight's meeting was a formal meeting of the Task Force Sub-Committee, and not necessarily intended to be one of the general public forums and input-gathering sessions

that will be advertised and scheduled beginning in February. Nevertheless, we gathered significant input and had an opportunity to share information that had been previously reviewed by the Task Force.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be held on Thursday, February 5, at a location yet to be determined. The formal meeting will begin at 8:00 p.m., but will be preceded by a public presentation and public forum beginning at 7:00 p.m. Attendees will have an opportunity to share their thoughts and ask questions. The location has yet to be determined, but we will get the word out as soon as possible.

As Superintendent, I remain 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. No decisions have been made and planning only proceeds if our study demonstrates that it can be done in a manner that is both educationally effective and cost effective. More importantly, understand that this is a community decision that needs the support of the Middle School Task Force, the HWRSD School Committee and ultimately voters at annual town meetings.

As always, I welcome your input and look forward to further discussions on how working together we can improve educational services for the children of Hampden and Wilbraham.

Sincerely,

Marty O'Shea

Superintendent of Schools