Meeting Date: September 10, 2015

Agenda Item Title: **New Lebanon Modular Recommendation**

Names of Submitters:
- Mr. James Hricay, Managing Director of Operations
- Ms. Barbara Riccio, Principal, New Lebanon School
- Mr. Ronald Matten, Director of Facilities
Executive Summary and Recommendations

After considerable deliberation and community input, the Board of Selectman, the Board of Estimate and Taxation, the Representative Town Meeting and the Board of Education reached consensus on a site for the rebuilding of New Lebanon School. The administration has forwarded educational specifications to the Building Committee which is in the process of hiring an architect.

The decision to build a new school at New Lebanon on the existing site presents challenges in terms of where to locate students during construction. While construction is not scheduled to begin until the 2017-2018 school year, there is the additional problem of where to house the growing New Lebanon student population during the 2016-2017 school year.

We recommend that the Board of Education adopt a three year plan to house New Lebanon students:

- For the 2016-2017 school year, we propose to move the Kindergarten sections currently housed off campus at the BANC site back into the building. Space for these sections would be created by housing the New Lebanon fourth and fifth grades in the Western Middle School building for one school year. WMS has an appropriate space that was used to house the Glenville fourth and fifth grade during the construction of the Glenville building.
- Construct a modular building on the Western Middle School campus to house students in Kindergarten through fifth grade for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.

Timely adoption of this plan will provide us with time to manage logistics, communicate with parents and the community, and ensure that construction proceeds with minimal disruption to the educational process.

New Lebanon Relocation during Construction

There are essentially two options to relocate students during construction at New Lebanon: 1) divide the students among three schools that have underutilized space and 2) build modular classroom units on the Western Middle School site. While it is feasible within the constraints of projected enrollment and classroom utilization, relocating students to two elementary schools and Western Middle School has a number of disadvantages including:

- Professional development is more difficult to deliver on a school-wide basis if staff is located in three schools. This holds true for any school wide activity. Location in three schools puts stress on the sense of community that is vital to the educational program at New Lebanon. A full analysis of the potential impact
of relocation to three schools on the New Lebanon community is included in the school program section of this report.

- North Streets enrollment is trending upward. Housing Kindergarten and grade one at North Street may not be possible in year two of construction without moving a section of prekindergarten out of the building (see chart at the end of this report).
- The number of grade two and three sections at New Lebanon is projected to increase from four to five in year two of construction necessitating moving a section of prekindergarten to another school.
- Transporting New Lebanon students to three schools is inherently inefficient requiring six additional buses. Locating students in modular classrooms on the WMS campus would require four additional buses for a savings of $155,000 per year during construction. These funds could be used to defray the cost of the modular classrooms.
- Travel time on buses from New Lebanon to Parkway would be at the outside limit of what we consider feasible for young children. Our experience transporting Hamilton Avenue students to Parkway indicates that it would be prudent to staff the buses with monitors.
- Western Middle School is much more accessible for New Lebanon parents.
- Transportation to after school programs would be easier to arrange from one school rather than three. It is unknown whether it is possible to provide transportation to after school programs from Parkway.
- Coordinating the delivery of the instructional program across three buildings is possible (we did it during the Hamilton Avenue and Glenville construction) but it is hardly ideal. It is particularly difficult to schedule the support staff that many New Lebanon students require.

For these reasons it is the recommendation of the administration that New Lebanon students be located in modular buildings on the Western Middle School campus during the renovation of New Lebanon School (2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years).

**Modular Classrooms at Western Middle School**

The Office of School Facilities is recommending the construction of a temporary modular building on the site of Western Middle School. The new structure would be placed behind Western Middle School.
The recommended size of the building would be approximately 20,000 square feet and contain:

- 20 Classrooms
- 3 Small specialty rooms
- 1 Media center
- 1 Cafeteria
- 6 Offices
- 1 Conference room

The site currently has utility hookups: water, power, sanitary sewer and telecom fiber from the previously installed temporary modular building.

The modular building would include:

- Heat
- Air conditioning
- Wi-Fi
- Smartboard
- Rest rooms

A typical modular classroom is 24 feet wide by 25 feet long or 600 square feet. We are recommending that the building be leased, not purchased. Smartboards, furniture and WiFi would be removed from the existing new Lebanon School and be installed in the temporary modular building. The District would need 12 working days to outfit the building after erection.

**Indoor Air Quality and Mold**

In the past, the Town and District have had unfavorable experiences with temporary modular buildings. A compromised building envelope and no airflow under the structure, combined with a lack of engagement, resulted in mold growth.
We are specifying that the building be installed with mechanical ventilation in the crawl space. The regular movement of air will avoid the condensate issues that significantly contributed to the mold in our previous temporary modular buildings.

The previous modular installation also had a compromised building envelope. Daily written building inspections will be required of the Head Custodian and weekly inspections will be performed by the Construction Maintenance Foreman. The increased scrutiny will ensure that the building integrity remains intact.

Cost

For this project, we are projecting a monthly lease expense of $53,500 per month. The project requires set-up, break down and utility hook ups. A more detailed breakdown is provided in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set-up Charges (Front End)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivery and Construction</td>
<td>300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utility connections</td>
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<td>Network wiring</td>
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<td><strong>Total Set-up</strong></td>
<td>340,120</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Removal (Back End)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>175,000</td>
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<td><strong>Rental 24 months @ $53,500</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Moving Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contingency @ 15%</strong></td>
<td>273,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,097,738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total leasing, set up and break down costs for the temporary modular building is projected to cost $2,097,738. The cost assumes construction to begin in 2017 and includes a 3% per year escalation above today cost estimates. Reimbursement from the State Office of School Facilities, Division of Construction is not guaranteed. We have been advised that the decision is made on an individual basis and Greenwich Public Schools is currently consulting with them.

**The Program at New Lebanon School**

**Academics**

- **International Baccalaureate** is NL’s rigorous Magnet Theme. The school and District did a five year development of the program leading up to its official authorization. The school was authorized as an official international school in December 2012. The school will need to go through re-authorization in December 2017. A self-study year for re-authorization occurs from December 2016 till re-authorization in December 2017. The IB philosophy is richly
connected to a whole-school environment that promotes the attributes of an IB learner in a framework of transdisciplinary learning across the school using six international themes which explore central ideas and develop lines of inquiry. The success of the program is the integration of these themes across curriculum and school settings, i.e., art, music, PE, ESL, ALP, etc. Teachers need to be continually collaborating to develop the students’ understandings of the themes and inquiries across a school day. The cohesiveness of the staff is an essential component of the IB philosophy. The timeline of the IB re-authorization program is the same as the timeline for the ground breaking and relocation of students to make way for a new building. To disperse the students across Greenwich would dilute the integrity of the IB program and place re-authorization in jeopardy. The magnet draw is a key element in the Racial Balance Plan to the State. Losing IB status would raise the risk that the Greenwich Public Schools would be out of compliance with the State’s mandates.

- **Title Programs** are a cornerstone of the support provided for children at NL who are in the achievement gap, a considerable area of concern for this high-performing district. Students who exist in this gap are those with the risk factors of poverty (approximately 59% at NL), minority background (approximately 75% at NL) and English language learners (approximately 23% at NL). Our Title I supports include an enhanced literacy staff (specialists and coaching) as well as, interventionists. They work across grade levels throughout the day to provide intervention services to students falling below grade level primarily due to the above stated risk factors. Additional to these personnel, Title I programs enhance student performance. These include after school programs geared towards our students who need more individualized strategies to succeed, such as, homework support, organizational and independence support and basic vocabulary, and reading/math strategy support. These programs are in addition to the District provided supplemental programs for support to academically at risk students. A third use of Title funds is to provide experiential activities for those in the gap so as to enhance their understandings of the culture and community they now are a part of, either because of poverty deprivation or cultural differences. These understandings directly contribute to student comprehension of the inquiries they are engaged in and the problem solving skills they must develop to respond to their world. If the NL population is dispersed across schools, the Title I programs will be diluted which will reduce the impact of the monies provided federally for these programs. This will occur in the following ways:

  - **Staffing:** if staff is spread across schools, travel time will decrease their time directly working with children. All of our specially trained staff work across grade levels throughout the day with varying skills and areas of
expertise. Disbursement will impact having the right person in the right place on a consistent and efficient basis.

- Programs: teachers run these programs after school. This is successful at NL because there are late buses to the Boys & Girls Club to meet the needs of the many working families. Our teachers also walk the younger children to the BANC After-School Program on these program days, again supporting the needs of the NL working families. Finally, these programs are often delivered by our ESL teachers or bilingual teachers so they can communicate with the families and holistically support the students. They often teach these out of their grade level assignments. Disbursement would not support this because the needed number of Spanish speaking teachers may not be in the schools where the students needing the supports are placed. One example of the effectiveness of these after school programs is the success of a small group of bilingual students who were targeted in the After School Program to transition from their reading instruction in Spanish to guided reading in English. The goal for this group was to have 100% of these three students grow three reading levels in English during this transitional support program. In deed, 100% did achieve the goal. Two students grew four levels and one grew five levels. They all reached the ELL Benchmark for the F&P, and one of the students is in the district grade level band! This all while they continue to be instructed in Spanish in the bilingual program during school hours, so they are becoming literate in their native language and their second language.

- Experiential Programs: we try to schedule such experiences across grade levels to make busing cost effective. Having students across the District could make this unmanageable with the funds available.

- Our ESL staffing is essential to the needs of the NL community. It involves a complex scheduling pattern for push-in, pull out, newcomer, teacher support, family support, intake, state testing, services, etc. If these teachers are dispersed across the District their areas of expertise cannot be fully exploited. In one building they can triage needs and have a flexible, collaborative approach to their support services and their scheduling, which needs to be flexible. This is the same barrier that would be experienced by Special Education and Professional Assistant support. The percentage of special education students at NL is 16% many with comprehensive needs 5%, requiring a rotating schedule of support from various differently trained personnel, i.e., services for the blind, non-ambulatory students, students requiring specialized instruction (ABA, direct teaching, etc.) Additionally, NL has developed an advanced process for conducting bi-weekly meetings for all personnel across grade levels to meet to ensure that the trains move on time and that the units being delivered across classroom teachers, ESL professionals, special education professionals and
literacy, interventionist specialist are coherent for the children receiving sometimes two to three of these services. Without these meetings, children would be exposed to a cacophony of teacher talk and skill overload. This could NOT be accomplished if staffing were diluted in various buildings in Greenwich. Non-classroom teachers are required to cover these specialists and classroom teachers to enable these meetings to occur. It takes our whole village every day to do this work!

- Three years ago we began a Bilingual Program at NL to address a growing need among our youngest students. We discovered that they were being considered needing interventions for things that were just part of their first language structure. With a collaboration between District leaders: ESL, special education, technology, foreign language, general education, etc., we developed a pilot bilingual program. It now spans from Kinder through second grade. The research-based hypothesis being that if children are instructed in their first language initially they would then transfer those skills more easily to a second language and would not be working from a deficit model, as was the case previously. This has proven correct for the majority of those in the program.

Since the initiation of the program, the bilingual students have achieved a greater percentage of students meeting the ELL benchmark at the end of each year of bilingual education than their peers who receive only ESL support. If we were dispersed this program could not be maintained at its current level. Scheduling and materials costs would be too great. A side effect of this program was an increase in parent involvement in their child’s education. Parents were now confident supporting their children in their native language increasing the atmosphere of a more inclusive environment at NL.

- At NL we use every possible moment to pursue Professional Development for our Staff. This includes using all faculty meetings for a predetermined, well-planned purpose. Whether it is looking at student work and having all teachers, PE, music, art, scoring writing on-demands using the TC rubric, or being schooled on cultural competencies by our ESL staff or behavioral strategies by the PPS specialists, we are all working together to develop teacher capacity. If we are dispersed at schools that start and end at different times, we would lose the effectiveness of a whole staff learning paradigm at faculty meetings. Additionally, the District, through Achievement Gap funds, has invested heavily in our work with Columbia Teacher’s College to develop teacher capacity for the teaching of writing across the grade levels. This involves five staff development days for each of the grade levels. This could not continue at this professional level if our grade levels were dispersed across the district. These days are tightly scheduled and travel would inhibit the time frame for the learning.
• **After School Programs** are a core part of the life of NL students. As mentioned above, these programs exist for a variety of reasons: to support ESL in the skill set needed for the American school system; to tutor at risk students in academic support; for experiential learning for children under-exposed due to poverty issues. The majority of these programs are free, or with minimal cost to the families. Besides providing the extended day support these children need, NL teachers can walk the children to aftercare beyond the program at BANC, and/or a late bus will pick up groups of children for the Boys & Girls Club. Because we are a walking community, many parents walk to pick their children up if they are not enrolled in aftercare, or they have older siblings do that if they are still at work. Many NL families do not have cars, or multiple cars, so traveling to a distant school to pick up their child(ren) at a similarly sponsored, often expensive, programs is out of the question for these families. This means that the children will be missing these opportunities and dropped off at NL after their trip to another school during the day and left unsupervised outside the Byram Shubert Library till dark till someone comes to pick them up!

**Parent Involvement**

• **Curriculum Nights** have been a key factor in increasing parent involvement at NL this year, beyond our wildest dreams. These evenings have had a school-wide spirit effect. We observed attendance of entire families, moms, dads, younger-not-school aged children, older NL graduate siblings, etc. It was amazing. The evenings drew from all groups at NL and were a night of learning and socialization for all parents and students. The data on the attendance is as follows:

> *All of the collaborative efforts helped us attain our goals of increasing the percentage of parents attending evening and after school events aimed to further help the closing of the achievement gap. Our goal, originally written to increase parent participation to increase by 5% (from 10%-15%) was not only achieved but also surpassed. Overall, parent participation for PTA increased from an average of 25 people to 27 people monthly. Similarly participation in our parent coffees increased from an average of 18 people to 21 people. However, our significant increase was mostly due to the whopping success of the Family Curriculum Nights. In those 3 nights we had an average of 199 attendees. In prior years with only 1 curriculum night each year, our participation was 127 attendees.*

If these nights were across different schools due to disbursement, our families would not be able to maintain this momentum. As mentioned before transportation would be the major issue, but so would the community and whole family, whole school participation. Costs would go up due to having multiple locations and presenters over multiple nights. Our AGAP budget does not have
the capacity at this time to accommodate this increase in programming. Nor would our families with multiple children be able to attend numerous Curriculum Nights across a number of schools.

- This year our Parent Liaison had a regularly scheduled time to be at NL every morning. She was a bilingual Latina who supported families with free and reduced lunch applications, summer school enrollments, after school program enrollments, after school care programs, how to read a writing rubric, how to interpret the report card, conferences with teachers and on and on. Families felt comfortable and empowered to interact with their child(ren)’s teacher(s) with her support. Teachers felt that misunderstandings could be easily resolved without language being a barrier. The number of parents she supported in her one hour each morning at NL were 40 appointments and 50 phone calls.

Recently our disenfranchised parents became a vocal part of the NL community through their Activism Relating to the New Building. For families used to being on the fringes, many found their voice due to the support of our bilingual PTA co-presidents and through the work of our parent liaison supporting these families at meetings with her translations. The BOE needs to be commended for making so many opportunities available to these parents at the NL building. To even attend the BOS meetings at the end of the year a complicated system of carpooling needed to be arranged, therefore, I worry that these newly developed social activists will lose their voices when they are diluted throughout a not so welcoming greater Greenwich community. These are underserved families who take great risk to come out and ask for what they know their children need. The amount of effort and work everyone at NL has done to welcome, empower and educate these folks is remarkable.
Greenwich Public Schools
New Lebanon Relocation During Construction
Revised September 10, 2015

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<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Rooms</th>
<th>PreK</th>
<th>NL Sections</th>
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Class Size Guidelines

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New Lebanon School

Notes

- Assumes maintaining District class size guidelines
- Based on enrollment projection
- One section of PreK moves from PK to CC in 2017-2018
- NL grades K and 1 at NS
- NL grades 2 and 3 at PK
- NL grades 4 and 5 at WMS
- Gr 4 or 5 could be located at HA but would impact STEM magnet capacity
- Gr 4 or 5 could be located at OG but traffic congestion would lengthen bus ride