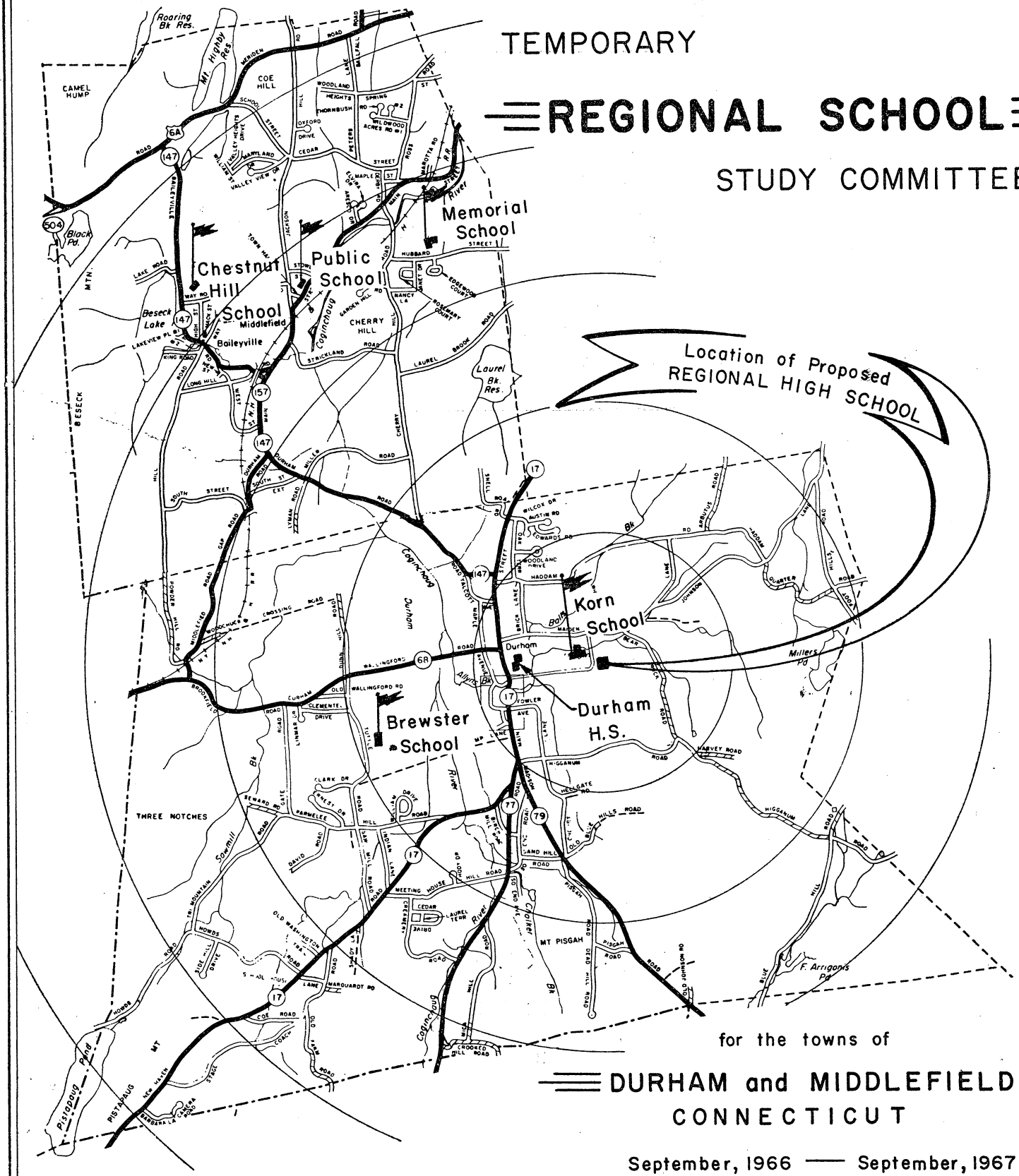
BETTER EDUCATION for DURHAM and MIDDLEFIELD

final report ....



TEMPORARY

REGIONAL SCHOOL

STUDY COMMITTEE

for the towns of

DURHAM and MIDDLEFIELD

CONNECTICUT

September, 1966 — September, 1967

TEMPORARY REGIONAL SCHOOL STUDY COMMITTEE

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Educational Program

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Finance

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Connecticut Department of Education

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University of Connecticut

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Ralph Conlon
Durham Superintendent of Schools

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Durham High School Principal

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Durham Elementary School Principal

Special Assistance

Maynard Stender
Durham High School Building Com.

Mid-State Regional Planning Agency

A desire for a comprehensive educational program within the limits of reasonable expenditures prompted the voters of Durham and Middlefield to form a Temporary Regional School Study Committee. This ten-member committee (five from each town) has met about every two weeks since September, 1966, to study the advisability of intergrating the educational efforts of the two towns. In this report the committee presents its fellow citizens with a factual analysis of the situation and recommendations for action which it believes necessary if Durham and Middlefield are to continue to provide quality education for their children.

FIRST, THE COMMITTEE PRESENTS A DIGEST OF

. . . the **NEED for action**

in DURHAM AND MIDDLEFIELD

*sharply increasing population (more than DOUBLE the average Connecticut rate)

*sharply increasing school enrollments (substantially higher than general population increases)

*relatively small total enrollments (well below recommended minimums to provide both quality and economy in educational programs)

*increasing cost of quality education (the economical utilization of (1) modern educational facilities, (2) sophisticated educational technology, and (3) highly trained specialized personnel requires relatively large student enrollments)

in DURHAM

*immediate need for expanded high school facilities

*high school enrollment far below the minimum recommended to provide both quality and economy in secondary programs

in MIDDLEFIELD

*no control in determining expenditures, policy, or program for students in grades 10, 11, and 12 (these students attend Middletown High School on a tuition basis)

*no assurance of the continued availability of Middletown's secondary facilities (Middlefield was recently forced to withdraw its ninth-grade pupils)

*total secondary enrollment too small to justify construction and operation of s aecondary educational facility

. . . the **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*that Durham and Middlefield cooperatively administer their entire educational system—kindergarten through grade 12

*that the new regionalized system be organized on an elementary, middle, and high school basis

*that children attending elementary and middle schools remain in their present locations

*that a four-year regional high school be constructed on the site presently available in Durham

. . . and the **ADVANTAGES** of a regional school system

to DURHAM AND MIDDLEFIELD

*an expanded and more comprehensive educational program than either town could afford alone

improved facilities—libraries, laboratories, auditorium, gymnasium, outdoor athletic facilities

increased availability of educational resources—reading and speech specialists, audio-visual equipment, counseling services, etc.

intergration and articulation of school program—kindergarten through grade 12

*unified administration—through a single board of education and school administrative staff

*preservation of local control
*greater efficiency in all phases of school operation
*increased state aid—30% more for school construction, 10% more for school operations

to DURHAM

*an expanded and more comprehensive secondary program
*reduced cost of school construction

to MIDDLEFIELD

*a permanently established school system for students in grades 10-12
*local determination of educational expenditures, policy, and program

...AND HERE ARE THE FACTS BEHIND THE RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Durham and Middlefield are essentially similar towns. Originally rural, they have become increasingly suburban in character as agricultural acreage has been absorbed by housing, schools, roads, watersheds, business, and recreation projects. Although both towns aspire to industrial development, they are predominantly residential towns, most of whose citizens work elsewhere.

The populations of the two towns include professional people, executives, businessmen, skilled craftsmen, commercial farm operators, and retired citizens. The per capita income is the same as the Connecticut state average (highest in the nation), and extremely high — and low— income groups appear to represent only a small proportion of the population.

In terms of assessed valuation per pupil (the amount of taxable property behind each pupil), Durham and Middlefield have, for a number of years, ranked among the lowest ten in a state of 169 towns. However, in terms of per pupil expenditures, both Durham and Middlefield rank among the upper half of the state's towns (Durham 74th and Middlefield 79th).[1] In order to maintain this position, Durham and Middlefield have appropriated 70% to 80% of town revenues for education.

[1]Connecticut Public Expenditure Council, Local Public School Expenses and State Aid in Connecticut. January, 1967. Durham spent $552.84 for each pupil and Middlefield spent $546.66. The state-wide average was $554.21. Figures quoted are for the 1965-66 school year.

POPULATION TRENDS

In view of the similarity in community characteristics of Durham and Middlefield, their nearly parallel rate of growth over the past twenty-five years is not entirely unexpected; however, what is remarkable is the phenomenal rate at which both towns have grown. As is indicated in the following figure, population in both towns has more than TRIPLED since 1940 and DOUBLED since 1950. And neither town show signs of significantly abated growth.

These increases in population by no means reflect current state trends. The following figure graphically illustrates this fact. From 1950 to 1960, Connecticut's population increased 26.3%, while Middlefield's increased 64.1% and Durham's rose by 71.6%. Even in the five years from 1960 to 1965, Durham-Middlefield's population increased at more than DOUBLE the rate of the state as a whole. It should be stressed that the lower percentage increases indicated for the 1960-65 period do not necessarily reflect a "leveling off" trend, but are merely the result of measurement over a shorter time period.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS

The following school enrollment data and projections were compiled by the respective administrations of the two school systems. Because Durham does not presently operate a kindergarten, the enrollment totals are not exactly comparable; however, within certain grade groupings, comparisons can be made.

POPULATION TRENDS

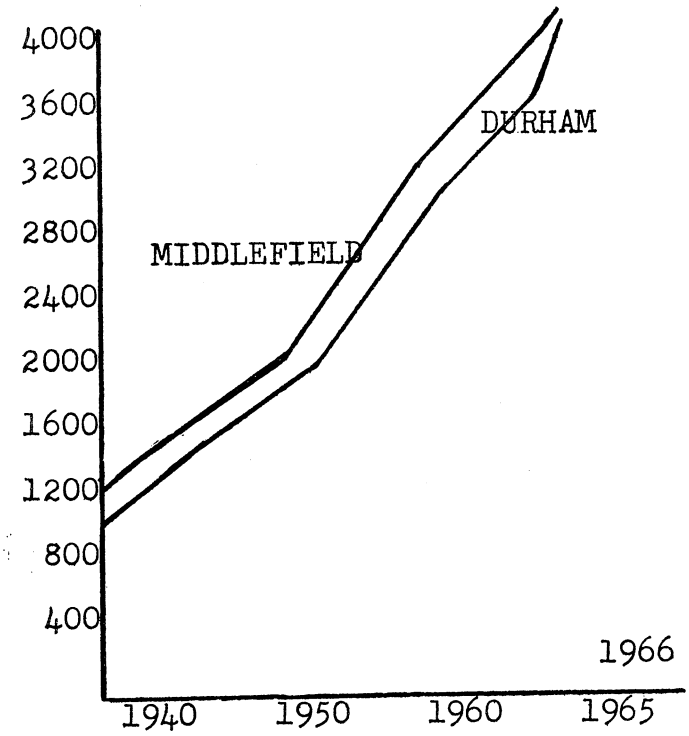

Table 1

PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE

Per cent

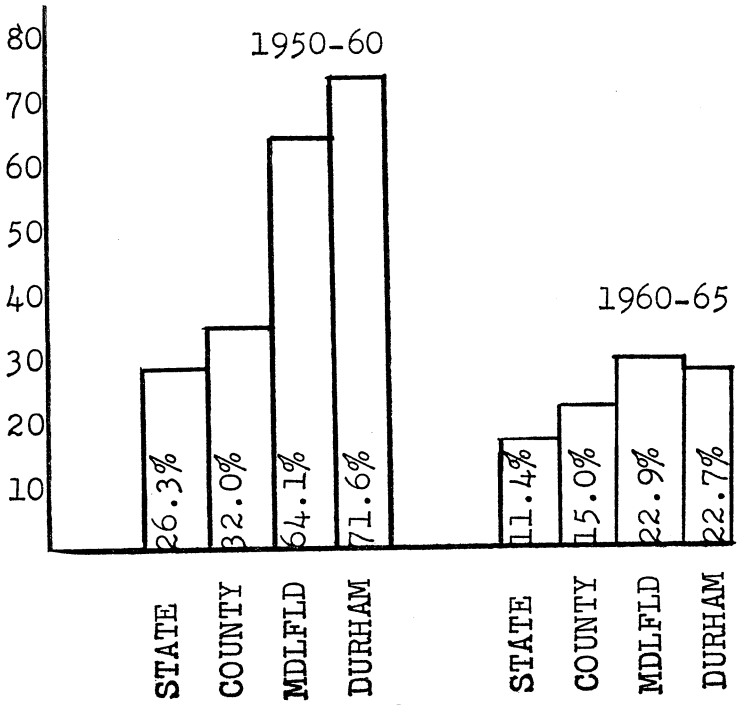

Table 2

DURHAM—ACTUAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS, 1961-67

	K	1–4	5–8	9–12	SPECIAL CLASS	1–12 TOTAL
1961–62		367	259	188		814
1962–63		381	280	191		852
1963–64		405	317	194		916
1964–65		426	359	200	4	989
1965–66		448	376	201	5	1030
1966–67		471	396	224	8	1099

Table 3

MIDDLEFIELD—ACTUAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS, 1961–67

	K	1–4	5–8	9–12	SPECIAL CLASS	1–12 TOTAL	K–12 TOTAL
1961–62	94	347	250	179	12	788	882
1962–63	93	355	286	192	9	842	935
1963–64	81	399	307	191	6	903	984
1964–65	93	374	342	187	11	914	1007
1965–66	81	376	359	176	12	923	1004
1966-67	84	347	350	197	13	908	992

Table 4

DURHAM—PROJECTED ENROLLMENTS, 1967-72

	K	1–4	5–8	9–12	SPECIAL CLASSES	K–12 TOTAL
1967–68	113	478	410	252	10	1263
1968–69	117	479	451	263	10	1320
1969–70	120	486	478	278	10	1372
1970–71	123	499	491	296	10	1419
1971–72	129	511	499	309	10	1458

Table 5

MIDDLEFIELD—PROJECTED ENROLLMENTS, 1967-72

	K	1–4	5–8	9–12	SPECIAL CLASSES	K–12 TOTAL
1967–68	88	343	363	202	10	1006
1968–69	92	362	348	220	10	1032
1969–70	75	358	357	237	10	1037
1970–71	87	357	340	240	10	1034
1971–72	93	361	336	248	10	1048

Table 6

It is important to remember that enrollment projections are merely **estimates** of anticipated future enrollments. Although several methods of computing future enrollments can be used, each utilizing somewhat different data and proceeding upon somewhat different assumptions, no "best" method exists, and unforeseen developments in the future can substantially upset any projection. In addition, the relatively small number of pupils in both Durham and Middlefield makes accurate forecasting of future enrollments somewhat hazardous. For present purposes the Committee felt that "percentage of survival" method used in making the projections provided the required information as adequately as any other method.

Total school enrollments for grades one through twelve over the past six years show a 35.01% increase for Durham and a 15.2% increase for Middlefield. Whether such a differential will continue in future years is uncertain, however, a situation in which enrollments in either town will decrease or even stabilize is highly unlikely. At present levels of enrollment, a unified K–12 Durham-Middlefield school district could provide fully adequate programs. However, it should be emphasized that the purpose of regionalization is not only to improve the present situation, but to provide for the long term needs of the two towns.

PRESENT SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

DURHAM operates a grade 1–12 school program. Grades 1–3 are located at the Brewster School, grades 4-6 at the Korn School, and grades 7–12 at the High School on Main Street. Durham has no approved available space to absorb significant pupil growth at either the elementary or secondary levels. The new high school will alleviate this situation.

MIDDLEFIELD operates a K–9 program. A readiness room and grades 1 and 2 are housed in the Public School. Kindergarten classes and grades 3, 4, and 5 are located in the Chestnut Hill School; Memorial School houses grades 5 through 9. Pupils in grades 10-12, however, are sent to Middletown High School on a tuition basis. Middlefield has one classroom available to absorb enrollment growth in the elementary or middle grades.

Because of the difference in the grouping of grades in the two systems, the committee is making no recommendation concerning the grade structure of the middle schools under regionalized administration. Such determinations would be the function of the regional school board.

The relatively small enrollment at Durham's junior-senior high school places restrictions on the programs which it is able to provide. Thus, while Durham maintains control over its secondary education, it is forced to sacrifice efficiency and economy of operation. Middlefield, on the other hand, in sending its secondary students to Middletown, forfeits control over expenditures, policy, and program. Middlefield has no firm assurance of a permanent home for grades 10–12: The tuition arrangement can be terminated according to prearranged notice, and rates may be revised at any time. Such an arrangement is at best an uneasy one—educationally and financially.

TRANSPORTATION

No substantial increases in transportation costs are anticipated for either town in the event of regionalization, indeed, increased state grants may even result in a slight reduction of transportation costs to the towns.

PRESENT SCHOOL PLANT

DURHAM has three schools—Brewster, Korn, and Durham High School.

Brewster School was built 12 years ago on a site of 20 acres and has 14 classrooms. The site is not approved by the State Department of Health for further expansion.

Korn School is a 3-year-old unit constructed on a 69 acre campus. It has 13 classrooms. Fifteen acres of the campus are approved by the State Department of Education for the addition of 12 more classrooms when needed.

Durham High School is a forty-four year old structure which was enlarged in 1949 and again in 1959. It is not approved by the State Department of Health for further expansion. It consists of 22 teaching stations and a gymnasium, standing on a 9 acre site adjacent on the west to the 69 acre main campus.

DURHAM'S three educational facilities, constructed on land totaling approximately 99 acres, house 49 classrooms in grades 1–12. No open teaching stations* exist in any of the three schools. In fact, the music room at the 3-year-old Korn School has had to be appropriated as a classroom. In addition, Durham provides no kindergarten as required by state law (although one is planned in order to conform with the law with the completion of the new Durham High School).

*Teaching stations are defined as "any one of a number of places or positions in a school or school system that require the services of a full-time teacher." Carter V. Good, ed., Dictionary of Education. Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959.

MIDDLEFIELD, like Durham, operates three schools—Public, Chestnut Hill, and Memorial.

Public School is 41 years old and houses 8 classrooms. Its 2 acre site precludes any expansion.

Chestnut Hill School, one year old, is constructed on a 15 acre site and contains 12 classrooms. The site is approved by the State Department of Education for the addition of 12 additional rooms when needed.

Memorial School, built in 1954 with an addition in 1960, is a 21 classroom unit built on a 20 acre site. It is approved by the State Department of Education for the addition of 8 to 12 classrooms when needed.

MIDDLEFIELD'S three schools are constructed on land totaling approximately 37 acres and house 43 classrooms in grades K–9. A current surplus of one classroom will be eliminated by next year's increased enrollment.

SITE FOR A REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Without presuming to prescribe the location of the proposed regional high school, the committee felt bound to develop a set of criteria for site selection, to explore the suitability of various locations, and to recommend an appropriate site.

The principal criterion established by the Study Committee was centrality of location. It was agreed that the site should be located as closely as possible to the population and geographic center of both towns. Additional important considerations agreed upon were: (1) the availability of the land for purchase, (2) the suitability of the topography, and (3) ease and safety of access from presently established roadways.

The geographical and (estimated) population center falls in approximately the same general area—i.e., between Route 17 and Route 47, near the Durham-Middlefield town line. However, the lack of reasonably level terrain and inaccessibility from existing topn roads would require costly site development and new road construction.

Within one-and-a-half miles of the geographic center is the 69 acre Korn School site. This site is characterized by the following advantages:

1. The land is owned by the Town of Durham; thus, problems of acquisition are eliminated.
2. The site is large enough to accommodate both the proposed regional high school and the Korn School, as well as the future expansion of both.
3. Although they will require expansion, athletic areas have already been developed.
4. Transportation to the site from both towns can be accomplished over state highways with no need for the construction of access roads.
5. The site has already been approved by the State Department of Education for the construction of the new Durham High School.

For these reasons, the Study Committee recommends the Korn School site as the location for the proposed regional high school (see cover map).

THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

The Study Committee recommends the construction of a high school with classroom facilities to accommodate 650 pupils and "core" facilities (auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium, etc.) for 850 pupils. Projections indicate that such a plant will be adequate for from five to seven years after opening (assumed for 1969), after which time additional classroom space may be required. Thorough study in cooperation with local school administrators and representatives of the State Department of Education has led the Study Committee to conclude that the secondary high school needs of the proposed regionalized district could be met with a facility which included the following features:

- 18 Regular Classrooms
- 1 Art Room
- 2 Typing Rooms
- 1 Office Machines Workroom
- 1 Bookkeeping Room
- 1 Library-Resource Center
- 1 Chemistry-Physics Laboratory
- 1 Gymansium (divisible, seating 1200), Locker Rooms and Storage
- 2 Student Activities Rooms
- 6 Departmental Offices (e.g. Social Studies, Mathematics, Science) Other Offices (Administration, Guidance, Health)
- 1 Reading Laboratory
- 1 Home Economics Laboratory
- 2 Industrial Arts Shops
- 1 Drafting Room
- 1 Music Room
- 1 Biology Laboratory
- 1 General Science Room
- 1 Auditorium—800 seats, divisible, with folding walls
- 1 Cafeteria—seating 225
- 1 Teachers' Lounge and Dining Room
- 1 Language Laboratory

THE PROGRAM IN THE K-12 REGIONALIZED DISTRICT

By combining the Durham and Middlefield school systems under a single administration, many important educational services which are presently not feasible because of small enrollments could be made available at ALL grade levels. It should be emphasized that these offerings are not "optional," but are considered by many professional educators to be an essential part of a modern educational program. Some possibilities for program development in a K–12 regionalized district are:

1. A system-wide K–12 art and music program. These culturally enriching subjects cannot receive adequate investment in materials and specialized personnel unless large numbers of pupils are to be served. (This same type of program would also be possible in physical education, health, and special services to exceptional children.)
2. A well-conceived and coordinated guidance program. The need for a guidance program beginning in the early elementary years and continuing through the twelfth grade has been well documented.
3. The establishment of a central resource center to serve the audio-visual needs of the schools in the regional district.
4. A continuous, K–12 reading program. In addition to providing for the needs of remedial and retarded readers, the program would furnish instruction in developmental reading for advanced secondary students.

The foregoing possibilities suggest program improvements accruing to all students enrolled in the proposed K–12 regionalized district. The Study Committee is convinced, after careful examination of the issues involved, that a regionalized K–12 district can offer a more comprehensive educational program than either town could offer by itself.

Middlefield, however, has traditionally sent its secondary students to Middletown High School. The long and cordial association thus developed will undoubtedly lead many to question the contention that a regionalized district will provide equal opportunities to what is now offered by the Middletown system. The Study Committee can only emphasize that careful consideration of all aspects of the problem has resulted in the conviction that the combined enrollments of Durham and Middlefield are large enough to justify and provide a program equal to that offered by larger communities.

OTHER ADVANTAGES TO MIDDLEFIELD

The Committee further believes that Middlefield residents should give careful consideration to the following four advantages of regionalization over the present agreement with Middletown:

1. The unified regional school district will be able to provide continuity of school program—Kindergarten through grade twelve—not possible under present arrangements. This will be augmented by consistency in school administration and board policy.

2. The state legislature is giving increasing encouragement and support to regionalization through consistently liberalized grants-in-aid.

3. A portion of Middlefield's tuition costs is applied to capital financing. With the advent of the proposed new Middletown High School, this charge, presently $50 per pupil will undoubtedly rise. Middletown receives state aid in the form of construction grants for educating Middlefield students, but Middlefield receives no equity in Middletown's school plant for the capital charge—or rent—she pays. Under the regionalization proposal, Middlefield will own proportionately with Durham all school buildings within the regional district.

4. All signs point to the further growth of both Durham and Middlefield. As Middlefield's high school population expands, there is no certainty that Middletown will continue to be in a position to accept Middlefield students. The uncertainty of Middlefield's situation was underlined a few years ago when Middlefield's ninth grade could no longer be accommodated by Middletown. On the other hand, since Middlefield's population growth is limited by its geographical area, it is doubtful that an independent Middlefield high school will be justifiable in the near future.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE REGIONALIZED DISTRICT

The Regionalized School District would be administered by **one** superintendent, an assistant superintendent, plus a suitable staff for the regional office and each of the schools.

FINANCING THE REGIONALIZED DISTRICT

To present a more meaningful and realistic picture, the committee chose to develop financial figures in terms of today's costs. Fluctuating prices, labor charges, and anticipated changes in the state aid formula make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to predict costs for even a few years hence. The following analysis, then, is based on prices, operating expenses, and state aid allowances as of June 30, 1967.

Several factors were considered in estimating the costs of establishing and maintaining the proposed region:

Debt Limitation. The School Code of the State of Connecticut limits the amount of indebtedness a town or regional school district may incur. The indebtedness shall not exceed five and three-quarters (normal 2.25 plus 3.50 for regional districts) times the annual receipts from taxation averaged for the last three fiscal years, less the aggregate indebtedness of the towns.

The following table presents the tax receipts of each town for the last three fiscal years and the existing indebtedness of each town.

TAX RECEIPTS AND EXISTING INDEBTEDNESS

TOWN	THREE YEARS TAX RECEIPTS	YEARLY AVERAGE	INDEBTEDNESS
DURHAM	$1,381,785	$460,595	$583,875
MIDDLEFIELD	1,408,802	469,601	821,000
TOTAL	$2,790,587*	$930,196	$1,404,875**

Table 7

* Total Receipts - 1963-64, 1964-65, 1965-66
**As of June 30, 1967.

When the formula given in the School Code is applied to Durham and Middlefield's average tax receipts, and current indebtedness is subtracted, a debt limit of almost four million dollars results. The formula is computed as follows:

Average tax receipts — 930,196 x 2.25	=	$2,092,941
x 3.50	=	3,255,686
		5,348,627
Less indebtedness		1,404,875
Debt Limit for the proposed region —		$3,943,752

Distribution of Costs. The distribution of costs for each town has been based on the projected K–12 enrollment for October 1, 1969 and is shown in the following table.

TOWN	ENROLLMENT	PERCENTAGE
DURHAM	1372	56.95%
MIDDLEFIELD	1037	43.05%
TOTAL	2409	100%

Table 8

Value of Buildings, Land, and Equipment. No practice has been established in the state for estimating existing values of buildings, land, and equipment for the purpose of determining equitable contributions of towns in a complete K–12 region. The value of existing buildings, therefore, was estimated with the help and agreement of the assessors of both towns. If the towns approve the proposed K-12 region, an accurate appraisal would be made by professional appraisers.

The values of the existing facilities were totaled for each town. Indebtedness was deducted from the total value and the net value as of June 30, 1967 is shown in the following table.

TOWN	VALUE	INDEBTEDNESS	EXISTING NET VALUE
DURHAM	$2,047,377	$577,000	$1,470,377
MIDDLEFIELD	1,386,347	765,000	621,347
TOTAL	$3,433,724	$1,342,000	$2,091,724

Table 9

Apportionment of net value of facilities. In order to determine the amount of debit or credit the value of the existing school plant of each town brings to the region, the percentages of apportionment as shown in Table No. 8 have been applied to the total value of $2,091,724. Equity in school facilities entitled Durham to a credit from the region. This credit is equalized by a debit to Middlefield. The following table shows the estimated 20-year average of credit and debit for each town based on the 1969-70 projected enrollment. However, it should be noted that the percentage of apportionment will vary year to year based on the percentage of enrollment of the preceding year.

TOWN	PERCENT	APPORTIONMENT OF TOTAL NET VALUE	TOWN'S EQUITY	DEBIT OR CREDIT	ANNUAL 20 YEARS
DURHAM	56.95	$1,191,237	$1,470,377	$+279,140	$+13,957
MIDDLEFIELD	43.05	900,487	621,347	—279,140	—13,957
TOTAL	100%	$2,091,724*	$2,091,724*	$0	$0

Table 10

*Existing net value from Table No. 9.

Amortization of new construction. The committee has developed an estimate for the cost of construction of a new high school. Cost per square foot includes fees, equipment, site development, administration, and contingency. Best available information indicates the most

suitable method of financing to be a 20-year bond issue at an interest rate of 4.5 per cent. The **interest stated in the following figures is for the first year. This would decrease yearly as payments on the principal were made.**

For regional districts covering pupils from kindergarten through grade 12, the state, under legislation recently enacted, will pay **80 percent** of the cost of new construction, as compared to the **50 percent** allowed to towns.

COST OF A NEW HIGH SCHOOL

Construction: 81,520 square feet at $29* per square foot		$2,364,080
Annual Payment (20 yr. bonds)	$118,204	
Interest (4.5%—first year)	106,384	
TOTAL ANNUAL PAYMENT	224,588	
Annual State Building Grant	94,563	
NET ANNUAL PAYMENT	$130,025	

Table 11

*Based on October, 1967 estimates

Operating costs. State operating aid is $180 for the first 300 pupils in average daily membership and $150 for all others. **An additional 10 per cent is granted to K-12 regional districts.** For the purpose of calculating state operating aid, each town in the region is considered as a separate entity.

In addition to the operating aid, the state reimburses towns in all regional districts for one-half the cost of transportation. Thus, the towns in the proposed region would receive in 1969-70 an estimated total of $458,757 in state aid, including transportation allowances.

Each town in a regional district would pay its proportionate share of the cost of capital outlay and current expenditures required to establish and operate the regional schools until such costs are paid in full. This cost-sharing would be determined by the regional board of education based on the average daily membership during the preceding school year and prorated according to the percentage from each town (as in Table No. 8).

The following table summarizes the estimated cost of operating as a regionalized district (with the proposed new high school) as compared with the estimated cost of operating independently in 1969-70. The estimated cost for the K–12 region shown below is distributed on an average daily membership basis of 56.95 per cent for Durham and 43.05 per cent for Middlefield as shown in Table No. 8. Figures shown are based on current 1967-68 budgeted costs and the projected 1969-70 enrollment, and indicate insignificant savings to both towns.

SUMMARY OF OPERATING COSTS ONLY, 1969-70: REGIONALIZED VS. INDEPENDENT

ITEM	TOTAL	DURHAM	MIDDLEFIELD
Estimated Cost—K–12 Region	$1,599,576	$910,959	$688,617
Estimated Cost operating independently	1,608,099	913,125	694,974
Estimated savings on operations—regionalized	$8,523	$2,166	$6,357
Per pupil cost—K–12 Region	$664	664	664
Per pupil cost—operating independently	$668	666	670

Table 12

CAPITAL AND OPERATING COSTS FOR REGIONAL DISTRICT

The following table shows the estimated annual operating expense for each town in the proposed K–12 regional district; the cost of constructing a high school, as projected for 1969-70, is included. Figures shown are based on current 1967-68 budgeted costs.

CAPITAL & OPERATING COSTS AS A REGIONALIZED DISTRICT

(1969-70) (INCLUDING COST OF PROPOSED NEW HIGH SCHOOL)

ITEM	TOTAL	DURHAM	MIDDLEFIELD
Number of Pupils	2,409	1,372	1,037
Per cent Distribution	100%	56.95%	43.05%
Cost New Construction	$130,025	$74,049	$55,976
Existing Debt	115,000*	65,493	49,507
Operating Expense	1,599,576	910,959	688,617
TOTAL	$1,844,601	$1,050,501	$794,100
Adjustment Existing Plant		—13,957	+13,957
Total Cash	1,844,601	1,036,544	808,057
State Aid (Operating)	—458,757	—261,262	—197,495
	1,385,844	775,282	610,562
Existing State Grants	—57,151	—25,742	—31,409
NET COST	1,328,693	749,540	579,153

Table 13

*Actual scheduled payment to be made by both towns, 1969-70.

COST OF INDEPENDENT OPERATIONS

The following two tables show the estimated cost to the two towns of operating independently in 1969-70, **including anticipated capital expenses.**

DURHAM (OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY 1969-70)

Cost of construction (new high school based on project cost of $1,731,111).	
Annual Payment (20 year bond)	$86,550
Interest at 4.5% (first year)	77,895
	164,445
Less State Building Grant	—43,277
Cost of New Construction	121,168
Existing Debt Payment	50,000
Est. Operating Expense (**see Table No. 12**)	913,125
	1,084,293
State Aid (operating expenses incl. trans.)	—239,800
	844,493
Existing State Aid (building grants)	—25,742
	$818,751

Table 14

MIDDLEFIELD (OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY 1969-70

Existing Debt Payment	65,000
Est. Operating Expenses (**see Table No. 12**)	694,974
	759,974
State Aid (Operating expenses including est. transportation)	—181,189
	578,785
Existing State Aid (Building Grants)	31,409
Net Cost	$547,376

Table 15

COMPARISON OF COSTS—REGIONALIZED VS. INDEPENDENT OPERATION

The following table shows a comparison of costs to each town operating under regionalization as against operating independently and indicates a saving to Durham of approximately $69,000 and increased cost to Middlefield of about $32,000 yearly.

It should be pointed out, however, that Middlefield's increased cost reflects increased capital investment in school plant and, thus, assurance of quality educational facilities for its youth in years to come.

	DURHAM		MIDDLEFIELD	
	Regionalized	**Independent**	**Regionalized**	**Independent**
Cost of New Construction.....	$74,049	$121,168	$55,976	
Existing Debt.....	65,493	50,000	49,507	65,000
Operating Expense.....	910,959	913,125	688,617	694,974
	1,050,501	1,084,293	794,100	759,974
Adjustment Existing Plant.....	—13,957		+13,957	
TOTAL CASH.....	1,036,544	1,084,293	808,057	759,974
STATE AID OPERATING.....	—261,262	—239,800	—197,495	—181,189
	775,282	844,493	610,562	578,785
EXISTING STATE GRANTS...	—25,742	—25,742	—31,409	—31,409
NET COST	749,540	818,751	579,153	547,376

Table 16

NET COST SUMMARY

	DURHAM	MIDDLEFIELD
OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY.....	$818,751	$547,376
OPERATING AS A REGION.....	749,540	579,153
* Saving for Durham	$69,211*	$31,777**
**Additional cost for Middlefield		

Table 17

HOW REGIONALIZATION WOULD BE INITIATED

The School Code of the State of Connecticut details a specific series of steps to be taken by the Temporary Regional School Study Committee and the towns participating in the study, once this report is published.

The procedure begins with open hearings which the committee will schedule in each town. All residents will have the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with members of the committee and to raise questions concerning all aspects of the proposed regional plan.

Within ten days, following the last hearing a copy of the report will be submitted to the State Board of Education for its approval. Within the next 30 days, each town clerk will receive from the State Board of Education approval or disapproval of the proposed regionalization plan. Within 90 days, a town meeting will be held in each of the towns to decide whether or not the regional school district proposal should be submitted to a referendum vote. If both towns favor a referendum, the date of the voting shall be set. It shall be the same in both towns, and not later than 30 days after the last town meeting.

The Referendum. The presentation of the proposal on the voting machines will read as follows: "Shall the Town of.....join with the following named Town of.....in the establishment of a regional school district with the schools located in the Towns of Durham and Middlefield, for the purpose of providing the necessary facilities and administering grades Kindergarten through 12 of the public schools? Yes.....No....." It must be emphasized again that within the broad limits of the above proposal, which is prescribed by law, the regional board of education would determine the programs and facilities of the regional district. Logically, the board could be expected to give due consideration to the recommendations of this study committee, but it is not legally bound by them.

If the majority of those voting in the referendum in each town is for adoption of the proposed regional school district, the chairman of the Temporary Regional School Study Committee will submit a statement of the vote, town by town, to the State Board of Education. If the State Board approves, the district is immediately established.

HOW THE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT WOULD BE ADMINISTERED

The affairs of the regional school district are conducted by a regional board of education consisting of not less than five nor more than nine members. The number representing each town is determined by a majority vote of a joint meeting of the boards of education of the participating towns, with each local board having one vote.

Members of the first regional board will be nominated in and appointed by a town meeting held within 30 days of the referendum creating the district. Thereafter, regional board members in each of the member towns will be nominated and elected in the same manner.

The regional board of education has all the powers and duties conferred upon boards of education by the General Statutes. Regional school district budgets, bond issues, and similar matters are discussed at joint meetings of the voters of the town in the district and are voted on a district, not a local basis.

The annual budget of the regional school district shall be presented by the regional board of education for approval to a public meeting of the voters in the district. A majority vote of persons eligible to vote at town meetings constitutes approval of the budget. If, in the opinion of the regional board, the budget approved is inadequate, another budget meeting may be held within two weeks, at which time a budget may again be submitted for approval. A meeting to reconsider the budget shall also be held upon petition of any twenty electors in each of the towns who are of the opinion that the budget so adopted is inadequate or too large.

The regional board of education would work cooperatively with the present local boards, as provided by statutes. These local boards could be expected to continue in existence in an advisory capacity until such time as the regional board and its administrators had established the policies necessary to the basic operation of the full regional school district.

ALTERNATIVES

During the months of this study, the committee has explored alternatives to its recommendation. It is firmly convinced that no other plan offers the advantages and opportunities of the proposed K–12 region.

Durham, if it chose to remain independent, could not hope to approach the regional program, let alone duplicate it. The town lacks the necessary enrollment to support the facilities and staff required by modern educational programs. The result of this situation MUST be either restrictions on program or higher costs.

Middlefield could continue its present agreement with Middletown for senior high school services. However, it would have no voice in the education of its secondary pupils, and it would be obligated to contribute toward the capital cost of the proposed new Middletown High School without having long range assurance that the town would continue to have use of the structure. Indeed, future enrollment increases in Middlefield **or** Middletown could result in the termination of the agreement between the two towns.

On the other hand, regionalization offers many advantages to both Durham and Middlefield:

(1). Under regionalization, an extensive secondary program that includes a full range of extra-class activities can be provided at a reasonable per pupil cost.

(2). Pupils at all levels of the school district, K–12, will benefit from the increased efficiency and coodination of programs.

(3). Greater state aid—30% more grants for construction and 10% more per pupil aid.

(4). Regionalization would provide the framework for a more comprehensive education for Durham and Middlefield in future years.

Too often, educational decisions are made on a crisis-to-crisis basis. Durham and Middlefield now have the opportunity to plan for the years ahead. Complex educational facilities and technology, highly skilled specialists, and streamlined administration are available only to those school districts with enrollment bases large enough to make them economically feasible. As enrollments in the regional district continue to expand, the schools will approach higher and higher levels of efficiency, and no educational service will have to be denied Durham-Middlefield youth because small enrollments make it economically unjustified. In a sense, the highest dividends of regionalization will be paid in the years to come.

The ultimate decision to regionalize our schools rests with the electorate—with each and every one of you. We urge you to give this report your thoughtful consideration and to attend the announced hearings for a further explanation of the regional plan. The future of your children—and of their children—may well depend upon your decision.

Letter of Approval from State Board of Education next page.

Copied from
Durham Town Proceedings
May 1964 to November 1969

February 8, 1968

Letter from St. Bd. of Education St. of Conn.

Mrs. Marjorie C. Hatch
Town Clerk
Durham, Connecticut

Re: Report of the Temporary Regional School Study Committee for the Towns of Middlefield and Durham

Dear Mrs. Hatch:

Sections 10-43 and 10-45, Connecticut General Statutes, Revision of 1958, call for the filing of the above mentioned final report of the committee with the State Board of Education and further state "within thirty days thereafter the State Board of Education shall submit a report of its approval or disapproval of the recommendations contained in the final report of the committee and its reasons therefor to the town clerk of each participating town, who shall forthwith publish such report in a newspaper having general circulation within the town."

This will advise you that the Connecticut State Board of Education on February 7, 1968,

Voted: To approve the recommendation of the Temporary Regional School Study Committee for the Towns of Middlefield and Durham that the towns join in forming a regional school district for grades kindergarten through twelve.

Published in the Middletown Press 2-12-68

Attest: M C Hatch, Town Clerk

The State Board has directed the Secretary of the State Board of Education to communicate this approval to the town clerk of each town with the following reasons for such action:

1. Durham and Middlefield are essentially similar towns. Geographically they are adjacent to each other and will make a compact regional school district.

2. The larger administrative unit encompassing all grades will enable the district to provide a more comprehensive education program including related services.

3. A centralized administration will make it easier to articulate the educational programs in the two towns and also provide better continuity in the total program for all grades.

4. Middlefield is presently sending its 10th, 11th and 12th grade pupils to Middletown High School. By going into a regional district it will have a voice in the type of high school program which will be offered. It would also have a permanent place for its high school students.

5. Durham is in nee d of additional high school facilities for its own pupils. It appears more logical, feasible, and economical to pool the resources of the two towns in order to provide adequate physical facilities for both towns.

6. The projected enrollment figures indicate that by 1971-72 the total K-12 enrollment for the district will be between 1550 and 1600. The high school enrollment, grades 9-12 will be between 550 and 600.

7. The proposal is in keeping with the national trend to increase the size of school districts in order to meet the increased demands for more adequate and varied programs and additional service.

Sincerely yours,
William J. Sanders (L.S.)
William J. Sanders
Secretary
State Board of Education

Received for record Feb. 9, 1968 at 9:30 A.M.
Attest: Marjorie C. Hatch Marjorie C. Hatch Town Clerk

Letter of Approval from State Board of Education dated February 8, 1968

Town of Durham Town Proceedings Book May 1964 to November 1969