

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 13  
EXPLANATORY TEXT**

The following questions will be voted on by the electors of the Towns of Durham and Middlefield, Connecticut on a date to be determined after the January 8, 2020 Special District Meeting. This explanatory text was authorized to be prepared by the Regional School District 13 Board of Education and is prepared in accordance with Section 9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Each of the amendments to the Plan of Regionalization described in Question 1 and Question 2 below shall be approved only upon a majority vote in each of the Towns of Durham and Middlefield in favor of the amendment.

**QUESTION 1:**

“SHALL THE PLAN OF REGIONALIZATION FOR REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 13 BE AMENDED TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DETERMINE THE PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES REQUIRED TO SERVE THE STUDENTS OF THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING THE ALTERATION, EXPANSION OR CLOSURE OF DISTRICT SCHOOL BUILDINGS?

YES

NO”

**Explanatory Text:** On April 10, 1968, the State Board of Education voted to approve the establishment of a regional school district composed of the towns of Durham and Middlefield pursuant to Section 10-45 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The State Board voted to designate the district as Regional School District 13 (the “District”) to be organized under the provisions of the General Statutes dealing with regional school districts.

Since the establishment of the District, the Regional School District 13 Board of Education (the “Board”) has authorized the closure of Center School in Middlefield and the Francis E. Korn Elementary School in Durham. In addition, the Board has authorized the establishment of the Integrated Day Program at the John Lyman Elementary School and the Contemporary Program at Frederick F. Brewster Elementary School. The Board has also taken actions to have all middle school students attend Frank Ward Strong Middle School in Durham. These actions were taken by the Board to meet various program and student enrollment factors and were supported by corresponding budget approvals.

Recently, the Board, after public meetings and surveys, proposed closing John Lyman Elementary School. This decision was made as a result of continued reduction in student enrollment, excess building capacity, capital needs and associated costs. Additionally, the Board voted to move forward with the development of a single educational approach rather than the two program choice design with a grade/building configuration of: primary/grades Pre-K-2 at Frederick F. Brewster Elementary School; intermediate/grades 3-5 at Memorial Middle School; middle/grades 6-8 at Frank Ward Strong Middle School; and high school/grades 9-12 at Coginchaug Regional High School.

To support this configuration, building improvements to Frederick F. Brewster Elementary School and Memorial Middle School are needed along with the closure of John Lyman Elementary School. The District intends to seek State funding and to authorize the issuance of the District's bonds to pay for these improvements.

The District's bond counsel, based upon recent court decisions, has advised the Board that it should amend the District's Plan of Regionalization to authorize the Board to close John Lyman Elementary School before moving forward with the new grade/building configuration and building improvements.

Accordingly, pursuant to Section 10-47c of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Board proposes that the Plan of Regionalization for the District be amended to authorize the Board to determine the programs and facilities including associated grade configuration required to best serve the District students, including the alteration, expansion or closure of District school buildings. The amended Plan of Regionalization also provides that the District will maintain at least one active school in both the towns of Durham and Middlefield that educates students of determined grade levels, and that the Board will hold at least one public hearing to receive input from residents of both Durham and Middlefield before determining the programs and facilities required for the District, including the alteration, expansion or closure of District school buildings.

QUESTION 2:

“SHALL THE PLAN OF REGIONALIZATION FOR REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 13 BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE THAT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS FROM THE TOWN OF DURHAM BE ELECTED AT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND SERVE TERMS OF FOUR YEARS, AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE DURHAM TOWN CHARTER?

YES

NO”

**Explanatory Text:** In 2006, the voters of the Town of Durham approved revisions to the Town Charter to change the method of the election and the term of the members of the Regional School District 13 Board of Education elected from Durham. The Town Charter revision provides for Board members to be elected at municipal elections in November and for the term of office for Board members to be four years. Currently, Board members from Durham are elected in May at a Town Meeting and serve for terms of three years.

The Town of Middlefield has not made similar changes to its election process for Board members and it should be noted that the proposed changes to the Plan of Regionalization would not affect the manner of election or the term of office of the Regional School District 13 Board of Education members elected from the Town of Middlefield.

The Board, pursuant to Section 10-47c of the Connecticut General Statutes, proposes that the Plan of Regionalization for the District be amended to provide that Board members from the Town of Durham be elected at municipal elections in November and that they serve for terms of four years.

On approval and adoption of this amendment to the Plan of Regionalization, the terms of the existing Board members from Durham will be adjusted in accordance with a schedule prescribed by the Town of Durham and in accordance with the Town Charter and the Connecticut General Statutes.