

## BROCKTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPTS DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL RECONFIGURATION PLAN

The Brockton School Committee voted unanimously April 8, 2008 to accept a district-wide school reconfiguration plan that expands full-day kindergarten, universalizes school grade spans to K-5, K-8 and 6-8, offers two new middle schools and one new K-8 option, and reconfigures the district into four school choice zones: Northeast, Northwest, South and Central.

"This plan will give the Brockton Public Schools the organizational flexibility needed to further increase academic performance, while also enhancing the home-school connection," said Superintendent of Schools Basan Nembirkow. "Brockton is an innovative school district that is making great strides, and our success is due to the important collaboration we have between school, home and community. We respect and value the opinions of all of our partners and we will continue to work with our parents, staff and community to make this the best urban school district in the Commonwealth."

Under the plan, the Franklin and Whitman Schools and the Gilmore Academy will close during the 2008-2009 schools year; and the Ashfield and Plouffe Elementary Schools will be converted to middle schools opening in September 2009. The highly sought-after Spanish Two-Way program will grow to a K-8 model, kindergarten will become the entry point for all schools, and the middle school model will be adopted citywide.

"This plan will have long-lasting and positive effects on our school system, and will provide our students with more opportunities to learn and grow," said School Committee Member James Daley, co-chair of the District-Wide School Reconfiguration Task Force. "The process was open and inclusive, and the community made a well-thought out decision through their representatives on the Task Force. The decision will not only enhance learning, but enable us to maximize funding efficiencies through some of these changes." Franklin and Ashfield Elementary School students will move to the Quincy Street School when it opens in the fall; and the Ashfield School will be converted to a Northeast middle school to open in the fall. Students and staff will move to the new Colonel Bell Drive School.



**New Brockton Public Schools Reconfiguration**

"These new facilities will be state-of-the-art, giving our students an opportunity to learn in 21st century buildings," the superintendent said. "By moving to a middle school model, teachers and staff will be able to form lasting bonds with students and their families while also allowing room for kindergarteners to begin their education in the elementary schools they will attend."

In September 2009, all elementary schools will open as K-5, all middle schools will serve students in Grades 6-8 and the Raymond School will open as K-7 school and grow to K-8 the following year through natural progression, providing a K-8 choice options for families living in the north end of the city.

The plan was developed by a 21-member volunteer Task Force made up of parents, school teachers and administrators, School Committee members and the Brockton Education Association president. The task force was convened in November to review the current district configuration and to study ways to fairly and equitably reconfigure the Brockton Public Schools.

"This was a very inclusive process, with input from parents from every ward of the city, every major educational group, teachers, administrators, School Committee members and the Brockton Education Association. I attended many of the meetings and was impressed with the thoughtfulness and consideration the members exhibited," Nembirkow said. "I thank the members for their willingness to serve the city and the students of Brockton."

The Task Force was made up of 10 parents (one from each ward and three representing Special Education, Talented & Gifted and bilingual groups), two teachers and two principals, a representative of the BEA, two School Committee members, and four administrators. Three non-voting members also took part in the proceedings, including the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent.

The task force set several goals for the district from the outset: priorities were the expansion of full-day kindergarten; the adoption of universal school grade spans of K-5, 6-8, K-8 and 9-12; the centralization of specialized programs; a reduced reliance on transportation; and the displacement of as few students as possible.

"The Task Force worked diligently to ensure that every option was fully explored and debated. I was gratified by the care and consideration that each member showed, and by the many suggestions and ideas that members brought forward," said Task Force Co-Chair Prudence Buckley, director of the school system's School Registration and Parent Information Center. "I believe that every group in the city was represented and that members carefully explored all options before endorsing one over another."

Throughout its deliberations, the Task Force looked at four separate draft proposals prepared by administrators in response to members' input. The task force members expressed a strong desire to include a second K-8 option in the north of the city to balance the Davis K-8 School, and required that Grade 4 and 5 Talented & Gifted classes be centralized in one location to allow for more collegiality and collaboration among teachers. Some bilingual programs are currently scattered among several sites, and the task force and the superintendent agreed that the bilingual programs should be housed together, to allow for easier access for parents and centralization of bilingual support services for students. Additionally, the Task Force worked to reduce reliance on transportation by creating additional choice zones.

"The Task Force members invested a lot of time and energy and selected plans that we believe are in the best interest of the students, which offer opportunities for all students and maintain choice within the Brockton Public Schools," Daley said. "I thought the Task Force did a lot of great work and the input from all the members was excellent. There was great discussion and I think we came up with a really good plan. We look forward to public input to help complete the process."

Under the plan adopted by the School Committee, students will be able to choose schools within their geographic area and will be eligible for transportation within their zone if they meet transportation criteria. The Grades 4 and 5 Talented & Gifted program would be housed in one school, the Angelo or Arnone. The plan also calls for the expansion of the Spanish Two-Way program to K-8 and the creation of a full strand of Cape Verdean SEI instruction in both the north and south zones.

Maribel Soto - parent representative Ward 2  
Doreen Francio - parent representative Ward 3  
Janet Landerholm - parent representative Ward 4  
Mary Milligan - parent representative Ward 5  
Filomena Cardoso - parent representative Ward 6  
Michaëlle Dimanche-Silva - parent representative Ward 7  
Barbara Lora - parent representative Sheltered English Immersion  
Jeanne Holmes-Kireillis - parent representative Talented & Gifted  
Patricia O'Connor - parent representative Special Education  
Timothy Sullivan - Brockton Education Association representative  
Christine Crossman - elementary teacher  
David Brewster - middle school teacher  
Barbara Janelli - elementary principal  
Terry Starr-Klein - middle school principal  
John Jerome - Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, 6-8  
Eligijus Suziedelis - Executive Director of Accountability, Planning, and Technology  
Prudence Buckley - Director of Parent Information and School Registration Center  
James Daley - School Committee  
Patty Joyce - School Committee

---