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ABSTRACT

This document describes one Connecticut school district's project to build a Pre-K through Grade 2 elementary school facility that is designed for small children and supports an educational program focusing on early learning success for all children. It describes the school district's goals, the project's rationale, the long-range plan to prepare students for the 21st century, the learning activities and program needs for each grade level, and the various facility design requirements that will support the student's educational and social needs. (GR)

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ED 437 814

EDUCATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE PROPOSED PRE-K - GRADE 2 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EAST HADDAM, CT 1999

Revised 5/24/99

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR THE DOCUMENTS

This document is designed to provide information to those interested in the specification of needs for the proposed Pre-K through Grade 2 elementary school facility. Its intent is to offer an overview of the program needs and facilities necessary to meet those needs. These needs are expressed in the Board of Education Goals created in 1997. The first goal, objective 1.4, formed the basis for the school facility planning that has occurred since that time.

District Goal 1 - Support emotional, social, and academic needs of the school community.

Objective 1.1

The district will communicate and implement the planned ongoing and systematic review of its Pre-K through 12 instructional program.

Objective 1.2

The district will develop and communicate a planned program that supports the health and well-being of the school community.

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Objective 1.3

The district will develop, communicate and implement a plan for staffing to deliver effective programs.

Objective 1.4

The district will develop, communicate and implement a plan for facilities to accomodate effective programs.

District Goal 2 - Challenge individual potential and take pride in each member of the community.

Objective 2.1

The district will provide the resources, programs, and instruction that enable members of the school community to reach their potential.

Objective 2.2

The district will develop a planned ongoing process that recognizes and communicates the contributions of the members of the school community.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DESIGN

PROJECT RATIONALE

The East Haddam Board of Education has determined a need for a new elementary school to meet increasing enrollment. This school should serve a population of Pre-K through Grade 2 children with an expected number of approximately 400 students.

The educational plan is in line with the National Education Goals panel report of 1998 for early childhood education along with State of Connecticut expectations for early childhood focus. Both State and National expectations center on early education for all children with early intervention for learning problems. A State of Connecticut framework for preschool education will guide the design and implementation of programs for these young children.

Because of the number of students to be taught at each grade level, the design focus will create units within this school that function as grade level entities. This is an essential component for providing all children at a grade level with a unified program and maximizing the facility and personnel resources.

The unified core facilities of this building should be designed with small children in mind. This means space for movement, grouping, and cooperative learning endeavors is essential. Classrooms and core facilities should be equipped with furnishings and technology appropriate for young children's use.

This building will need space for programs that assist a young child's physical as well as mental development. Many of the spaces needed would best be designed as large tiled floor areas where projects and activities can take place.

Building Inventory

As of 1999, the East Haddam Public Schools consist of three educational facilities for students in programs Pre-K through 12. The present population is approximately 1,400 students. An elementary school facility, built in three phases between 1962 and 1988, services students in grades Pre-K through 4. This building presently has 600+ students in attendance. The functional capacity of students for this building is 450. The middle school, the oldest of the school buildings, was built in 1924 with additions added through the 1980's. It serves approximately 300 students in grades 6, 7, and 8. The functional capacity of students for this building is 338. Attached to the middle school facility is a portable school structure built in 1998 consisting of six classrooms housing approximately 120 Grade 5 students that remain a part of the elementary program. The high school, completed in 1994, serves students in grades 9 through 12. The population of this building is approximately 340 students. The functional capacity of students for this building is 400.

Our Central Office facilities are located in rental space on Plains Road in Moodus. This space serves the Board of Education and its employees, the superintendent, business manager and related clerical and financial services.

Enrollment Projections

Student population analysis, using several different means, leads to the same conclusion - that the number of school age children is increasing. The new housing construction areas are progressing at a rapid rate at least in part due to the strong economy. Student projections done through Dr. Frank Yulo in the late 1980's anticipated a population in 1998-99 of 1,335 students. Our present enrollment in spring of 1999 is in excess of 1,370. Tracking the live birth statistics for the past six years leads to a projection for the next five years of an average birth rate in the range of 100-110.

Present enrollment projections (see attachment), using data derived through Cohort Survival Method and Midstate Planning data as well as Connecticut State Department of Education, indicates the continuation of growth of elementary school populations.

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THE LONG RANGE PLAN

Preparing students for life in the 21st century presents challenges to schools. The demands of the society they will live and work in is, in many ways, undetermined. We must build this school for the future without the knowledge of exactly what it will demand. In the 1960's, two electrical outlets were deemed appropriate for school needs. Today's education requires so many more sources of electricity to deliver educational opportunities. We must deal with what are the current needs yet look to what the future in education will demand. Success in this emerging society shows the need for certain skills at this time. The students we prepare will need excellent communication skills. Their ability to use language in both oral and written form is essential. They need to have the ability to read and interpret information and act upon their new knowledge. Their ability to use mathematical reasoning and problem solving skills will assist their success in the global community. Technology skills of all types will need to be used in application in whatever endeavor they choose. Working in pairs or groups with expertise in managing the accomplishment of the work group is what the work force of the future must have.

The East Haddam Public Schools are committed to providing these opportunities to our students along with the social and emotional support for students to become happy, productive adults. To this end, we are committed to the design and construction of an early childhood educational facility that will give these children a quality opportunity on the road to lifelong success in a democratic society.

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EAST HADDAM PRE-K THROUGH 2 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT

In order for this project to meet the needs of children ages three to seven, we must plan a design that addresses educational objectives for programs designed for educational, social/emotional, and physical development of this age group. In many ways, the education of this age range is critical to the success of the adults they will become. Programs designed for visual stimulation, auditory discrimination, vocabulary and language development have a window of opportunity that matches this school's plan. Children learn some life skills in sequence, explore ideas approached from various directions, and integrate their new knowledge in their own unique ways. The child's ability to gather information and integrate it for their use must have nurture, time and the feedback from

other individuals having similar learning experiences.

Children in this age range need intensive experiences with language acquisition. Young children learn about 50 new words a week if they have the opportunity to gain support with this learning. By age eight, the grammatical base for language used in life is in place. Children with limited experiences in their early years are at a disadvantage for their lifetime. The November 1998 issue of "Educational Leadership" devoted the magazine to articles of current research on the development of the brain. Articles by Ron Brandt and Pat Wolfe focused on what the research tells us about learning opportunities for young children. Current research confirms the need to actively develop language early in a child's existence.

The National Goal of having all children ready to learn at the beginning of their school career is dependent upon their preparation for "school" learning in their first five years. The National Goal of having all children have access to high-quality and developmentally appropriate pre-school programs to prepare them for school is an essential component to the East Haddam design for the education of its children. Schools need to support parent's efforts to assist their child in optimum physical and mental development opportunities. Parent education to assist student learning should occur frequently in the early years. Knowledgeable parents can assist children with early success. Involving parents in the education of their children so that learning can be truly integrated is an essential component of early childhood programs.

Designing a school facility to accomplish the education of the very young child, as well as programs focused on early literacy and numeracy skills of the beginning grades, must have very specific focus. The need for flexible spaces as well as spaces designed with very specific uses will assist the professional staff in the delivery of programs through quality curriculum. The design of this facility should also look to East Haddam's future growth and provide reasonable means for expansion when needed.

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Learning Activities/Program Needs Pre-School

The program needs of the pre-school design focus on opportunities for both regular education students and those with special needs. Educating children that are three years of age in one program and four year olds in another require similar spaces but separate times. Scheduling can allow for overlapping use of space since most pre-school programs, at present, average three hours per day. Using the same rooms for separate morning and afternoon programs would maximize space usage. Four full size classrooms are needed for

this program.

Children will have language experience through use of literature, discussions and visual aides. They will work as individuals, in small groups and in large group arrangements. Guided developmental play is an essential part of the education of three and four year old children. The children will use many varieties of manipulative materials to explore early mathematics concepts. Children will need computer technology experiences that demand high quality, sophisticated resources. They will learn traditional skills of drawing, cutting, pasting, and writing. They will explore the use of their bodies in space and in interaction with other people and learning materials. The environment to promote this learning must have space, furnishings, equipment, and classroom design that maximizes the child's ability to be independent. Bathrooms in each classroom, designed with at least two stalls and two sinks, are essential to the program. Young children need access to these facilities frequently as they learn toileting procedures. Primary style lockers for student possessions should be part of each classroom.

Because of the volume of hands-on materials needed for their programs, storage of more than adequate size is essential to keep the environment orderly and safe. The storage for individual teacher materials must be augmented by grade level storage facilities for materials the teaching team uses in common.

A staff bathroom in this educational unit will assist staff use of time efficiency as well as promote student safety. Keeping adults in close proximity to the students is a goal of this plan. A baby/toddler change table unit is needed in this facility.

A space for testing and observation should be designed to abut one of the classrooms so that assessments may be done efficiently. Student observations and information gathering can be done from this location.

Technology services and access will be essential to early assessment, data collection and evaluation. Computer ports are needed in all rooms.

A speech/language room, which will have focus on pre-school, will also service the entire school for any remedial instruction.

A kitchen used for instructional activities should be in this educational unit. Here students will learn about and participate in food preparation and clean-up as well as gain an understanding of how people working together can accomplish tasks. The kitchen is an essential component of this educational unit.

A room near the testing facility for parent education and support is needed. The parent education center will provide to the parents of the youngest learners knowledge to of how to assist their child's early success. Working with reading consultants, speech and language teachers and classroom teachers will provide parents with at-home activities,

approaches to learning and development of attitudes that will support children struggling with new ideas.

All of these rooms should be clustered around a common space (large hall area/meeting place). This common space will be used for larger group meetings with speakers or special presentations. It will be used for projects that are worked on over several days and need to dry.

Hall arrangements to connect this educational unit to the main building core facilities and administrative services complete this unit's space needs.

A Pre-K storage area for outdoor equipment should be conveniently located for access for primary toys. The playground storage space must be accessible from the outside of the building through double-wide doors. The play area should include a blacktop area with partial overhead coverage for play with riding toys. The free-standing permanent equipment should be placed conveniently for monitoring of students safety. Areas of grass and sand should be part of the design to facilitate a wide range of educational play activities.

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Learning Activities/Program Needs Kindergarten

The Educational program for five year olds takes a more formal step into the design of instruction. Students will experience full day programs designed to extend beyond their earlier experience in language acquisition, literacy skills, and mathematical reasoning. Because of the expanded use of time, opportunity to develop in depth lessons with student hands-on exploration is a focus. Children will need space and materials to use their new ideas about the world around them. The need for many books, artifacts and equipment increases as the children's program becomes more complex. The use of technology will play an even greater role in the instructional plan.

The enrollment projections lead us to believe seven classrooms will be needed for this program. Each classroom will need counter space, sinks/bubbler and student locker areas. Classroom walls will need dry-erase whiteboards, tack boards and computer ports. Each classroom will need in-class bathroom space for two toilets and two sinks. In-class storage for teacher materials will provide support for access and usage as well as safety for students.

Grade level storage for common unit shared materials provides convenience and

organization of materials purchased by the district.

A staff bathroom in this educational unit will provide convenience, efficiency and safety for children. Keeping adults in close proximity to the students is a goal of this plan.

A kitchen to provide opportunities for student learning will be used by small groups of students with adult supervision. Children need opportunities to work collaboratively to prepare and use food items for greater understanding of how literacy and numeracy are applied in life skills.

A common meeting area centrally located in the educational unit will be the hub of shared activities.

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Learning Activities/Program Needs Grade 1

The enrollment projections for Grade 1 provide information that our needs for this level student will be seven classrooms. Each classroom should be designed with classroom storage for teacher and student materials. Student lockers, counter, sinks and bubbler need to be included in each Grade 1 room. Classrooms need dry-erase whiteboards and tack boards as well as multiple computer ports.

A grade level storage center for units of study should be in this educational unit. Hallway accessed grade level bathrooms for boys and girls should be in this unit. A staff bathroom should be in this location as well.

The OT/PT service center should be located in this educational unit. This facility will be used by the other grades in the school as well. The ceiling structure should be designed for weight bearing equipment.

A common meeting area to facilitate grade level use as a team should be the hub of this grade level unit. Common meeting areas in each grade level are to be used for larger instructional activities that are team taught and collaboratively organized.

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Learning Activities/Program Needs Grade 2

The enrollment projections lead us to request seven regular educational classrooms in the second grade level unit. One full size classroom for Special Education students identified for grades 1 and 2 should be located in this unit.

Classrooms should be designed with in-class storage as well as student lockers, counter space, sink & bubbler. Classrooms need dry-erase white boards and tack boards as well as multiple computer ports.

A grade level storage room should assist unit storage. A staff bathroom for adults in this area should be part of the unit. Student bathrooms for boys and girls should be in this hall area.

A common meeting area to facilitate grade level activities should be the center of this grade area.

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Administrative Unit

The administrative unit of this facility should be located in the front portion of the building with easy access to the public. This unit will include areas for some specialized student services as well as administrative functions.

The Title I Services for student assistance will be located in this unit. Central textbook storage as well as general storage of instructional supplies will be located in this area.

A men's and ladies' bathrooms should be in this location accessed from the main hallway.

The nurse's office, with a separate handicapped designed bath, will provide services to students in need.

A time-out space should be located near the main office for convenient monitoring.

The principal's office and the main general office will serve the whole school community. Computer services to the administrative wing should have access to the school computer network yet also have the ability to be independent of the schoolwide systems.

A psychologist/social worker office will be part of this unit with a conference room attached for PPT's and other parent meetings.

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Core Space

The Core Space of this school includes facilities shared and used by all members of the educational facility.

Because of the essential nature of the services provided by these facilities for this school, these core facilities should be the center of design to promote efficiency of time and assist use by all parties.

The library/media center should be viewed as the center of school life and as such should be in this unit. This facility should include audio visual storage (access from library and hall), library preparation room, and adjacent computer laboratories along with library collection space, research area with mini-computer lab and story/activity instructional space.

The creation of a small instructional space for students needing resource room assistance could also be used to provide gifted and talented planning and use space.

A staff room designed for adult lunches and small meetings should be adjacent to a teacher preparation room that is outfitted with equipment to assist teacher instructional preparation. The equipment should include computer, printer, scanner, photocopy machine for mass production, laminator, ellison machine and other machinery effective for instructional preparations.

Custodial space for both maintenance and preparation activities should be part of this core space. This area should be equipped with tools for maintenance activities as well as cleaning materials and equipment. Space for assembly of purchased furnishings and repairs should also be provided.

Classrooms for health, art and music instruction should be part of this unit. Each of these classrooms should have in-class storage space for materials. The art room needs space for wet activities, storage of supplies, and a lighting design that will enhance displays in the classroom as well as visual instruction. The health classroom will need standard classroom furnishings and space for role-playing skits and demonstrations. The music classroom needs instrument storage, space for dance and game activities and furnishings appropriate to the musical experience of young children.

Corridor connections to make access available to all users will need to be extensive.

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Cafeteria/All Purpose Configuration

This portion of the school is most likely the area of the building that will also be most used by the community for other purposes.

The cafeteria will serve lunch for all full-day program students. It will need a preparation kitchen and serving lines for the Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. Bathrooms will need to be part of this facility as well as several storage areas. One storage area will specifically be geared to before and after-school care in this room. In-school before and after-school care is part of the plans for use of this room.

The all-purpose room will function as a gymnasium for student physical education as well as a meeting place for the school for assemblies. The stage will need to be low in design for young children with access for storage in side wings. A storage room for physical education equipment will also need to have access from this room.

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GENERAL PROGRAM NEEDS - FACILITY DESIGN

This Pre-K through Grade 2 school should be located on a land parcel appropriate to the needs of the children it will serve. The projected population of 400+ students will need, according to state guidelines, a minimum land parcel of 14 acres. This land area will contain the school building, driveways, bus lane and parking area. It will have field space for age appropriate activities. It will need blacktop areas for student gatherings and organization as well as play during inclement weather months.

Outdoor play equipment appropriate for the age and size of the children should be located in areas around the school building which will facilitate safety and time efficient use. Play equipment areas should be designated for the Pre-school/Kindergarten children separate from the Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. Installation of appropriate play facilities will ensure safety as well as growth opportunities for all children. Fencing appropriate to

locations on the grounds should ensure student safety near traffic areas, parking lots and unsafe terrain.

The area near the cafeteria and all-purpose room should have its own parking and exterior entrance and exit to facilitate use during non-school hours without the need to proceed through the school to use these rooms.

The classrooms should all have vinyl, or equivalent material, tile floors with area rugs for student use.

All bathrooms in the facility should have ceramic tile, or equivalent material, floors to assist maintenance and to deal with water issues.

All hall floors should be a tile equivalent with some specialized approach for the school main entrance.

Corridor walls should be made of low-maintenance durable/attractive material. Corridor tack boards for each classroom with connecting tack strips provide a means for visual display in the hallways.

Common areas need to be equipped with TV/VCR, panel for video/public address system and computer terminal.

Classroom walls should be made of low-maintenance durable/attractive material. Counters and storage should be designed for ease of use with very young children. Sinks should provide hot and cold running water with attached drinking fountain/bubbler.

Classroom designs should include door access to the outside as well as to the corridor system of the school.

Connecting doors between rooms may, in some locations of this building, be advisable and desirable.

The nurse's facility should be designed to provide easy access for reception, but also designed for privacy for those who are ill.

Built-in book storage and shelving should be in classrooms, instructional spaces and offices to minimize other furnishing needs.

Covered entrances for bus entry and exit will assist the staff's ability to supervise students during inclement weather.

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Building Systems

The following building systems are considered necessary for an Elementary School in East Haddam. The purpose of this section is to identify these systems in a general sense and clearly state the need for their incorporation into the building. All systems need to be in code compliance with handicapped accessibility.

Classrooms need to be wired for information technology (voice/data/video) access with multiple machine availability in compliance with State Department guidelines. There needs to be sufficient electrical outlets to support simultaneous use of multiple audio visual aides in different learning centers within the classroom. Built in TV/VCR equipment should be part of the design. Each classroom, instructional space, office, conference room and lab will be wired in accordance with State Department of Education technical specification (i.e. Category 5 wire). The connection to the district wide-area network should be part of this plan.

Clock systems with centralized management should be in every instructional room.

A centralized bell system with both exterior and interior capability is needed.

A communication/telephone system is needed to provide communication between classrooms, office and outside world. A public address system needs to be part of this communication system design with audible sound inside and outside the building.

The building will be equipped with a HVAC system to provide zoned control and comfort. The administrative offices, conference room, and library/media center should be equipped with air conditioning for year round use. One or two of the pre-school classrooms should be able to be air conditioned for summer school.

Appropriate lighting should be planned for this school with special attention to specialized areas such as the art room, library, all-purpose room and cafeteria. The building will be equipped with low wattage, electronic ballast, energy efficient lighting with occupancy sensors. Natural light should be provided to all facilities where children and adults will work daily.

The building's supply of electricity to electronic systems, motors and communications equipment will be equipped with surge protection at the main service entrance equipment. The building will be equipped with an emergency generator that will supply adequate lighting, heat and water during the loss of line power.

The building's energy consuming systems (e.g. heat, air conditioning, lighting, hot water) will be managed by an energy conservative computer system. Boilers should be configured to use alternate fuel sources if possible in the East Haddam area.

The building will be equipped with a state-of-the art security system to afford adequate security for both building and grounds.

The building will be equipped with fire alarm and sprinkler systems that meet state and local code requirements.

The building will provide an emergency site for evacuation and assistance. This will be a town resource.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

The East Haddam Pre-K through Grade 2 school project has as its focus the creation of a school for children three to seven years old. As this document has stated, the emphasis of the educational program is on early success with learning for all children.

The structure we envision will provide support for young learners. This can be accomplished through the creation of a practical, efficient learning environment that is designed for these small children.

This community cares for the success of all of their children and brings forth a plan to start down the road to success for the very youngest citizens.

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This page was last updated on July 29, 1999.

Central Office

The East Haddam school district's central office is located at 26 Plains Road in the Moodus section of East Haddam. The hours are 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. The phone is 860-873-5090 and the FAX number is 860-873-5092. Questions and comments about the district may be sent to the following e-mail address. (easthad@snet.net)

Central office personnel include...

- Steven Durham, Superintendent
- Donald Paulison, Business Manager
- Joyce Medling, Secretary to the Superintendent
- Sandra Haseltine, Financial Assistant
- Annette Krotsis, Secretary

David Scata, Director of Pupil Services, has his office at the Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School. Telephone him at 860-873-9081.

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