



## THE PRESTON SUPERINTENDENCY: PART TIME OR FULL TIME?

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Revised by Lois DaSilva-Knapton, Canterbury Superintendent 7/30/2017

## BACKGROUND

In recent years, some members of the Preston community have questioned the need for a full-time superintendent to oversee Preston's public schools. Across the state, suburban and rural communities have witnessed declining enrollments with forecasts of a continuing downward trend. However, Peter Prouda, demographic consultant on student enrollments, forecasts that Preston's PK-8 enrollments should hold steady in the low 400s for the next five years. Nevertheless, the announcement by Superintendent John Welch that he intends to retire in June 2017 presented an opportunity for the Preston Board of Education to study the question of whether a part-time superintendency might make sense for the community.

The Board of Education charged an ad hoc Full-Time versus Part-Time Superintendent Evaluation subcommittee with researching the question. That committee, chaired by Sean Nugent and including Cindy Luty and Charles Raymond, interviewed Mary Broderick of CABA Search Services to discuss a study, gathering input from those serving as part-time superintendents in Connecticut. The Board endorsed moving forward with Mary's proposal.

Between June 28 and July 12, 2016, Mary interviewed 18 of Connecticut's 21 part-time superintendents, gathering answers to survey questions the subcommittee had generated as well as participants' wisdom and experiences. She spoke with superintendents in Andover, Ashford, Barkhamsted, Bozrah, Colebrook, Eastford, Franklin, Hampton, Lisbon, Marlborough, Norfolk, Pomfret, Region 11/Chaplin, Salem, Sherman, Sprague, Union, and Voluntown. She also spoke with Jack Welch, Preston's Superintendent of Schools, and Dr. Joseph Cirusuolo, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS).

A superintendency of a Connecticut public school system is a complex responsibility. According to a 2016 joint School Governance Statement prepared by CAPSS and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABA), individuals in these roles are expected to:

- Work effectively with the board, serving as chief executive officer and educational leader for the board, district, and community.
- Implement policies approved by the board, recommend changes, if appropriate, and develop, implement, and inform the board of administrative procedures necessary to implement board policy.
- Proactively identify and address potential barriers to the realization of the board's vision for the school system.
- Respond to communications, as appropriate, and ensure the adherence and

appropriate response through the chain of command, and keep board members informed about district issues in a timely manner.

- Facilitate effective, data-driven decision-making.
- Prepare, advocate for, and implement an annual budget that addresses district goals and meets the needs of all students; and report regularly to the board on the status of the budget and any concerns or other issues about which the board should be informed.
- Engage in leadership development opportunities provided by the board.
- Work closely with board leadership to develop meeting agendas that include student achievement.
- Hire personnel for the school district and ensure that each employee is properly supervised and evaluated; make recommendations for termination of employment.
- Implement the board-established professional staff evaluation process that is based on effective performance, in accordance with state statute.
- Serve as a key, effective member of the board/superintendent leadership team and lead the district staff to meet the district's goals.
- Communicate research information, performance results, and educational needs to the board for possible board action.
- Ensure that actions of the entire district align with the district vision.

These are responsibilities shared by superintendents in all districts, but do not include many other activities critical to a superintendent's success, such as building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders, engaging in long-range planning, etc.

There are many lessons to be learned from the districts across the state that have experience with part-time superintendents. Responses to survey questions, an analysis, discussion of themes that emerged, and remaining questions follow in this report. The data gathered suggest that the Preston public schools have much in common with many of those districts, and yet there are some major differences. The Preston Board of Education is to be commended for considering this step carefully.

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## FINDINGS

### ENROLLMENT

Size of district seems to be a critical factor in boards choosing to go to part-time superintendent leadership. The 18 districts included in this study had total enrollments ranging from 81 to 620 students. The average size was 357 students, and the median was 373. None of the 18 communities had enrollments greater than Preston's PK-12 640 students. (Please see tables on pp. 7-8, 11-12, and 14-15 for details.)

Of these districts, six had Pre-Kindergarten (PK) to Grade 6 structures, and 12 had PK-8. Please note, however, that because they are not part of regional districts for high school, 10 of these districts (Bozrah, Eastford, Franklin, Lisbon, Pomfret, Salem, Sherman, Sprague, Union, and Voluntown) are considered by the state to be PK-12. All 10 of these districts pay tuition for their students to attend high school. Because of these differences, the tables included in this study will present the data in two ways: 1a, 2a, and 3a will list the districts alphabetically, and 1b, 2b, and 3b will sort the districts by regional vs. tuitioned out high school students.

Preston enrolls students from PK-8 and, since it is responsible for high school tuition and special services for students beyond grade 8, is considered by the state to be PK-12.

**Canterbury enrolls students from PK-8 and, since it is responsible for high school tuition and special services for students beyond grade 8, is considered by the state to be PK-12.**

### Students Receiving Special Services

One of the most unpredictable of all expenses in any district budget is special education. Districts are required by federal and state law to meet students' needs. In small districts, the variability and impact can be profound.

The number of students receiving special services varied widely among surveyed districts, ranging from 14 (Hampton) to 103 (Salem), with an average of 44 students. Districts considered PK-12 tend to have higher numbers of students served, since they are responsible for students until they graduate or turn 21 years of age.

Preston, with higher overall enrollment than the districts in the study, currently ties Salem at 103 students with special needs, PK-12 plus 18-21 year olds still receiving services.

**Canterbury had 78 Special needs students in 2016.**

### NUMBER OF SCHOOLS/SITES

Since multiple schools and/or locations increase the complexity of oversight of a school district, the Preston Board wanted to compare this information. There are greater challenges ensuring consistency and "coherence" of curriculum in a district with multiple schools. Seventeen of the 18 districts have just one school/site. The one exception is Region 11/Chaplin, whose .5 superintendent oversees Chaplin Elementary School (PK-6 and governed by its own board) and Region 11 (Parish Hill, grades 7-12, serving Chaplin, Hampton, and Scotland) with its separate board.

Preston is unique among these districts in having two sites for its PK-8 population.

**Canterbury has 2 school sites, serving Pk-4 and 5-8.**

## ANNUAL BUDGETS

Just as enrollments vary widely among the 18 districts, so, too, do budgets. This is an area to which nearly all the superintendents devote a lot of time. Budgets ranged from \$1.9 million (Colebrook, 81 students K-8) to \$10.6 million (Salem, 620 students PK-12). The average budget is \$5.5 million and the median is \$5.9 million. Naturally, the PK-12 budgets tend to be higher because, unlike their counterparts with regional high schools, their budgets include payments for high school tuition and special services.

Preston's current budget of \$11.2 million serves 640 students PK-12. When comparing budgets, please note that Preston is larger than any of the districts served by part-time superintendents.

**Canterbury's Budget for 2016-2017 was \$11,231,192 and served 734 children.**

## PER STUDENT EXPENDITURE

In comparing district expenditures per student, it is important to make a couple of points. First, it is very difficult for small districts to achieve economies of scale, so their per-student spending tends to be higher than the average school district. Special services expenses can wreak havoc with small district budgets. It is also typically more expensive to educate a high school student, so you would expect very small districts that are PK-12 to have higher per-student expenditures.

The average per student expenditure of the districts in this study was \$17,279. The minimum was Sprague (PK-6) at \$11,236, with 534 students. The maximum was Colebrook at \$23,457 (K-8), with 81 students and a regional high school. The median expenditure was \$16,813.

Preston's per student expenditure was approximately \$18,155.

**Canterbury's per student expenditure was approximately \$19,134**

## YEARS POSITION HAS BEEN PART-TIME

In years past, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) funded traveling regional superintendents. The feedback from communities was that the superintendents were spread too thin, and districts didn't feel they received sufficient attention. CSDE then gave districts funds to hire their own superintendents, but later ended that funding. Some districts went on to combine principal/superintendent positions, but that staffing model caused numerous issues. Thirty years ago, at least four of these 18 districts already had part-time superintendents. However, the average number of years the role has been part-time is nearly 16. A few made the change as recently as three years ago. Declining enrollments appear to be a recent driving force behind a growing number of districts considering a change from full- to part-time.

Preston employs a full-time superintendent at this time.

**Canterbury employes a full- time superintendent at this time.**

## NUMBER OF YEARS IN CURRENT ROLE

Do part-time superintendents stay in the role? The participants in this study have served anywhere from one (Andover and Pomfret) to 11 (Voluntown) years in their current roles. The average is 5.9 years, with a median of six. The average tenure of superintendents is three to four years, though it is lower in urban districts than suburban and rural. Nationally, districts with superintendents with longer tenure tend to have students performing at higher levels. These data suggest that part-time superintendents in Connecticut may stay longer than the national average.

Preston's superintendent has been in his current role for 12 years.

**Canterbury's superintendent has been in her current role for 4 years.**



**TABLE 1a: CONNECTICUT DISTRICTS WITH PART-TIME SUPERINTENDENTS July 2016**

District/ School configuration	Regional or PK-12 *	PK-6 /PK-8 Enrollment	Total Enrollment	# Receiving Special Services	# of Sites	Annual Budget (millions)	Approx.\$/Student	Years Part Time Supt.	Current Supt.'s Tenure (ys)	Part Time days/year
Andover PK-6	Regional	260	260	15	1	\$4.2	\$16,269	12	1	117
Ashford PK-8	Regional	400	400	44	1	\$8.0	\$20,000	4	9	104
Barkhamsted PK-6	Regional	345	345	39	1	\$4.3	\$12,464	15	10	104
Bozrah PK-8	PK-12	205	305	35	1	\$5.7	\$18,689	8	6	70
Colebrook K-8	Regional	81	81	15	1	\$1.9	\$23,457	30	9	104
Eastford PK-8	PK-12	130	196	32	1	\$3.8	\$19,388	30	6	104
Franklin PK-8	PK-12	157	242	31	1	\$4.0	\$16,529	20	3	104
Hampton PK-6	Regional	102	102	14	1	\$2.2	\$21,569	3	2	78
Lisbon PK-8	PK-12	388	606	74	1	\$9.4	\$15,512	9	6.5	104
Marlborough PK-6	Regional	560	560	55	1	\$7.0	\$12,500	7	7	110
Norfolk PK-6	Regional	110	110	14	1	\$2.5	\$22,727	15	2	104
Pomfret PK-8	PK-12		609	69	1	\$9.9	\$16,256	20	1	133
Region 11/Chaplin 7-12 and PK-6	Regional	430	430	88	2	\$6.3	\$14,651	9	9	110
Salem PK-8	PK-12	376	620	103	1	\$10.6	\$17,097	5	4	110
Sherman PK-8	PK-12	320	471	75	1	\$8.9	\$18,896	20	5	78
Sprague PK-8	PK-12	365	534	66	1	\$6.0	\$11,236	18	3	N/A
Union K-8	K-12	80	114	14	1	\$2.1	\$18,421	30	6	65
Voluntown PK-8	PK-12	320	449	68	1	\$6.9	\$15,367	30	11	102
<b>Mean:</b>		85.9	357.0	44		\$5.5	\$17,279	16	5.9	100
<b>Median:</b>		320.0	372.5	37		\$5.9	\$16,813	15	6	104
<b>Minimum:</b>		80	81	14		\$1.9	\$11,236	3	1	65
<b>Maximum:</b>		560	620	103		\$10.6	\$23,457	30	11	133
<b>Preston PK-8</b>	<b>PK-12</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$11.2 m</b>	<b>\$18,155</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Canterbury Pk-12</b>	<b>PK-12</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>\$19,134</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>n/a</b>

\* Some PK-6 or PK-8 districts send their students to regional secondary districts with separate budgets and their own special services. Therefore, expenses to educate their students are not included in tuition or Special Services numbers above. Districts listed as PK-12 include the total cost of educating students through 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**TABLE 1b: CONNECTICUT DISTRICTS WITH PART-TIME SUPERINTENDENTS July 2016**

District/ School configuration	Regional or PK-12 *	PK-6 /PK-8 Enrollment	Total Enrollment	# Receiving Special Services	# of Sites	Annual Budget (millions)	Approx.\$/Student	Years Part Time Supt.	Current Supt.'s Tenure (ys)	Part Time days/year
<b>Regional HS:</b>										
Andover PK-6	Regional	260	260	15	1	\$4.2	\$16,269	12	1	117
Ashford PK-8	Regional	400	400	44	1	\$8.0	\$20,000	4	9	104
Barkhamsted PK-6	Regional	345	345	39	1	\$4.3	\$12,464	15	10	104
Colebrook K-8	Regional	81	81	15	1	\$1.9	\$23,457	30	9	104
Hampton PK-6	Regional	102	102	14	1	\$2.2	\$21,569	3	2	78
Marlborough PK-6	Regional	560	560	55	1	\$7.0	\$12,500	7	7	110
Norfolk PK-6	Regional	110	110	14	1	\$2.5	\$22,727	15	2	104
Region 11/Chaplin 7-12 and PK-6	Regional	430	430	88	2	\$6.3	\$14,651	9	9	110
<b>Tuition to HS:</b>										
Bozrah PK-8	PK-12	205	305	35	1	\$5.7	\$18,689	8	6	70
Eastford PK-8	PK-12	130	196	32	1	\$3.8	\$19,388	30	6	104
Franklin PK-8	PK-12	157	242	31	1	\$4.0	\$16,529	20	3	104
Lisbon PK-8	PK-12	388	606	74	1	\$9.4	\$15,512	9	6.5	104
Pomfret PK-8	PK-12		609	69	1	\$9.9	\$16,256	20	1	133
Salem PK-8	PK-12	376	620	103	1	\$10.6	\$17,097	5	4	110
Sherman PK-8	PK-12	320	471	75	1	\$8.9	\$18,896	20	5	78
Sprague PK-8	PK-12	365	534	66	1	\$6.0	\$11,236	18	3	N/A
Union K-8	K-12	80	114	14	1	\$2.1	\$18,421	30	6	65
Voluntown PK-8	PK-12	320	449	68	1	\$6.9	\$15,367	30	11	102
<b>Summary Statistics:</b>										
<b>Mean:</b>		125.6	357.0	44		\$5.5	\$17,279	16	5.9	100
<b>Median:</b>		320.0	372.5	37		\$5.9	\$16,813	15	6	104
<b>Minimum:</b>		80	81	14		\$1.9	\$11,236	3	1	65
<b>Maximum:</b>		560	620	103		\$10.6	\$23,457	30	11	133
<b>Preston PK-8</b>	<b>PK-12</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$11.2</b>	<b>\$18,155</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Canterbury Pk-12</b>	<b>Pk-12</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>\$19,134</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>n/a</b>

\* Some PK-6 or PK-8 districts send their students to regional secondary districts with separate budgets and their own special services. Therefore, expenses to educate their students are not included in tuition

or Special Services numbers above. Districts listed as PK-12 include the total cost of educating students through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

## HOW IS PART-TIME DEFINED?

Most participants measured their part-time status in days. The superintendent in Union, with the lowest enrollment, was contracted to work 65 days, the fewest, and the Pomfret superintendent, with enrollment of 609 (PK-12), had the highest contracted days at 133. Seven were contracted for 104 days, also the median. Though these were the contracted times, each and every study participant made it very clear that they considered themselves on duty 24/7, whether they were present in the district or not. To serve a district effectively, the superintendent has to commit to being available for the many crises and critical needs that arise.

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING

Small districts have to tap the talent in existing staff and configure the work to build on their strengths or hire individuals with multiple needed skills. The districts participating in this study all found ways to configure district administration (those holding Connecticut administrative certificates) most effectively. Many superintendents spoke of the need to spend a couple of years getting it right... changing administrators if the work was not being accomplished under the existing configuration. There appears to have been a lot of flux in administrative staffing as people and dynamics changed. Table 2a/2b (pp. 11-12) and the paragraphs below include those staff members in participating districts who hold administrative certification from the State of Connecticut.

### Principals

Sixteen of the 18 districts employ one full-time principal. All 16 of those districts house just one school. The two exceptions are 1) Sherman, which is in the process of changing from a full-time principal to combine the roles of principal (.7) and superintendent (.3); and 2) Region 11/Chaplin, which has two principals, one for each of its two schools: PK-6 and 7-12.

Preston has two principals, one at each of its schools located on separate sites.

**Canterbury has two principals, one at each of its schools located on separate sites.**

### Assistant Principals

Seven districts, all with enrollments over 320, also have full-time assistant principals. A seventh, Andover, splits that role with special education oversight.

Preston does not have an assistant principal.

**Canterbury does not have an assistant principal.**

### Special Education Director

Two districts (Ashford and Lisbon) both have full-time directors of special education. Nine others have part-time (from .2 to .8) directors.

Preston's Special Education Director position has just increased from .415 to .45 to cover an increase in children requiring services. Preston has more children receiving special services (103) than any other district.

**Canterbury has a full-time Special Education Director.**

### Director of Curriculum

Two districts (Franklin at .2 and Sherman at .4) have administrators dedicated on a part-time basis to curriculum. Otherwise, principals or other administrators or teachers assume curriculum responsibilities.

Like most of the districts in this study, Preston's principals and superintendent take responsibility for overseeing curriculum development and implementation.

**Canterbury has a .4 contracted person who assists with curriculum development.**

### Teachers to Administrator Ratios

On average, the districts in this study had 12 teachers per administrator. The ratio ranged from 3.8 teachers to 20.0 teachers per administrator, with a median of 11.3.

Preston is a little above the study average, with 12.8 teachers per administrator.

**Canterbury is below the study average, with 10.5 teachers per administrator.**

### Business Operations

Each district has managed its fiscal function according to the resources it has available. (Please also see details in Table 3a/3b, pp. 14-15.). Included in Table 2a/2b are those business managers who are certified by the State of Connecticut (holding an 085 certification). Several districts have full- or nearly full-time business managers (Andover at .8, and Lisbon and Marlborough at 1.0). Three districts have business managers one or two days/week (Ashford and Region 11/Chaplin at one day/week; Sprague at two days). Barkhamsted and Union both outsource the function. In the remaining districts, the superintendents work with in house bookkeepers or administrative assistants to manage the books and human resource function. In one case, the bookkeeper is shared with the town.

Preston shares its Business Manager/Finance Director with the town, working for the schools four days per week, and for the town one day per week.

**Canterbury has a full-time Business Director.**

**TABLE 2a: ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING AND TEACHERS TO ADMINISTRATOR RATIOS**

District	PK-6 or PK-8 Enr.	Total Enrollment	Supt.	Principal	Asst. Princ	Special Services	Curriculum	Total Admin	Teaching Staff FTE	Teachers per Admin.	Bus. Mgr.
Andover PK-6	260	260	0.5	1	0.5	0.5		2.5	26	10.4	0.8
Ashford PK-8	400	400	0.4	1	1	1		3.4	46	13.5	0.2
Barkhamsted PK-6	345	345	0.4	1				1.4	23	16.4	
Bozrah PK-8	205	305	0.25	1		0.24		1.49	16	10.7	
Colebrook K-8	81	81	0.4	1				1.4	10.5	7.5	
Eastford PK-8	196	196	0.4	1		0.2		1.6	15.5	9.7	
Franklin PK-8	157	242	0.4	1		0.3	0.2	1.9	17	8.9	
Hampton PK-6	102	102	0.3	1				1.3	5	3.8	
Lisbon PK-8	388	606	0.4	1		1		2.4	43	17.9	1.0
Marlborough PK-6	560	560	0.5	1	1			2.5	50	20.0	1.0
Norfolk PK-6	110	110	0.4	1				1.4	9	6.4	
Pomfret PK-8		609	0.6	1	1	0.8		3.4	40	11.8	
Region 11/Chaplin 7-12 and PK-6	430	430	0.5	2	1	0.6		4.1	60.2	14.7	0.2
Salem PK-8	620	620	0.45	1	1	.45		2.45	40	16.3	
Sherman PK-8#	320	471	0.3	0.7	1	0.8	0.4	3.2	30	9.4	
Sprague PK-8**	365	534	1	1				2	40	20.0	0.4
Union PK-8	80	114	0.2	1				1.2	7.9	6.6	
Voluntown PK-8	320	449	0.4	1	1	0.4		2.8	35.4	12.6	
<b>Mean:</b>										12.0	
<b>Median:</b>										11.3	
<b>Minimum:</b>										3.8	
<b>Maximum:</b>										20.0	
<b>Preston PK-8</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>0.45</b>		<b>3.45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Canterbury Pk-12</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>

# Sherman is moving to a .3 superintendent/.7 principal position, the only such configuration in the state.

\*\*Sprague's superintendent is full-time, and also covers the role of special services director.

**TABLE 2b: ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING AND TEACHERS TO ADMINISTRATOR RATIOS**

District	PK-6 or PK-8 Enr.	Total Enrollment	Supt.	Principal	Asst. Princ.	Special Services	Curriculum	Total Admin	Teaching Staff FTE	Teachers per Admin.	Bus. Mgr.	
<b>Regional HS:</b>												
Andover PK-6	260	260	0.5	1	0.5	0.5		2.5	26	10.4	0.8	
Ashford PK-8	400	400	0.4	1	1	1		3.4	46	13.5	0.2	
Barkhamsted PK-6	345	345	0.4	1				1.4	23	16.4		
Colebrook K-8	81	81	0.4	1				1.4	10.5	7.5		
Hampton PK-6	102	102	0.3	1				1.3	5	3.8		
Marlborough PK-6	560	560	0.5	1	1			2.5	50	20.0	1.0	
Norfolk PK-6	110	110	0.4	1				1.4	9	6.4		
Region 11/Chaplin 7-12 and PK-6	430	430	0.5	2	1	0.6		4.1	60.2	14.7	0.2	
<b>Tuition to HS:</b>												
Bozrah PK-8	205	305	0.25	1		0.24		1.49	16	10.7		
Eastford PK-8	196	196	0.4	1		0.2		1.6	15.5	9.7		
Franklin PK-8	157	242	0.4	1		0.3	0.2	1.9	17	8.9		
Lisbon PK-8	388	606	0.4	1		1		2.4	43	17.9	1.0	
Pomfret PK-8		609	0.6	1	1	0.8		3.4	40	11.8		
Salem PK-8	620	620	0.45	1	1	.45		2.45	40	16.3		
Sherman PK-8*	320	471	0.3	0.7	1	0.8	0.4	3.2	30	9.4		
Sprague PK-8	365	534	1	1				2	40	20.0	0.4	
Union PK-8	80	114	0.2	1				1.2	7.9	6.6		
Voluntown PK-8	320	449	0.4	1	1	0.4		2.8	35.4	12.6		
<b>Mean:</b>										12.9		
<b>Median:</b>										11.3		
<b>Minimum:</b>										3.8		
<b>Maximum:</b>										20.0		
Preston PK-8	436	640	1.0	2		0.45		3.45	44	12.8	0.8	
Canterbury PK-12	472	734	1.0	2	0	1.0	0	4.0	41	10.25	1.0	

# Sherman is moving to a .3 superintendent/.7 principal position, the only such configuration in the state.

\*\*Sprague's superintendent is full time, and also covers the role of special services director.



## **OUTSOURCING VERSUS IN HOUSE SERVICES**

Some services essential to our schools can consume considerable time for the superintendent. The Preston Board was interested in knowing how other districts handled certain services. The results follow below and on Table 3a/3b on pp. 14-15.

### **Transportation**

Sixteen of the 18 districts studied outsource their school bus services. Only Ashford and Voluntown manage their own buses.

Preston manages its own bus fleet and transportation system.

**Canterbury manages its own bus fleet and transportation system.**

### **Food Service**

Unlike transportation, food service is more easily managed in house. Indeed, there are few vendors interested in bidding on very small districts' meal programs because of the difficulty operating in the black. Two districts offer no food service (Eastford and Union), so students must bring their own lunches or go hungry. Two of the larger districts, Marlborough and Salem, have found vendors and outsource the program. One district (Andover) shares a director with Coventry, who takes responsibility for operations. Andover pays the workers directly, but Coventry manages oversight, reports to the state, and certifications. The remaining 13 have hired people to run the service in house.

Preston manages its food service in house.

**Canterbury manages its food service in house.**

### **IT/Technology**

Finding the right combination of technological know-how and understanding of curriculum and the integration of those two arenas into robust learning for students are major challenges for small districts. Seven of the participating districts have contracts with outside entities [Norwich Free Academy, EASTCONN, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT), and TBNJ Enterprises] to oversee technology. Two have combined in house and outsourcing. Seven other districts have in house staff serving the hardware and (sometimes) integration functions. In one very small district, the superintendent remarked, "We're thin here."

Preston has recently outsourced its technology integration and support to XDF and EASTCONN, its Regional Educational Service Center.

**Canterbury outsources technology using CT Center for Advanced Technology 2 days per week.**

### **Facilities/Maintenance**

All of the participating districts take care of custodial, maintenance, and facilities needs in house. In most cases, custodians do the oversight, though three of the larger districts have directors. (Region 11/Chaplin) has a consultant one day/week, and Salem and Voluntown both have Director of Maintenance positions. In Salem, the position is .4 FTE. A couple of districts

have arrangements with the town where the schools manage the buildings and the town manages the grounds. These arrangements require excellent working relationships with the town so that school priorities are met.

Preston manages its buildings and facilities in house.

**Canterbury manages its own buildings and facilities in house, and has a full-time Director of Facilities.**

**TABLE 3a: IN HOUSE VERSUS OUTSOURCED SERVICES**

District	PK-6 and PK-8 Enrollment	Total Enroll.	Outsource/In House Buses?	Outsource/In House Food Service	Outsource/In House IT/Technology	Outsource/In House Facilities/Maint.	Business Support
Andover PK-6	260	260	Outsource: Dattco	Shared with Coventry	In House: 1 hardware; .5 tchr	In House 3 custodians	.8 bus. mgr
Ashford PK-8	400	400	In House	In House	In House : 1.0 tech	In House	.2 bus mgr 2 bkkprs
Barkhamsted PK-6	345	345	Outsource	In House	?	In House	Outsource
Bozrah PK-8	205	305	Outsource	In House	In House	In House	clerk, admin. asst.
Colebrook K-8	81	81	Outsource: Allstar	In House	Thin here	In House	Bookkeeper
Eastford PK-8	130	196	Outsource	No Food	Contract	In House	Admin. Asst.
Franklin PK-8	157	242	Outsource: M&J	In House	Outsource: NFA	In House 1FT, 3PT custs	.5 Bkkper (shared w/town)
Hampton PK-6	102	102	Outsource First Stu.	In House	Outsource: EASTCONN	In House: FT Cust	Bus coord.
Lisbon PK-8	388	606	Outsource First Stu.	In House	Outsource: CCAT	In House 1FT	1.0 Bus Mgr
Marlborough PK-6	560	560	Outsource	Outsource: Chartwells	In House: staff	In House	1.0 Bus Mgr
Norfolk PK-6	110	110	Outsource: Allstar	In House	In House .4	In House: 2 cust	Clerical
Pomfret		609	Outsource: M&J	In House	In House 1.0 + .2 vendor	In House	1.0 bus/admin asst.
Region 11/Chaplin 7-12 and PK-6	430	430	Outsource: First Stu.	In House	In House	In House: 1 day/wk consult.	1 day/wk consult.
Salem PK-8	376	620	Outsource: M&J	Outsource	Outsource: TBNJ	In House: .4 Dir	1.0 accts pay, budget; Supt admin asst handles HR
Sherman PK-8	320	471	Outsource: Allstar	In House	Outsource	In House 1FT	Office mgr
Sprague PK-8	365	534	Outsource	In House	Combined	In House	.4 Bus Mgr
Union PK-8	80	114	Outsource: EASTCONN	No Food	Outsource: EASTCONN		Contract w/ EASTCONN + bookkeeping
Voluntown PK-8	320	449	In House	In House	In House	In House: Dir of Maint + 25 hr cust	Accts Pay Mgr

<b>Mean:</b>		357.4					
<b>Median:</b>		372.5					
<b>Minimum:</b>		81					
<b>Maximum:</b>		620					
<b>Preston PK-8</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>Outsource: XDF and EASTCONN</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>.8 Business Manager</b>
<b>Canterbury Pk-12</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>Outsource</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>1.0</b>

**TABLE 3b: IN HOUSE VERSUS OUTSOURCED SERVICES**

District	PK-6 /PK-8 Enr.	Enrollment	Outsource/In House Buses?	Outsource/In House Food Service	Outsource/In House IT/Technology	Outsource/In House Facilities/Maint.	Business Support
<b>Regional HS:</b>							
Andover PK-6	260	260	Outsource: Dattco	Shared with Coventry	In House:: 1hdwe; .5 tchr	In House: 3 cust.	.8 bus. mgr
Ashford PK-8	400	400	In House	In House	In House: 1.0 tech	In House	.2 bus mgr 2 bkkprs
Barkhamsted PK-6	345	345	Outsource	In House	?	In House	Outsource
Colebrook K-8	81	81	Outsource: Allstar	In House	Thin here	In House	Bookkeeper
Hampton PK-6	102	102	Outsource First Stu.	In House	Outsource: EASTCONN	In House: FT Cust	Bus coord.
Marlborough PK-6	560	560	Outsource	Outsource: Chartwells	In House: staff	In House	1.0 Bus Mgr
Norfolk PK-6	110	110	Outsource: Allstar	In House	In House .4	In House: 2 cust	Clerical
Region 11/Chaplin 7-12 and PK-6	430	430	Outsource: First Stu.	In House	In House	In House: 1 day/wk consult.	1 day/wk consult.
<b>Tuition to HS:</b>							
Bozrah PK-8	205	305	Outsource	In House	In House	In House	clerk, adm. asst.
Eastford PK-8	130	196	Outsource	No Food	Contract	In House	Admin. Asst.
Franklin PK-8	157	242	Outsource: M&J	In House	Outsource: NFA	In House 1FT, 3PT custs	.5 Bkkper (shared w/town)
Lisbon PK-8	388	606	Outsource First Stu.	In House	Outsource: CCAT	In House 1FT	1.0 Bus Mgr
Pomfret		609	Outsource: M&J	In House	In House 1.0 + .2 vendor	In House	1.0 bus/admin asst.
Salem PK-8	376	620	Outsource: M&J	Outsource	Outsource: TBNJ	In House: .4 Dir	1.0 accts pay, budget; Supt admin asst handles HR
Sherman PK-8	320	471	Outsource: Allstar	In House	Outsource	In House 1FT	Office mgr

Sprague PK-8	365	534	Outsource	In House	Combined	In House	.4 Bus Mgr
Union PK-8	80	114	Outsource: EASTCONN	No Food	Outsource: EASTCONN		EASTCONN + bookkeeping
Voluntown PK-8	320	449	In House	In House	In House	In House: Dir of Maint + 25 hr cust	Accts Pay Mgr
<b>Mean:</b>		357.4					
<b>Median:</b>		372.5					
<b>Minimum:</b>		81					
<b>Maximum:</b>		620					
<b>Preston PK-8</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>Outsource: XDF and EASTCONN</b>		<b>.8 Business Manager</b>
<b>Canterbury Pk-12</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>Outsource</b>	<b>In House</b>	<b>1.0</b>

## Collective Bargaining

Thirteen of the superintendents participating in this study were involved with contract negotiations and worked with attorneys. Four superintendents were advisory to the board and attorney who handled the negotiations. Only one superintendent (Bozrah) handled negotiations himself. All districts negotiated with a teachers union. Other unions included Service Employees International Union (SEIU), or the American Federation of State and County Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

One major complexity in negotiations, especially for small districts, is health care. Some major carriers have cancelled negotiated plans, leading to annual negotiation demands. Some small districts (Scotland, Hampton, Region 11/Chaplin) have joined forces in their health care, taking a load off the superintendent. Overall, collective bargaining can mean a lot of nights out for superintendents.

Preston's superintendent and business manager form a tag team working with the district's unions: teachers, administrators, and MEUI classified (food services, custodians, secretaries, instructional assistants, bus drivers). Board members occasionally participate. Preston partners with the Town to share the same health care offerings.

**The Canterbury Negotiations team consists of 2 BOE members, the Superintendent, the Business Director, and our Board attorney (for the Teachers' and Paras' contracts only) .**

## ADDITIONAL BUDGET EXPOSURES CREATED BY PART-TIME STATUS

Though the move to part-time status results in a cost savings in the superintendent's salary, the Preston Board was interested in knowing if any additional costs might be incurred as the superintendent's responsibilities were delegated to others. In order to accomplish a full-time superintendent's typical work, some reported dividing up reports among staff, and offering teacher stipends for absorbing curriculum development work.

Most superintendents could not identify additional costs that would result from a shift from full-time to part-time status. They noted that it depended on the individual superintendent's skill set and the strength of the "back office." However in one instance, the savings generated in the superintendent's salary by the move to part-time were spent on a new assistant principal position.

## Combining Superintendency with other roles

A number of participants expressed concern with combining roles of superintendent with, for instance, principal or director of special services. As one superintendent put it, *"There's where you run into trouble. Like having a superintendent/principal. You need the second voice. I meet with the principal and SpEd director once a week. We go over policies and procedures and where we want the school to go. You can't do that alone."*

In 16 of the 18 districts, the part-time superintendent serves only in that role, though if someone is out, they fill in. One participant (the only one employed full-time in the district) is currently serving in multiple administrative roles, both as superintendent and director of special education. When the principal is out, she also assumes that role. She reports that it is an

untenable arrangement because everyone is spread too thin, no job can be done well, and parent expectations cannot be met. Finally, one superintendent serves .45 as superintendent and .15 as technology specialist, a non-certified position.

Sherman is going to attempt a principal/superintendent structure in 2016-17. The retiring superintendent studied the issue, considered the resources, and he and the board determined it was their best option.

### **PART-TIME SUPERINTENDENT FOCUS**

Asked how participating part-time superintendents spent the bulk of their time (and many mentioned multiple focuses), respondents cited the following:

- Budget and finance (6)
- Labor relations and personnel (6)
- Board of education "TLC" (4)
- Communications (3)
- Putting out fires/hot button issues (3)
- Policy (3)
- Curriculum/change agent (2)
- Paperwork (2)
- Managing (2)
- Relationships (2)
- Facilities (2)
- Health insurance (1)
- State mandates (1)
- Legal issues (1)
- Long-range planning (1)

### **COVERING NIGHT MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES**

All superintendent participants attended evening board meetings, subcommittee meetings, and town budget meetings, arranging to work on the days they have night commitments. Several spoke of the importance of boards' sensitivity to their schedules, for instance, holding regular board meetings just once a month. Most left parent meetings and activities to their principals to cover, though three particularly mentioned the importance of having a physical presence in the community. They also attended conferences, though in a more limited way than they had when serving in a full-time capacity.

### **QUALITY OF CANDIDATES**

All participants were asked their perspectives of candidate prospects for full- versus part-time superintendents. Five did not really have an opinion. Others talked about the pros and cons of part- versus full-time role.

Part-time superintendents are usually retired full-time superintendents (and that was the case with all but Lisbon and Sprague in this study) who love their work. As one said, "Part-time superintendents are some of the best people we've seen. Very talented. It's a way of staying active and vital. It gives me more than just something to do, it allows me to keep my passion."

Two cautioned about finding a mid-career (non-retired) person coming in to take a part-time role. Given the complexity of the work, experience in a larger district apparently prepared superintendents for juggling the issues of a part-time role.

One noted that part-time superintendents might not be enthusiastic about being change agents, but added that this is the case with some full-time superintendents, too. To that point, only one mentioned spending time on long-range planning.

Others questioned whether the pool would be smaller because of recent rule changes to the Teacher Retirement Board (TRB) guidelines. The district would have to make a compelling case and commit to supporting the successful part-time candidate.

Though some said they thought there would be more qualified candidates in a full-time pool, one questioned the potential to attract candidates to a full-time position that paid only mid-\$120,000s, Preston's current pay. Others noted that a candidate who retired from another state might be attracted to the full-time position, as was the current superintendent.

## **THEMES**

A number of themes emerged that may offer important insights as the Preston Board of Education considers its direction.

### **WHY PART-TIME? THE BOARD'S ROLE IN BROKERING COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS**

The superintendent participants offered a variety of benefits and cautions about a part-time superintendency. One caution, heard multiple times, was the importance of the board deciding what it wants. A district won't get a five to seven day per week superintendent if paying for two to three days.

The Board of Education first needs to consider the future of Preston's schools five to ten years out. Then it should define expectations of a part-time superintendent, then broker the expectations of the community, explaining the limits a part-time superintendency implies. The Board and the community cannot expect that the work of the superintendent will be accomplished as if nothing has changed. Board members will especially need to ensure effective juggling of the talents of staff.

In addition, the Board must commit to supporting the individual they hire, demonstrating understanding and compassion for the strain of running a district within limited time constraints. How a board treats a superintendent is an important ingredient in an individual choosing to apply for a position, and then in remaining in the role. As many superintendents attested, this job, part- or full-time, requires 24/7 commitment and passion. People need to feel supported if they are to be effective in fulfilling their roles and remain devoted to the work. Board members will need to be very supportive and trusting, and will need to devote time to the work, especially ensuring effective school/community relations.

Another caution raised is the potential difficulty the Board might face if the part-time superintendency proves unsuccessful. The public might not be willing to restore funding necessary to hire a full-time superintendent.

### **STRONG, EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM AND SUPPORT STAFF**

A successful part-time superintendent needs a very strong principal and a full-time administrative assistant who understand roles, boundaries, and when they need help. According to some in the trenches, the administrative team must meet regularly and talk through direction and issues. This team needs to enjoy a sense of camaraderie, with principals feeling deeply a part of the process. One superintendent, Colebrook's, felt that principals enjoyed the additional responsibilities they inherited with a part-time superintendent because it gave them a greater sense of autonomy.

A capable administrative assistant is also very important. This works best, according to this study's participants, when the assistant has institutional knowledge and a good sense of when to contact the superintendent. The assistant also needs not to be inclined to "take over" running the district. On the other hand, others in the district should not usurp the assistant's time when the superintendent is not present. A part-time superintendent needs a full-time assistant to follow through on ordering, grant reporting, tracking deadlines, etc.

Small districts also need strong fiscal capacity somewhere. In many districts, responsibilities for business functions fall to clerical staff. To be able to sleep at night the superintendent needs sufficient confidence that the staff can handle the work and accomplish the complex fiscal and human relations functions with integrity.

### **DON'T HAVE SUPERINTENDENT SERVE IN ANY OTHER CAPACITY**

Though there was one superintendent (Sherman) who disagreed with this, the vast majority spoke of issues when the superintendent held multiple positions—such as, doubling as principal or director of special services. When wearing multiple hats, superintendents ran into problems of role ambiguity (especially for parents) that led to frustration for all. Several spoke of potential conflicts inherent in dual roles. For example, a teacher might bring a grievance to a principal. If that principal is also the superintendent, there is no avenue for due process, appealing to the superintendent. It is the principal's role to represent staff, students, and parents. The board needs its own person in the role of superintendent, not trying to satisfy everyone at once. It is also healthy to have multiple perspectives to bounce ideas around in considering the district's direction.

### **AVAILABILITY OF INDIVIDUALS FOR THE WORK**

There are probably excellent leaders who could be attracted either to full-or part-time superintendencies. Please see the "Quality of Candidates" section on p. 17. It is early to know the impact of recent changes (June 2016) to the rules governing teachers' retirement on Connecticut retirees choosing to hold part-time positions. Yet there do seem to be candidates interested in serving in a part-time capacity. A new rule mandates the following formula as a maximum salary: top teacher salary x 220% x .45. (In 2016-17, Preston's highest paid teacher



will earn \$88,810, so the highest salary a retired Connecticut superintendent will be able to earn is \$88,922.) These rules do not apply to retirees from other states.

Unless Preston is interested in increasing its full-time salary substantially, the field for candidates for that capacity may be less robust. The average 2014-15 salary for a full-time superintendent in Connecticut was \$180,452. Salaries in eastern Connecticut were a little lower, averaging \$165,850. Preston's salary was the lowest in the state.

**Canterbury 2015-2016 full-time superintendent's salary was \$132,080 and 2016-2017 was \$135,382. Canterbury salary was 3rd from the lowest in the state for full time position.**

Whether full- or part-time, candidates will want to know that the Board of Education is committed to their success.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE PRESTON BOARD

Finally, as the Preston Board of Education makes this decision, members should give careful consideration to the following questions:

What will the district look like in five years? Ten years?

Looking at the long term.... what would be the compelling reasons to move to a part-time position?

Are you prepared to lose the capacity a full-time superintendent brings? What are the implications? What are you prepared to see dropped?

What changes would you make to the job expectations and administrative structure to make this successful?

Is the Board willing to commit more time to make such a change possible? Are the Board and the community of Preston willing to support a part-time superintendent to ensure success?

## LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The sources for much of these data are almost exclusively retired superintendents who supplement retirement pensions through this part-time work. There is the possibility they have a vested interest in this structure. Having said that, all participants seemed genuinely analytical and thoughtful about the pros and cons of the part-time arrangement.

Though this has been a comprehensive study, in the interest of time, we focused on key elements. The intent was to provide a snapshot at a moment in time.