

Middle school enrollment

Feeder model, neighborhood zones set for 2009-10

The majority of middle school students in the City School District of Albany will attend two schools next year through a feeder system the Board of Education approved in February. North Albany Academy will continue to serve students from prekindergarten through grade 8.

Students will attend either Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School on Whitehall Road or William S. Hackett Middle School on Delaware Avenue based on the elementary school they attend (*see related stories*).

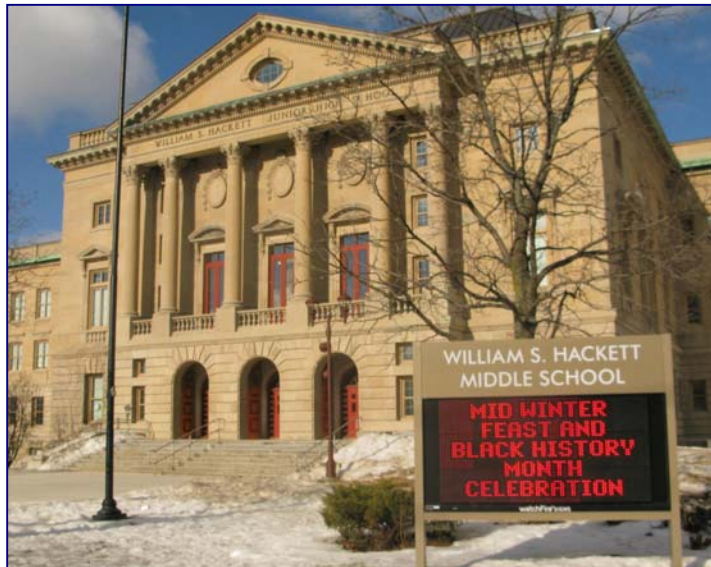


Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School opened in 2005.

Both brand new, state-of-the-art schools will accommodate up to 650 students. The board's action followed a months-long study of enrollment options that was necessary because the middle school at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy will close after this school year due to declining enrollment.

North Albany Academy, on North Pearl Street, will serve up to 150 students in grades 6-8.

“This has been one of the most important decisions our school district has addressed in recent years, and I believe we have reached an excellent, thoughtful conclusion that will serve all of our students and families well,” said Board President Barbara Gaffuri.



Built in 1926-27, William S. Hackett Middle School was completely renovated in 2007-08.

“I am grateful to our administration, and to the district and community volunteers who came forward to assist us with this work, for the great attention to detail and the great care they took in helping us make this decision.”

The board also approved half-mile neighborhood enrollment zones for Hackett, Myers and Livingston.

Students living within that distance of Hackett or Myers will have the option of attending the closer school. Families living within a half-mile of Livingston will have the option of choosing either Hackett or Myers.

Additionally, students in grades 6-7 at Livingston this year also will be able to choose Hackett or Myers for 2009-10.

Additional details about the choice options for Livingston families will be available after March 2 by calling the Office of Central Registration at (518) 462-7207 or visiting www.albanyschools.org.

The transition to two main middle schools is happening because Livingston's enrollment has shrunk dramatically in recent years. Once enrolling more than 800 students, Livingston serves about 250 this school year.

A 30-member committee made up of district and community volunteers met for several months during the fall and winter to research enrollment options.

Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education Tresa Diggs, Ed.D., led the Middle School Enrollment Planning Committee, along with Assistant Director of Special Education Michele Bridgewater and New Scotland Elementary School Principal Gregory Jones.

"Dr. Diggs, Ms. Bridgewater and Mr. Jones provided exceptional leadership and guidance during this process," said Superintendent Eva C. Joseph, Ed.D. "I also would like to thank the committee members for their dedication to this extremely important undertaking for our school district and our community. Their careful study of this complex issue has been a tremendous benefit to our children and families."

The committee focused on two primary options – the feeder system, and a random school assignment system in which students would be assigned to Hackett and Myers through an annual, random, computer-generated process.

The committee presented the two options to the board Dec. 2, then held six public forums in early January to provide information to the community and gather feedback. After receiving an update on the community input at its Jan. 15 meeting, the board voted in favor of the feeder system and neighborhood zones at its Feb. 3 meeting.

The board approved the feeder groupings Feb. 12.

Myers, Hackett and North Albany each have been part of the district's current facilities project for elementary and middle schools.

Myers is a completely new facility that opened in September 2005. Hackett (September 2008) and North Albany (September 2005) both were completely renovated. As a result, all students in grades 6-8 will have the opportunity to access state-of-the-art school buildings beginning next fall.