

Purpose of the Proposal

The primary goal was to address logistical challenges while making election administration more efficient and adapting to changes in voting patterns.

Strategy Behind Consolidating to One Polling Place

1. Respond to the loss of two polling locations.

- Long Lots Elementary School became unavailable because of school construction.
- Greens Farms Elementary School became unavailable due to extended school year programming and limited custodial availability before the new school year.
- Both schools have now been made available by working around the issues.

2. Simplify the voter experience.

- A single polling location would eliminate confusion about which district voters belong to.
- One centralized site could offer better parking, lighting, and accessibility during early morning and evening voting hours.

3. Enhance election security.

- Concentrating voting at one location would make it easier to provide police presence or other security measures if needed.

4. Adapt to changing voting behavior.

- This would be the first election after the implementation of no-excuse absentee voting.
- Officials anticipated that, combined with early voting, significantly fewer voters would vote in person on Election Day, reducing the need for multiple polling places.

5. Reduce staffing requirements.

- Early voting has substantially increased staffing needs over a 7- or 14-day period.
- Consolidating Election Day operations would reduce Election Day staffing , helping manage costs and staffing demands.

Legal Considerations

The Secretary of the State's office advised that Connecticut law requires primary polling places to be the same as those used for the corresponding general election. Specifically:

- A town could **not** use one polling configuration for the August primary and then return to different polling places for the November election.
- If polling places were changed, they would need to remain the same through the general election.
- The office suggested either:
 - finding temporary replacement locations for the unavailable schools that would also be used for the general election, or
 - selecting a permanent replacement to minimize repeated voter notifications.

Why the Proposal Was Reversed

According to the statement provided:

"After carefully considering the feedback and concerns expressed by members of the Westport community, the Registrars of Voters and the Town Clerk have decided to return to the original polling places. We appreciate the public's engagement throughout this process."

In other words, although the consolidation was driven by operational, legal, staffing, and logistical considerations, the officials ultimately decided to retain the existing polling-place system after receiving significant public feedback and concerns from residents.

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