IEDL SPRING 2020 NEW HAVEN ANALYSES: EDUCATION

Kate Cooney, Ph.D.

IEDL Summer Intern: Bryan Fike

IEDL Class: Uzma Amin, Marisa Berry, Arianna Blanco, Joy Chen, Norbert Cichon, Brice Eidson, Charles Gress, Stephen Henriques, Evan Oleson, Tessa Ruben, Naomi Shachter, Alexandra Sing, and Allen Xu

CitySCOPE podcast Episode 4: Real Integration in Public Schools #stillnotequal featuring interviews with Barbara Biasi, Yale School of Management and Sarah Camiscoli, Integrate NYC

#Still not equal

Public Schools and Fiscal Leveling

Strong public education is a cornerstone of inclusive economic development. Yet in greater New Haven and across the country, there are vast disparities across districts in access to resources and educational quality. In the *CitySCOPE* podcast, episode 4, Yale SOM economist Barbara Biasi highlights how the traditional model to fund public education in the US has led to vast disparities across school districts.

A LEGACY OF SCHOOL FUNDING INEQUALITY

"Historically, US public schools have been funded for the most part through local taxation revenues and in particular local property taxes. A consequence of this type of financing scheme is that school districts that have a higher property basis - meaning a higher wealth, which is usually associated with a better socioeconomic status and higher income - were also able to raise more revenues and therefore have better funded public schools. This has led to a situation in which districts within the same state were spending wildly different amounts of money on a per pupil basis."

-Barbara Biasi, Assistant Professor of Economics, Yale School of Management

While lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of such funding schemes have reduced the share of public education expenditures coming from local revenue sources to 35-45%, there is still significant variation in per-pupil expenditures across districts.

The composition of students in a school also bears great importance. There is a growing body of evidence that the efforts in the 1950s and 1960s to integrate schools made a difference for students of color without reducing the advantage of white students.[1] Despite clear evidence demonstrating the impact of integration, many of the country's public schools remain characterized by racial imbalance and isolation. In New Haven Public Schools, Black and Hispanic students make up 83% of total enrollment,

[1] Johnson, Rucker. "Why school integration works." *The Washington Post.* 16 May 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/05/16/why-school-integration-works/

despite accounting for only 63% of the city's population under 18 years of age.[2] Half of New Haven schools are considered profoundly segregated, meaning that most Black and Hispanic students will rarely sit in the classroom that has any White students.[3] For example, Church Street Elementary School has roughly an 80% Black or Hispanic student body and Lincoln-Bassett Elementary School has a 95% Black or Hispanic student body.[4] On the other side of the racial imbalance, approximately 90% of all students in Guilford and Madison public schools are White and less than 5% of students receive SNAP benefits.[5] These districts, some of the highest-rated in Connecticut, have higher per-pupil K-12 expenditures than the state average, and a majority of students consistently exceed state averages across a range of performance metrics.

Models of Promise

While these disparities are jarring, New Haven and Connecticut can draw from examples around the country of efforts to more equitably fund and desegregate public schools. **Vermont's** Act 60, signed into law in 1997, sought to move away from a property tax-based funding system by establishing a standard, state-wide property tax and pooling and distributing tax revenues to districts in proportion to their enrollment. In Louisville, Kentucky and surrounding suburbs in Jefferson County, the public schools are remarkably economically diverse, yet there's no divide between inner city and suburban schools. The **City of Louisville**'s public schools merged with **Jefferson County**'s in 1975, and the city and county governments merged in 2003, sharing tax revenues and resources across the entire metropolitan area. Further, the city/county government has actively worked to integrate its schools, creating school clusters to draw students from diverse neighborhoods with regard to household income, racial composition, and parent educational attainment. The district puts schools and clusters of diverse neighborhoods where parents fill out an application, listing their preferences for schools in the cluster with a district-wide aim of achieving diversity goals. These efforts have resulted in a district that is 49% White, 37% Black, and 14% Latinx, without significant performance gaps between city and suburban schools.[6]

Regional Fiscal Equalization

Applying the Jefferson County funding model to New Haven

Significant school funding disparities exist in greater New Haven. Following an approach developed by EdBuild, we compiled data to compare state and local resources across districts.[7] We found that in Hamden Public Schools, for example, local and state revenues amounted to $26,640 per pupil in 2018,

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[2] U.S. Census Bureau. Quick Facts – New Haven city, Connecticut.
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/newhavencityconnecticut/AGE295218

[3] Peak, Christopher. "2 Segregated Schools, 2 Reactions." *New Haven Independent*. 3 September 2019.
https://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/school_segregation_measures/

[4] *ibid*

[5] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard

[6] Semuels, Alana. "The City That Believed in Desegregation." *The Atlantic.* 27 March 2015.
https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/03/the-city-that-believed-in-desegregation/388532/

[7] School revenue comparison methodology adopted from "Dismissed: America's Most Divisive Borders." *EdBuild*.
https://edbuild.org/content/dismissed/methodology

43% more than in neighboring New Haven city's $18,590 per pupil for its 21,418 students.[8] To see how per pupil dollars would change under a regional pooled resources model like in Jefferson County, Kentucky, we aggregated all state and local funding less capital expenditures across 16 districts in the South Central Connecticut Region, which roughly matches Jefferson County in geographic area. We found that, if distributed equally, revenues per pupil would amount to $21,250 per student. Expanding further, if revenues were distributed equally across the 26 districts in New Haven county, state and local revenues would amount to $20,250 per student, an increase of $1,661 per pupil and $35.5 million overall for New Haven City Schools. For New Haven, this additional amount would close the budget shortfall and allow the district to expand the number of school guidance counselors, nurses, and special education teachers, and make investments in areas that can make a difference for the quality of educational environment for the students.

The table below lists state and local school district revenues for each district in the South Central Connecticut region.

State and Local Revenue per Pupil, by District ($ in thousands)

District Name	Enroll.	State Revenue	State Revenue for Capital Outlay	Local Revenue	Total Adjusted State and Local Revenue[1]	Adjusted State and Local Revenue per Pupil
Hamden Town Schools	5,362	$46,168	$316	$97,004	$142,856	$26.64
Milford Public Schools	5,749	$32,389	$3,202	$113,753	$142,940	$24.86
Branford Town Schools	2,900	$11,928	$19	$58,300	$70,209	$24.21
Regional School District 5	2,197	$7,403	$16	$44,916	$52,303	$23.81
Madison Public Schools	2,814	$9,796	$32	$56,674	$66,438	$23.61
Guilford Public Schools	3,363	$13,357	$142	$62,923	$76,138	$22.64
Wallingford Town Schools	5,824	$39,326	$56	$89,072	$128,342	$22.04
Bethany Community Schools	364	$2,987	$57	$5,052	$7,982	$21.93
Orange Town Schools	1,173	$5,281	$203	$20,133	$25,211	$21.49
East Haven Town Schools	2,853	$29,912	$1,189	$32,211	$60,934	$21.36
Woodbridge Public Schools	830	$3,435	$276	$14,384	$17,543	$21.14
North Haven Town Schools	3,136	$16,316	$2,887	$52,369	$65,798	$20.98
North Branford Town Schools	1,777	$13,878	$1,492	$24,227	$36,613	$20.60
West Haven City Schools	5,758	$72,632	$7,989	$52,430	$117,073	$20.33
Meriden City Schools	7,874	$92,094	$3,540	$62,490	$151,044	$19.18
New Haven City Schools	21,418	$291,731	$22,705	$129,162	$398,188	$18.59
Total	73,392	$688,633	$44,121	$915,100	$1,559,612	$21.25

Data source: U.S. Census Bureau Annual Survey of School Expenditures. [1] Total adjusted state and local revenue = state revenue – state revenue for capital outlay + local revenue. State revenue for capital outlay is subtracted from this formula because can fluctuate significantly from year to year.

[8] U.S. Census Bureau Annual Survey of School System Finances. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/school-finances.html.

Integrate Greater New Haven

Diversifying the New Haven region's schools

Jefferson County, Kentucky has also taken steps to integrate their schools on a regional basis by students' socioeconomic status. Interestingly, we found that the 15 town South Central Connecticut region is roughly the same land area as Jefferson County Kentucky, so it served as a potential model for exploring how such an initiative could work here in the New Haven region.

Jefferson County's student assignment plan aims to allocate students to encourage integration outcomes while also preserving school choice and valuing geographic proximity between school and home. The student assignment plan has been revisited and revised periodically since its initial introduction. In their 2011 proposal to revise the county's student assignment plan, Gary Orfield and Erica Frankenburg sought to create diverse school clusters by drawing students from diverse neighborhoods according to average household income, adult educational attainment, and racial composition.[9] Using Census data on those three factors, they categorized neighborhoods into one of three categories. They then developed a student assignment plan such that the student composition of each school cluster would fall within a desired range on a diversity index.

Using Orfield and Frankenburg's plan as a model, our hypothetical student assignment plan categorizes each of the 127 Census tracts in the 15-town South Central Connecticut region into one of three categories, with category 1 being the most advantaged and category 3 being the least advantaged, by income, educational attainment, and racial composition. The category values for each metric are combined using a formula developed by Orfield and Frankenburg to arrive at an overall category score for the tract. Approximately 30% of tracts were classified as category 1, 46% as category 2, and 24% as category 3.

Using location data for each Census tract and each public, non-magnet high school in the region, each tract was assigned to a high school. The assignment formula aimed to minimize geographic distance between Census tracts and schools and to satisfy two criteria. First, the calculation assigned tracts to schools such that each school's diversity index, a weighted average of the tract category values assigned to the school, fell between 1.4 and 2.5, following Orfield and Frankenburg.[10] Second, the calculation also sought to ensure that the percentage of the region's under-18 population assigned to each school roughly matched the school's current share of the region's total school enrollment. The resulting hypothetical neighborhood – school assignment maps follow on subsequent pages. Figure 1 shows proposed school attendance boundaries, and Figure 2 shows proposed school attendance boundaries with existing school district boundaries in white. Detailed views focused on the city of New Haven follow.

Notably, after we ran the analysis, we found for the most part, those high schools were able to remain diverse or become diverse if they weren't diverse already without major changes to existing school attendance boundaries. For example, in Milford, Jonathan Law High School's attendance boundaries

[9] Orfield, Gary and Erica Frankenburg. "Diversity and Educational Gains: A plan for a changing county and its schools." UCLA Civil Rights Project. September 2011. https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/diversity-and-education-gains-a-plan-for-a-changing-county-and-its-schools

[10] A school's diversity index is calculated as: [% of students from category 1 tracts] * 1 + [% of students from category 2 tracts] * 2 + [% of students from category 3 tracts] * 3

would be almost unchanged. For the schools that would require a change to the school attendance boundaries, the changes are not major redrawing of school boundaries. For example, James Hillhouse High School in New Haven, under this simulation, would still draw from the nearby Dixwell and Newhallville neighborhoods in New Haven city, but it would also bring in students from the town of Orange to diversify the school. Similarly, for some suburban schools, largely wealthy and white, an integration plan would require bringing in some students from New Haven city. By way of example, some students from Fair Haven might attend North Haven High School or Daniel Hand High School in Madison and residents of the Annex or Fair Haven Heights might attend Guilford High School. But once those changes take effect, we really are able to achieve diverse schools. It's important to note that none of this is possible without a high degree of regional cooperation. It would take the involvement of everyone in the region to achieve diverse schools, if that's what we want to do.

Figure 1: Hypothetical high school assignment for South Central CT Region

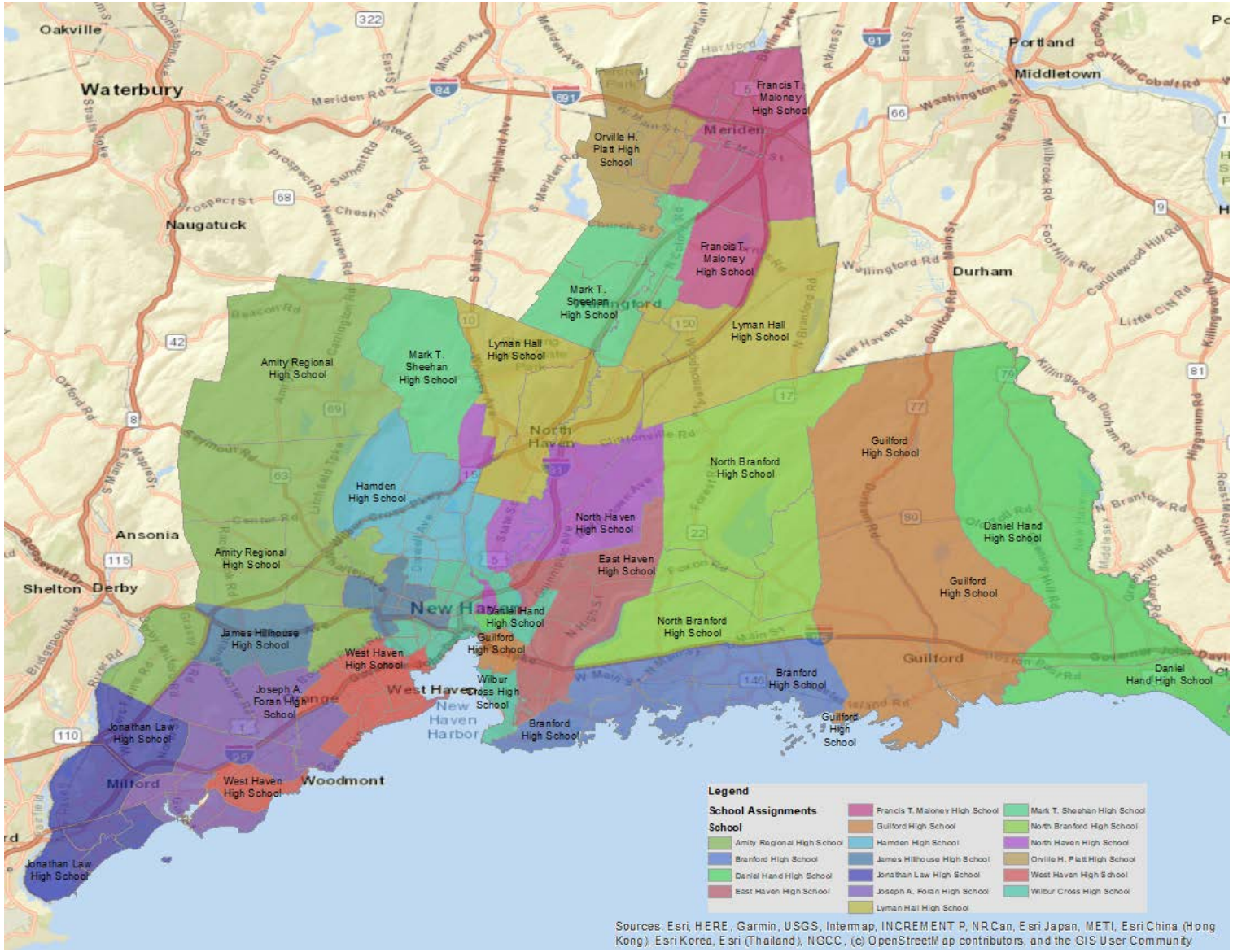
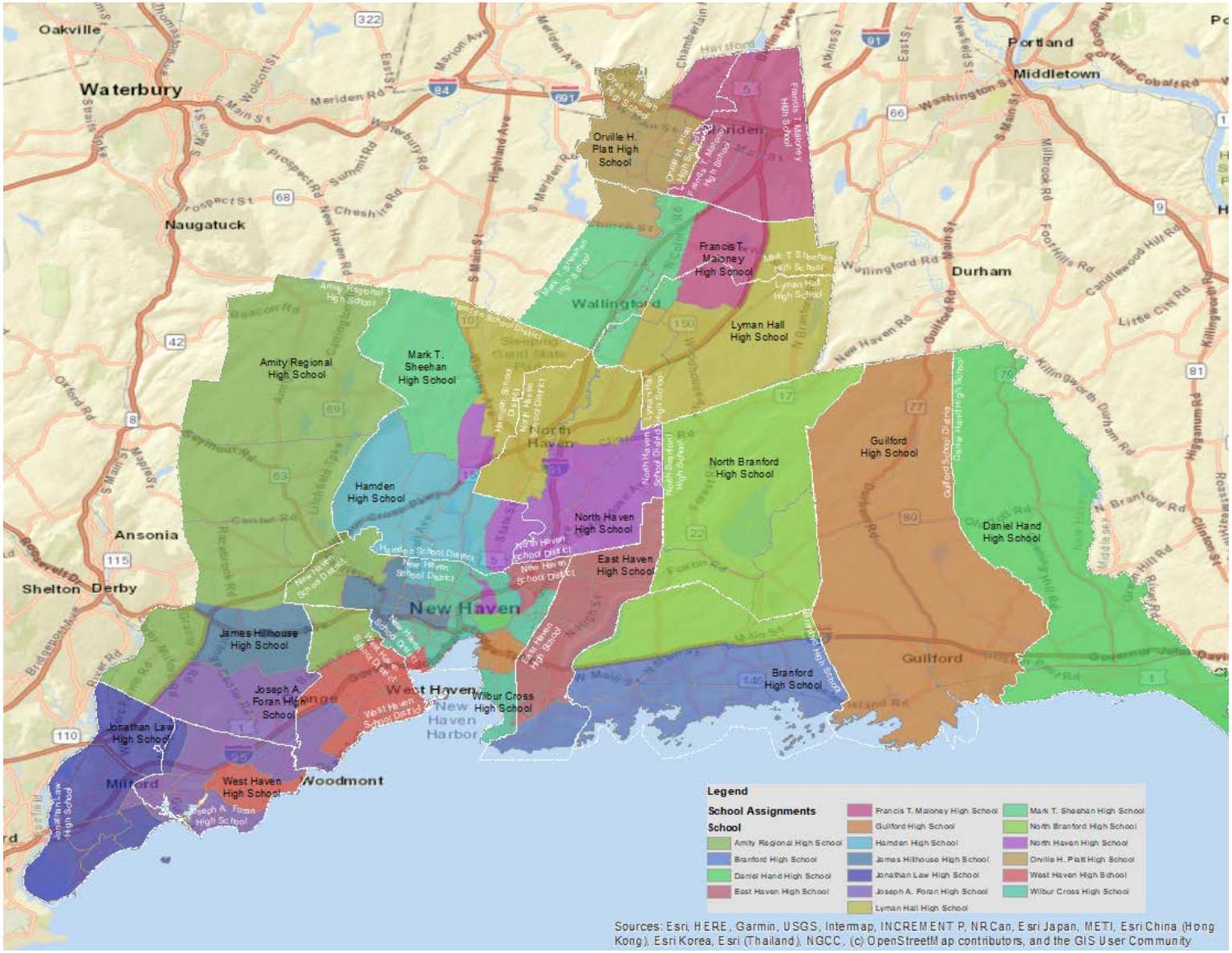
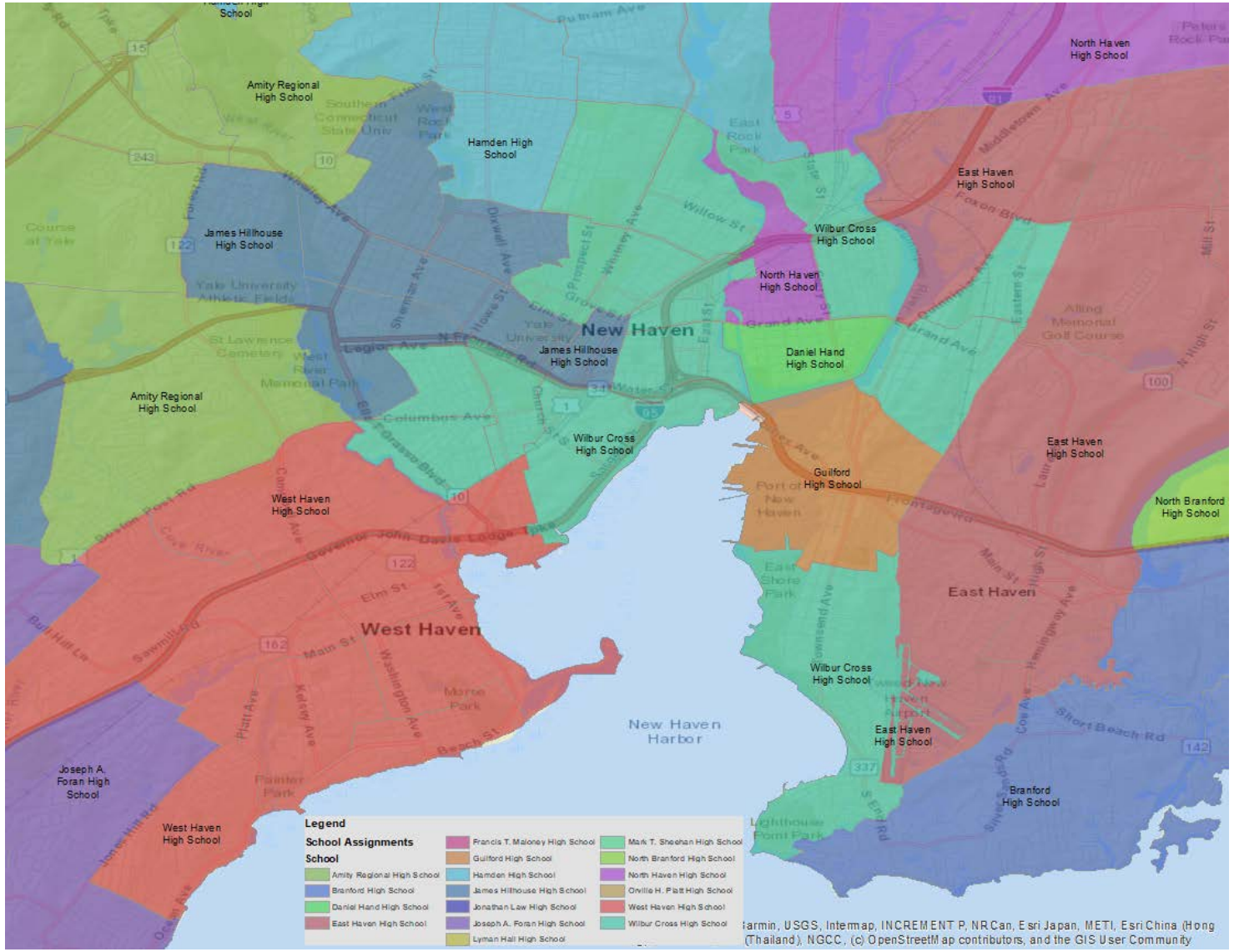


Figure 2: Hypothetical high school assignment for South Central CT Region, with existing district boundaries in white



Detailed view 1: Hypothetical high school assignment for New Haven city neighborhoods



Detailed view 2: Hypothetical high school assignment for New Haven city neighborhoods, with existing district boundaries in white