Analysis of Enrollment and Utilization of Building Space

A Study for the

SOUTH SENECA

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kevin Baughman, Ph.D. - Study Consultant

May, 2024

South Seneca Central School District

Ovid, New York

2023-2024 South Seneca Board of Education

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Study Consultant

Dr. Kevin Baughman	Principal, Dr. Kevin Baughman & Associates

Acknowledgements

The South Seneca Central School District, nestled in between two Finger Lakes, provides a warm and intimate learning experience for its children. The generally quiet roads and slower life style make this an attractive place to raise a young family. A place where most people know you, or at least know of you and where the schools foster personally knowing each child as an individual.

The study consultant sincerely thanks everyone who had any role in meeting with, or sharing information about the schools with the consultant. People were warm, friendly, interested, and committed to the school district and area communities. Special thanks for providing a vast amount of time supporting the study including various members of the Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, Business Administrator, Principals at the Elementary, Middle and High Schools, High School Guidance, Teacher Association Co-Presidents, Director of Athletics, Director of Special Programs, and local officials.

Thanks for inviting me into your district. My best wishes and warmest regards to everyone.

Kevin Baughman, Ph.D.
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April, 2024

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South Seneca Central School District
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PART 1 – Purpose and Background of the Study

1.1 Executive Summary

The South Seneca Central School District Board of Education indicated the need for an updated study of school building space utilization including analysis of student enrollment and review of current instructional space use. The initial study over a decade ago was precipitated by concern about declining student enrollment and need to review district options for managing district excess building space.

The current study was guided by five key questions concerning student enrollment projections, possible commercial and residential development, current use of building space, and options to address enrollment and surplus space in the schools.

The study generated a robust set of data tables and information. Although not a strong predictor of future student enrollment, results indicated the overall birth rate for the district outperformed the all-school district average in New York State between 2007-2020. Five-year enrollment projections through the 2028-29 school year suggest that grade enrollments over the next five years will show little or a slight enrollment increase to slightly over 700 students. Since 2000, enrollment ranged from a peak of 1,000 students in 2005-06 to a low point of 619 in 2021-22 during COVID. More recently, enrollment has increased slightly in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years.

As part of the study, 50 other school districts with similar enrollment within New York State were selected for comparison regarding school size, grade level configuration, and enrollment history. Results indicated that South Seneca with two buildings physically separate and in different district locations, falls in the 40% of districts in the study that are not on a centralized connected complex of multiple buildings. At a size of 120,851 Sq. ft., the South Seneca Elementary School was approximately 55% larger than the average PK-5 or PK-6 elementary school among the other schools in the study. Similarly, the South Seneca Middle/High School at 188,500 Sq. ft. is 47% larger than the average of the 29 secondary schools in the study. With a combined square footage of the two South Seneca buildings of 309,351 Sq. ft., is more than 103,000 Sq. ft. larger than the district total building size average of the comparison group of similar schools. Compounding the issue of excess space, South Seneca's loss of student enrollment of 195 students (2010-2023) was 49 students higher than the average loss of the similarly sized school districts in the comparison group.

Despite the data indicating much larger space that comparative schools, onsite observations indicated that space appeared to be used reasonably well. Both buildings exhibited instructional activities appropriately matched to the type, size and characteristics of each space. With few exceptions, spaces had a designated use that was clear to administration, staff and students. Review of data and consultant observations did not support the conclusion of waste regarding space utilization. School leaders and staff perceive the space as an asset and as an opportunity to be used to help students and support staff.

The percentage of occupancy of High School classrooms was analyzed using its 10-period day. Results suggested 81% of all designated instructional classrooms were being used at least 4 or more periods per day.

Findings point to an ongoing challenge for the South Seneca school district. Offering a high school comprehensive curriculum to meet graduation requirements requires offering classes with some small numbers of students in each classroom and is exacerbated by needing to sometimes offer multiple sections of some low subscribed courses providing student schedule flexibility. It is costly per student to provide advanced classes in world languages, math and science, or Advanced Placement due to the typically small enrollments. Another challenge due to the rural location and small district size is attracting and retaining hard to find teachers in high demand areas like math, science and Spanish.

One of the study suggestions was for the school district to consider establishing a trigger number for determining grade level sectioning for grades K-8 to ensure resources are used effectively. Another suggestion regards the district's open border with neighboring schools. Over the past several years, South Seneca has lost both students and revenue through this informal ongoing "neighbor" policy. The district would benefit from study of this issue with possible modification.

The study also shared seven ideas or options that could help the district in either cost reduction, revenue enhancement, or alternate use of school surplus space. One of the options shared in the study is the possible consolidation of the grade PK-5 Elementary School into the current Middle/High School forming a single campus PK-12 building. It is possible that some renovation, alterations, and a possible building addition may be needed. Although a cursory discussion and analysis was included in the study, there lacks any detailed conceptual design analysis, construction cost estimates, nor any detailed cost benefit analysis. Without detailed objective information, the school community and Board of Education will not be equipped with objective, fact-based data and information. The findings in Part 4 include a suggested course of action.

South Seneca serves a broader community role than just educating children. The district offers after school programs, community access to technology, summer programs, art and music programs, community and mental health services, and community access to school facilities after hours and on weekends. South Seneca Central School District is the lifeblood of several villages and towns and serves as one of the largest employers in the area.

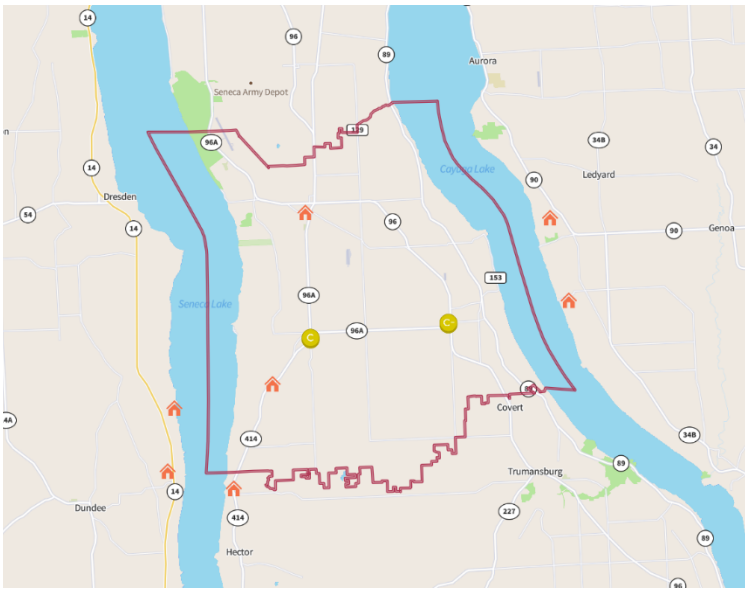
1.2 Overview of South Seneca School District

Location & Demographics

The South Seneca Central School District serves residents in Ovid, Interlaken, Sheldrake, Lodi, Willard, and parts of the towns of Romulus and Hector. The school district is comprised of three schools housed in two buildings. The South Seneca Elementary School is located in Interlaken, New York and serves grades PK- 5. The Middle School and High School are located in the same building in Ovid, New York and serve grades 6-12. According to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), South Seneca Central School District student enrollment for 2023-24 was 689, including 317 in grades PK-5 and 372 in grades 6-12.

According to NYSED 2022-23 data, student demographics include 97% White, 1% Black, 1% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% Hispanic/Latino. The student-teacher ratio is 9 to 1. Also, 51% of students are female, and 49% of students are male while 56% of students are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price meal program. The total population of the school district in 2022 was 6,949. (US Census Data, 2022). The estimated population of the villages of Ovid and Interlaken were 542 and 622 respectively (National Census Bureau).

CHART C1-a: SOUTH SENECA SCHOOL DISTRICT MAP



In informal conversations and observations, a marked number of the staff including teachers had attended or graduated from South Seneca, and returned to the area as adults to work in the district. A similar observation applies to parents and district residents. The school district takes advantage of its size in knowing each student and their families, and supporting each child with personal attention. Despite its smaller student enrollment size, the district prides itself on offering a full high school curriculum for students. Its music, sports and performing arts programs generate district and regional pride as well as providing entertainment to district residents.

Formation of the District

The South Seneca school district was formed after a Spring 1968 school merger vote was narrowly passed to merge the separate Ovid and Interlaken school districts. The closeness of the vote prompted an appeal to the New York State Commissioner of Education and the judicial state courts for review of the vote. The merger vote was finally made official in 1970. With the school district merger finally approved, the new district had school facility capacity to accommodate 1,525 students in grades K-12. However, student enrollment was reported as slightly over 1,700 students.

Class Size and Enrollment Policy

South Seneca Central School District does not have a formal board policy or administrative guideline for grade and course class size. During the last decade, the district has been committed to three "home bases" per grade level in the Elementary School for grades PK-5. For example, a grade level cohort of 45 students would include three classroom sections (“home bases”) of approximately 15 students in each room. However, the elementary cohorts have occasionally dipped below 45 students resulting in some classrooms with less than 15 students in each room.

Besides the home base commitment in the Elementary School, the school district similarly operates a three-class home base model in the Middle School in grades 6-8. For example, grade six students identify as either 6-1, 6-2 or 6-3 and mostly attend the same classes together per the master schedule. The intact three home base model at grades 6-8 faces the same challenges at previously discussed.

Similar to most high schools for grades 9-12, the school district guidance department matches course requirements with student course requests. The school counselor works with the building principal to develop a master schedule each year, trying to balance student class numbers while meeting student course needs. The combination of smaller enrollment with the commitment to offer a full curriculum at the South Seneca High School results in some classes having a small number of students. This is especially true in advanced courses at the high school averaging between 2 and 8 students. Certain high school class sizes can also be increased by the acceleration of select highly capable 8th graders joining specific math and science classes.

Over approximately the last ten years, the South Seneca School District experienced the loss of several large employers impacting employment and the tax base with the closures of the Seneca Army Depot and the Willard Psychiatric and later Drug Treatment Centers.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study focused on assessing school building space and classroom utilization and enrollment projections in the South Seneca Central School District. The results of the study provide additional information assisting the Board of Education in making operational decisions and determining need for targeted future study.

This study follows a similar study conducted approximately eleven years ago in 2013. The initial study was precipitated by concerns about declining student enrollment and need to review district options for building use.

Over the past year, the South Seneca Board of Education had indicated the need for an updated study of school building utilization including detailed analysis of student enrollment and review of current instructional use of space. There are no plans at this point for major changes of grade or building use. The school district reached out to Dr. Kevin Baughman & Associates for study assistance.

The study was guided by the following core questions:

1) What is the projected student enrollment by grade levels for the next 5-10 years?

2) What commercial or residential development, or other local trends may affect enrollment?

3) How is current building space being used?

4) How is the surplus of school building space perceived by district stakeholders?

5) What options are available to the Board of Education to address declining enrollment to ensure educational quality while balancing with financial affordability?

Consultant Background

Dr. Kevin Baughman & Associates consult with educational organizations on areas of strategic planning, administrative searches, organization of administration, enrollment projections, and studies on grade level configurations and building utilization. Dr. Baughman has been a teacher, private sector leader, school superintendent, college professor and consultant. He retired as professor and coordinator of the Educational Leadership Programs at The College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York in 2018. Prior to his service in higher education, he retired as Superintendent of Schools of the 4,300 student Niskayuna Central School District in Schenectady County, New York. Baughman has over 25 years of school leadership experience.

PART 2 – Analysis of South Seneca Central School District

2.1 Methodology of Data Collection and Analysis

The study employed a series of methods and strategies to address the key study questions. These methods and strategies included 1) Select employee 1:1 Interviews; 2) Review of the school district web site; 3) Review and analysis of statistical data on demographics, student enrollment, and live births; 4) Onsite meetings, observations, and analysis of schedules and room use; 5) on-site detailed tours of each building space; 6) Comparative data with 50 other "similar" school districts in the areas of buildings, enrollment, and square footage; 7) Matching room numbers and school program use of every instructional space in the school district; 8) Comparisons of classroom size with New York State requirements; 9) A period by period room use analysis of the high school to determine efficiency and use of space; 10) An updated list of options available to the district to address class size and building utilization; and 11) Development of answers to the key questions and list of key findings.

Additional strategies included: data comparisons; use of email, phone and online video meetings with district staff and local and school officials; onsite observation; data collection from school administration, Board of Education, guidance, school staff, building maintenance and transportation, and teacher representatives. Additional discussions on study methodologies are incorporated into the text in certain sections of the study report.

Primary sources for data and analysis for the study included: general access to the New York State Education Department websites (NYSED); 2010-2024 Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) for enrollment; NYSED 2015, 2020, 2021, or 2022 Building Condition Surveys (BCS); National Center for Education Statistics 2021-22 (NCES); United States Census Bureau 2020, 2022; 2020 Vital Statistics of New York State; and the New York State Health Department 2010-2020.

During the initial consultant work and observations, it became clear the current district study of building use and utilization should be an update of the previous study rather than a deeper exploration of the alternatives available to the Board of Education in addressing building utilization with a declining enrollment. A deeper exploration would need to include detailed cost projections and savings, design feasibility, pro/con of each option, and explore school stakeholder opinions of each alternative. A deep exploration of options would also require additional technical analysis for design and engineering, district long term financial analysis, and projection of state building aid.

Since the board and district officials have been explicit there are no plans at this point for major changes of grade or building use, developing and including detailed analysis and public survey opinions on each option in the current study report would be premature, expensive, and **cause potential public perception that the school district is moving forward to realign grade levels, or close a school building without public involvement.**

2.2 Student Enrollment Projections

Reasonably accurate predictions of student enrollment are essential for planning and decision-making regarding school and grade level configuration, building addition or closure, and budget. This section begins with live birth data followed by examining the correlation between live births and kindergarten enrollment. The section concludes with discussion on student grade level stability coefficients followed by enrollment history of the school district and five- and ten-year enrollment projections.

2.2.1 District Live Birth Data and Projections

Live birth data provides potentially important information on predicting future kindergarten classes. A child born today into a family that resides in the South Seneca Central School District would hypothetically enroll in kindergarten approximately five years later. However, *several factors impact this outcome including change in family residency, parental decision to not enroll in South Seneca, or a New York State error in inaccurately recording the initial birth* as a school district resident in South Seneca.

Live births by New York State school district are tracked by the New York State Health Department. The data is reported in the *2020 Vital Statistics of New York State*. The data in table T2-A below compares live births between the two most recent seven-year time periods 2007-2013, and 2014-2020. The data indicates that across all 670 New York State school districts, there was an average annual live birth decline of approximately 10 live births *per New York State school district* over the past 7 years through 2020, or a 5.2% reduction. The data further suggests that the South Seneca Central School District live births when compared with the state average, showed an *actual annual increase* of nearly 9 live births annually during the period 2014-2020 versus the prior seven-year period, 2007-2013.

TABLE: T2-A: SUMMARY OF LIVE BIRTHS

SUMMARY OF LIVE BIRTHS BY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 2007-2020			
	2007-2013 Ave. Annual Live Births	**2014 – 2020 Ave. Annual Live Births**	**Live Birth Percentage Change**
All 670 NYS School Districts	184.0	174.4	**(5.2%)**
South Seneca Central School District	77.4	86.1	+11.1

Analysis (and optimism) must be slightly tempered since there was a “bubble” or anomaly in calendar year 2018 where 95 live births were reported from the South Seneca school district. This is considerably higher than all other years. District officials should be cautious when projecting future enrollments based upon this possible data anomaly. Further, as will be discussed elsewhere in this report, the correlation between live births attributed to a school district and actual students five years later is not strong. Enrollment data for 2023-24 indicates 46 kindergarten students were enrolled but not closely correlated with the much higher births reported for 2018 by the Department of Health. Mitigating factors might be hospital error in assigning births to the correct school district, the transient nature of a segment of the district population, or simply that there is no hospital with a maternity department in Seneca County. *Balancing the limitations of the data*, **it remains potentially positive information that**

the overall birth rate for the school district outperformed the all-school district average in New York State between 2007-2020.

Historically summarizing the relationship between district live births and kindergarten enrollment five years later is found in Table T2-B below. For this analysis, in-district live births were a blended number. Since children typically enroll in kindergarten at age 5, or when reaching age 5 by December 1, two years of live birth data were factored into the calculation. The number of live births in the fifth year after birth were factored at 11/12 or .9217 of the total. The live births from the fourth year after birth were then factored in at 1/12 or .083 of the year total and then added together with 11/12 of year five live births to more accurately predict kindergarten enrollment based upon live births. The subsequent tables T2-C and T2-D below illustrate and better construct the interpretations of the data.

TABLE T2-B: DISTRICT LIVE BIRTHS & KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT

South Seneca: District Resident Live Births

	Birth Year	District* Live Births	Yr Enter Grade K	Grade K # Students	Stability Coeff.
Actual Data for Live Births and Kindergarten Enrollment	2004	71	2009-10	61	0.853
	2005	73	2010-11	49	0.673
	2006	70	2011-12	64	0.911
	2007	83	2012-13	49	0.598
	2008	75	2013-14	46	0.608
	2009	72	2014-15	48	0.664
	2010	78	2015-16	48	0.619
	2011	78	2016-17	62	0.795
	2012	75	2017-18	59	0.784
	2013	81	2018-19	55	0.683
	2014	89	2019-20	42	0.475
	2015	87	2020-21	50	0.574
	2016	84	2021-22	55	0.653
	2017	82	2022-23	49	0.596
	2018	95	2023-24	48	0.511
Projected	2019	86	2024-25	48	0.558
	2020	80	2025-26	45	0.558
	2021	85	2026-27	48	0.558
	2022	85	2027-28	48	0.558
	2023	85	2028-29	48	0.558

Source: New York State Health Department (2020)

Table T2-C provides a comparison in five-year increments of the number of kindergarten children enrolled five years after live births. The Stability Coefficient is the percentage of live births that five years later enroll in kindergarten. As an example, a coefficient of .700 indicates that 70% of the number of live births will result in kindergarten enrollment five years later. Data suggests that despite a slight increase in live births rates of in-district live births since 2004, the Stability Coefficient, or percentage of live births that come to kindergarten five years later, **has continually decreased since live birth data from 2014**. Table T2-C shows that the coefficient has declined in each of the three most recent five-year periods: 0.729 in 2009-2013, 0.709 in 2014-2018, and 0.562 for the most recent 2019-2024 period.

TABLE T2-C: LIVE BIRTH & KINDERGARTEN – 15 YEAR ANALYSIS

South Seneca: Live Birth/Kindergarten 5 Year			
5 Year Period for Comparison	So. Seneca Grade K Enroll	% Change 5 Year Periods	Stability Coeff.
5 Year Average (2019-2024)	48.8	**(-10.3%)**	0.562
5 Year Average (2014-2018)	54.4	1.1%	0.709
5 Year Average (2009-2013)	53.8	-	0.729

Source: *New York State Education Department Enrollment data*

While Table T2-C above, focused on the association between live births and subsequent kindergarten attendendace, Table T2-D below only looks at live births by five year periods. Assuming the accuracy of the live birth data, **the chart indicates positive growth in district live births**. **The five year period between 2016 and 2020 indicated nearly a ten live birth annual increase compared with the base five year period 2006-2010.** Between 2006 and 2020, there was an overall approximate 13% increase in the annual live birth rate. More interesting, during the same period, the average live birth rate of all New York State school districts was *a decrease* of approximately 8%.

TABLE T2-D: LIVE BIRTH TRENDS

South Seneca: District Live Birth 5 Year Trends				
5 Year Period for Comparison	District Resident Births	% So.Seneca Change by 5 Yr Periods	NYS Ave. In-District Births	% NYS Change by 5 Yr Periods
5 Year Average (2016-2020)	85.4	4.1%	171.0	**(-3.4%)**
5 Year Average (2011-2015)	82.0	8.5%	176.9	**(-4.8%)**
5 Year Average (2006-2010)	75.6	-	185.8	-

Source: *New York State (NYS) Health Department 2020.*

We have previously indicated that making implications from live birth data is fraught with uncertainty for several reasons. **Using this data only as a trend indicator is far safer**. In fact, predicting enrollment in schools is better used as a trend indicator rather than the data being used to drive decisions on class sizes, staffing, budget, etc. The data suggests a positive long term trend increase in district live births. However, **enrollment data above indicates that live birth data does not necessarily result in more children attending district schools.**

2.2.2 Coefficients Used to Project Student Enrollment

Coefficients are used to help project student enrollment into the future. These coefficients capture the amount of historical movement of enrollment from one grade to the next. For example, a coefficient of 1.00 indicates that historically, the movement from one grade to the next averages no increase or decrease. Coefficients are the percentage change in data over one or more intervals – or years.

Table T2-E indicates the coefficients for projecting grade level changes from year to year and grade level to grade level. The table is based upon the historical enrollment of the school district from 2004-2024 found in the later table T2-F further below.

In Table T2-E, columns representing each grade level show 20 years of coefficient data. Below each column moving downward indicates the 5, 10 and 15 year averages of the coefficient for each grade level. The five year coefficient is the average of the coefficients for the last five years. For enrollment projection purposes, we are using the most recent five year average coefficients by grade level to project future enrollments as they appear normal without anomaly. **The last five year coefficients showed an average of 1.01 over the five years indicating that incoming grade enrolments over the past five years have averaged an increase of approximately 1% annually. Therefore, projecting forward suggests a slight overall average increase in student enrollment in South Seneca.**

TABLE T2-E: COEFFICIENTS

South Seneca: 20 Yr Coefficients for Grade Level Stability & Births to Grade K														
Grade	**Births to K**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**K-12 Ave.**
2004-05	*N/A*	0.99	0.85	0.99	1.07	0.97	0.99	0.91	1.00	1.34	0.87	0.54	0.88	0.95
2005-06	*N/A*	1.13	0.93	1.04	1.07	1.00	1.08	0.93	1.04	0.96	0.98	0.87	1.30	1.03
2006-07	*N/A*	0.94	0.88	1.00	0.91	0.92	0.95	0.92	0.97	1.10	1.13	0.65	0.97	0.95
2007-08	*N/A*	0.92	1.02	0.95	0.98	1.08	0.97	0.97	1.08	1.09	0.92	0.84	0.91	0.98
2008-09	*N/A*	1.14	1.03	1.00	1.09	1.05	0.98	1.02	1.02	1.20	1.02	0.73	0.79	1.01
2009-10	*0.85*	1.00	1.04	1.05	1.09	0.97	1.05	1.08	0.97	1.10	0.95	0.98	1.07	1.03
2010-11	*0.67*	1.06	1.04	0.97	1.00	0.96	1.00	0.97	0.98	1.06	1.09	0.94	0.81	0.99
2011-12	*0.91*	0.88	0.88	0.90	1.07	1.06	1.02	1.02	0.96	1.21	1.00	0.63	0.87	0.96
2012-13	*0.60*	1.09	1.02	1.13	1.05	1.05	0.97	1.04	1.02	1.09	0.85	0.82	1.07	1.02
2013-14	*0.61*	0.93	0.97	1.05	0.94	0.96	1.10	0.95	1.04	1.08	1.06	0.97	0.95	1.00
2014-15	*0.66*	0.98	0.92	0.88	0.96	0.98	1.30	0.93	0.98	1.09	0.88	0.86	0.91	0.97
2015-16	*0.62*	1.00	1.16	1.02	0.92	1.09	1.11	1.02	1.03	1.03	0.86	0.93	0.91	1.01
2016-17	*0.79*	0.98	1.00	0.90	0.98	0.94	1.02	0.90	0.98	1.02	0.89	0.96	0.95	0.96
2017-18	*0.78*	1.02	0.96	0.93	1.02	1.09	1.04	1.04	1.02	0.96	0.99	0.88	1.00	0.99
2018-19	*0.68*	1.04	0.98	1.02	0.97	0.96	1.06	1.04	1.02	0.96	0.96	0.82	1.04	0.99
2019-20	*0.48*	1.07	1.02	0.96	1.02	1.08	0.94	0.94	0.96	0.92	0.89	0.87	1.06	0.98
2020-21	*0.57*	0.96	0.92	0.98	1.02	1.11	1.03	1.06	1.04	1.04	0.96	1.05	1.13	1.02
2021-22	*0.65*	1.03	0.95	1.02	0.96	0.98	0.98	1.05	0.94	1.00	0.96	0.87	0.84	0.96
2022-23	*0.60*	1.04	1.00	1.05	1.04	1.09	1.02	0.96	1.07	0.96	1.00	0.90	0.95	1.01
2023-24	*0.51*	1.13	0.96	1.18	1.07	0.98	1.12	1.06	1.19	1.11	1.11	1.08	1.12	1.09
5 Yr Av.	***0.56***	**1.04**	**0.97**	**1.04**	**1.02**	**1.05**	**1.02**	**1.02**	**1.04**	**1.01**	**0.98**	**0.95**	**1.02**	**1.01**
10 Yr Av.	***0.64***	**1.02**	**0.99**	**0.99**	**1.00**	**1.03**	**1.06**	**1.00**	**1.02**	**1.01**	**0.95**	**0.92**	**0.99**	**1.00**
15 Yr Av.	***0.67***	**1.01**	**0.99**	**1.00**	**1.01**	**1.02**	**1.05**	**1.00**	**1.01**	**1.04**	**0.96**	**0.90**	**0.98**	**1.00**

2.2.3 Enrollment History and 5- and 10-Year Projections

Determining student enrollment numbers appears simple in context but in fact can be quite complex. Children can be counted in school enrollment in many ways. Although the most common situation is resident children attending a school within the district, there are some children who do not attend the local in-district schools at all. Some examples include children who are: 1) home schooled by a parent or others; 2) attending a private or parochial school; 3) attending a full-time BOCES or other special

program; 4) receiving school instruction during incarceration; 5) students who are considered homeless under the Department of Social Services regulations, or 6) resident students attending another neighboring public school under an agreement between several school districts. Further compounding the challenges of accurate enrollment forecasting are families that move in or out of the school district throughout the year. These many variables cause almost daily changes to student enrollment. Accurate enrollment projections are quickly outdated due to these contravening variables. **Accurate projections of future enrollment are subject to greater long-term unpredictability. *Enrollment forecasting is best at capturing a trend or trends within the data* rather than expecting actual student numbers to exactly mirror the projections.**

Another variable that complicates projections is the unpredictability of residential or commercial property development or closure. For example, there continues to be discussion and interest in redeveloping the closed Willard site. It was recently reported in local newspapers that five parties had submitted expressions of interest in the redevelopment of the vacant Willard Psychiatric Center campus in Ovid. The redevelopment could have a major impact on student enrollment if the final plans for development included affordable housing or apartments. In the Interlaken area, a local official indicates there may be one or more housing developments in the near future. This potential development is at least partially precipitated by phase 2 of a $12 million infrastructure enhancement project for water and sewer systems in Interlaken. Municipal improvement projects often positively impact area population and increase capacity for community sustainability.

Data from Table T2-F below provides a detailed historical look at student enrollment through the 2023-2024 school year in South Seneca. It also projects five- and ten-year enrollment projections through 2028-29 and 2033-34 school years respectively.

TABLE T2-F: ENROLLMENT HISTORY & PROJECTION

South Seneca: 20 Year Enrollment History
Five & Ten Year Student Resident Enrollment Projections

	Grade	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total*
20 Year Resident Student Actual Enrollment	2004-05	28	61	69	53	67	63	66	85	80	85	115	83	60	50	965
	2005-06	48	49	69	64	55	72	63	71	79	83	82	113	72	78	1,000
	2006-07	41	64	46	61	64	50	66	60	65	77	91	93	74	70	924
	2007-08	38	49	59	47	58	63	54	64	58	70	84	84	78	67	875
	2008-09	37	46	56	61	47	63	66	53	65	59	84	86	61	62	846
	2009-10	34	48	46	58	64	51	61	69	57	63	65	80	84	65	845
	2010-11	36	48	51	48	56	64	49	61	67	56	67	71	75	68	831
	2011-12	35	57	42	45	43	60	68	50	62	64	68	67	45	65	771
	2012-13	37	55	62	43	51	45	63	66	52	63	70	58	55	48	784
	2013-14	26	51	51	60	45	48	43	69	63	54	68	74	56	52	775
	2014-15	37	41	50	47	53	43	47	56	64	62	59	60	64	51	745
	2015-16	29	46	41	58	48	49	47	52	57	66	64	51	56	58	737
	2016-17	41	50	45	41	52	47	46	48	47	56	67	57	49	53	713
	2017-18	36	47	51	43	38	53	51	48	50	48	54	66	50	49	698
	2018-19	40	45	49	50	44	37	51	54	50	51	46	52	54	52	686
	2019-20	45	45	48	50	48	45	40	48	51	48	47	41	45	57	659
	2020-21	45	38	43	44	49	49	50	41	51	53	50	45	43	51	655
	2021-22	30	51	39	41	45	47	48	49	43	48	53	48	39	36	619
	2022-23	43	39	53	39	43	47	51	49	47	46	46	53	43	37	636
	2023-24	38	46	44	51	46	46	46	57	52	56	51	51	57	48	689
Ten Year Projection / Five Year Projection	2024-25	40	48	48	43	53	47	48	47	58	54	56	50	48	58	699
	2025-26	40	45	50	47	44	54	49	49	47	60	54	55	48	49	693
	2026-27	40	48	47	49	48	45	57	50	50	49	61	54	53	49	699
	2027-28	40	48	50	46	50	49	48	58	51	52	50	60	51	54	705
	2028-29	40	48	50	49	47	52	52	48	59	53	52	49	57	52	707
	2029-30	40	48	50	49	50	48	54	53	49	61	53	51	46	58	711
	2030-31	40	48	50	49	50	52	51	55	53	51	61	52	49	47	709
	2031-32	40	48	50	49	50	52	54	52	56	56	51	60	50	50	717
	2032-33	40	48	50	49	50	52	54	55	52	58	56	50	57	51	723
	2033-34	40	48	50	49	50	52	54	55	56	54	58	55	48	58	728

Sources: *https://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/enroll-n-staff/ArchiveEnrollmentData based upon New York State Basic Educational Data System annual enrollment data submitted by all public PK-12 school districts in New York State.*

Table T2-F above indicates student enrollment reached a high of 1,000 students in 2005-06 and reached its low point in enrollment of 619 in 2021-22 during the peak of the COVID pandemic. However, enrollment began to increase again in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. Several interesting observations regarding the historical enrollment trends raise interesting questions the district may wish to explore. First, the average five-year enrollment of grades 1 – 5 in elementary indicates that most grade levels tend to add additional students each fall as a net positive number (more students migrating from grade to grade after deducting students leaving). It's not clear where these new children are coming from but may be explained by homeschooling return, foster care, return from outside district, move-ins, etc.

The second observation of historical enrollment regards the trend for losing students between grades 9 and 10, and again between grade 10 and 11. Interestingly, grade 12 typically is larger than grade 11

enrollment indicating that more students return for senior year or to complete graduation. It is not unusual for districts to lose more students in high school though drop outs, moves out of state, or students attending in a neighboring school district. This data may invite future conversation and exploration.

The five-year enrollment projections include the school years 2024-25 through 2028-29. The data projections suggest a very slight enrollment increase over this period. Enrollment will climb to approximately 707 students by 2029.

As previously shared, longer term student projections are less accurate due to length of projection and coefficients become weaker and less reliable over longer periods. Regardless, **the ten-year projection similarly projects a continued slight increase in student enrollment, reaching approximately 728 students by the 2033-34 school year.**

Although these are not large enrollment increases, they suggest **that enrollment decline is less likely to be a major issue for the next 5 years.**

2.3 Similar School District Comparisons

2.3.1 Comparison of Building Configurations & Size

An accurate analysis of school building space use, building size, and grade configuration requires a context for comparison. The study consultant selected 50 similar sized school districts in New York State. The selection was based upon student enrollment between 525 and 750 students based on the 2022-23 New York State Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) forms submitted annually by each school district. The 50 school districts that met these criteria were also typically more rural. South Seneca Central School District was classified as rural per the 2020 United States Census Bureau. The 2022-23 BEDS enrollment of South Seneca was 636 placing it near the middle in enrollment with the other districts.

The school district comparative data was accessed from several available public sources. In addition to those already cited, data was also accessed from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) and the New York State Education Department utilizing the 2015, 2020, 2021 and 2022 Building Condition Surveys (BCS). A BCS is a comprehensive inspection survey of each school building assessing structural components including walls, floors, roofs, windows, and doors. All major building systems are also reviewed including plumbing, HVAC, and electrical. The BCS also includes Interior components of the school building including finishes and fixtures. The inspection survey is typically performed by architectural or engineering related professionals and a detailed written report is provided to each school district. Beginning in 2020, school districts were newly placed on a rotating schedule to submit the BCS every five calendar years from last submission.

TABLE T2-G shares information on each of the selected school districts regarding: district enrollment; number of buildings; number of principals; number of schools; and whether the buildings are housed on a central single campus, or located in different locations within the school district. The final set of columns provide information on different grade level configurations for each district.

For clarity, this table makes a distinction between number of buildings and number of schools. In many more rural school districts with smaller enrollments, a single building can be comprised of several building additions around a core original building. The various additions are attached to the core original building through a web of hallways. Although technically a "single" building, there is often two or more schools housed within the building. For example, it is common to have both a grade Pre-K-6 school and a 7-12 school within the same building or attached complex. Each school typically has its' own principal, main office, and staff.

TABLE T2-G: COMPARISONS OF GRADE CONFIGURATIONS

Similar Size School District Grade PK-12 Building Configurations

	Enroll	# Bldgs	Principals	Schools	Complex	Diff. Loc.	PK-3	PK-5	PK-6	4-6	4-8	6-8	6-12	7-12	9-12	PK-12
Alfred Almond*	551	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Barker *	643	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Bemus Point	602	1	2	2	•			■					■			
Berlin*	668	2	2	2		•		■					■			
Berne Knox*	691	2	2	2	•				■					■		
Bolivar-Richburg	704	2	2	2		•		■					■			
Candor *	706	2	2	2	•				■					■		
Chateaugay	535	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Dalton-Nunda	544	1	3	3	•		■			■				■		
Duanesburg*	652	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Dundee*	654	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Ellicottville*	554	1	2	2	•			■					■			
Fabius-Pompey *	630	2	2	2		•		■					■			
Fillmore	650	1	1	1	•											■
Florida *	709	2	2	2		•		■					■			
Franklinville	601	2	2	2		•		■					■			
Genesee Valley *	547	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Hadley Luzerne	644	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Hamilton	559	1	2	2	•			■					■			
Harpursville*	597	2	2	2	•				■					■		
Heuvelton	552	1	1	1	•											■
Honeoye	556	1	2	2	•			■					■			
Kendall *	685	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Lake George	630	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Lake Placid *	567	2	2	2		•		■					■			
Lisbon	560	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Lyndonville	593	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Madrid Waddington *	655	1	2	2	•			■					■			
Manchester-Short. *	709	1	3	3	•			■					■			
Marion *	698	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Middleburgh	651	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Moriah *	700	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Morrisville Eaton	598	2	2	2		•		■					■			
Mount Morris	539	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Naples *	602	2	2	2		•			■					■		
New York Mills *	547	1	2	1	•				■					■		
Newfield *	689	2	3	3	•			■					■			
North Collins *	556	2	2	2	•				■					■		
Northeast	642	2	3	3	•	•	■			■				■		
Oriskany	547	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Pavilion	631	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Salem *	557	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Southern Cayuga	658	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Warrensburg *	663	2	2	2		•			■					■		
Weedsport	703	2	2	2		•		■					■			
West Canada Valley *	628	1	2	2	•				■					■		
Westfield	637	1	3	3	•			■					■			
Wheatland Chili	679	2	2	2		•		■					■			
Whitehall *	673	1	2	2	•				■					■		
York *	682	1	2	2	•			■					■			
South Seneca	**636**	**2**	**3**	**3**		•		■					■			

Sources: *Data included: 2022-23 NYS BEDS for enrollment; NYSED 2015, 2020, 2021, or 2022 Building Condition Surveys; National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021-22); and United States Census Bureau.*
Notes: *A district with an * indicates the 2015 BCS survey reports were used since they were the most recent available.*

The data indicates that based upon the 50 similar study school districts compared with South Seneca, the two most frequent grade PK-12 configurations were a Grade PK-6 school with a Grade 7-12 school (n= 28, 56%), followed by a Grade PK-5 school with a Grade 6-12 school (n= 15, 30%). Therefore, 86% of the similar school districts utilized either a Grade PK-5 and 6-12 configuration, or a Grade PK-6 and 7-12 configuration. The remaining schools in the study included configurations of PK-5, 6-8, 9-12 (n= 3, 6%), PK-12 single school (n= 2, 4%), and other n= 2, 4%). **The South Seneca Central School District is a grade K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 three school, two-building configuration consistent with 6% (n=4) of the comparison 50 school districts.**

When comparing the study school districts' location within the district, the majority of districts had all schools and grade levels housed in a large centralized building or connected complex (n= 30, 60%). The remaining districts as indicated in the table, maintained separate decentralized locations in the district for the various schools (K-5, 6-12, etc.). **South Seneca with two buildings physically separate and in different district locations, falls in the 40% of districts in the study that are not on a centralized connected complex.**

2.3.2 District Comparison of Total School Building Size Using Square Feet

After examination of enrollment and grade configuration, the next 50 school district comparison focused on size of the school district buildings, both on specific school size and overall aggregate size districtwide compared by total square feet. This data was based on the districts submitting the Building Condition Surveys (BCS) to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for either years 2015, 2020, 2021, or 2022. Beginning in 2020, all school districts in New York were placed on a staggered five-year revolving basis. Based on the staggered schedule of submission, data for some of the districts in the comparison group was based on the 2015 BCS as it was the most recent submission. These districts are marked with an * in the tables.

The BCS is a comprehensive written document that evaluates the condition of all school district structures including classrooms, hallways, roofs, health and safety, HVAC systems, etc. It also provides the square footage of each building in a district, the number of rooms identified as classrooms, and the estimate of the amount of square footage used for instructional purposes within the building. **All information was interpreted, measured, collected and self-reported by the school district** to NYSED. The BCS is often *completed by an external contracted architect or engineer, often with assistance* from the school district administration and/or facilities staff.

Two Tables Used Due to Differences in How District Information Shared with NYSED

School and district size information is found below in two tables: Table T2-H Comparison of District Size by Specific School; and Table T2-I: Comparison of District Using Aggregate Size Only. Table T2-H is limited to inclusion of only 29 of the 50 school districts *because these districts submitted to New York State specific BCS reports for each of the in-district school buildings*. Table T2-I includes the remaining 21 of the 50 school districts from the comparison group. Table T2-*I included school districts that only submitted aggregate district square feet without building* specific information. The South Seneca Middle/Senior High School statistics were combined in both tables because the building is listed as a single building BCS and there were only three other districts in the comparative group operating a grade 6-8 middle school. It should be noted that South Seneca Central School District submitted separate school building reports for each of the two school buildings, making similar comparisons easier.

Limitations of Data

The information provided in the two tables below is key to analysis of district size comparisons. However, the importance of the data must be tempered by several substantive limitations. First, the BCS reports vary from 2015 to 2022, spanning seven calendar years – since districts report on a staggered basis. A major limitation is that information regarding the number of classrooms and percentage of building space used for instruction are BOTH self-reported by districts. Can a classroom be

counted if it is a 200 square foot space used once per week for two children? Does a school include a 2,000 square foot stage as instructional space. Examples from the two tables shown below support the inconsistency of the interpretation and reporting of the BCS data. The two tables indicate school districts reporting total square footage for instruction ranged from a low of 25,000 Sq. ft. to a high of 125,758 Sq. ft.! These are all relatively similar school districts for enrollment and overall size.

Comparison of school district data among a large group of "similar" schools is also made more challenging since school district grade configurations within the comparison group of 50 school districts ranged from grade PK-3, PK-5, PK-6, 4-6, 4-8, 6-8, 6-12, 7-12, and PK-12. Fortunately, a reasonable number of districts operated similar configurations.

The final limitation is more a limitation of analysis. As briefly discussed above, 29 school districts from the group submitted BCS reports for each individual school building. This allows comparisons of building size at the elementary and middle/high school levels as well as in the aggregate by district. However, 21 districts submitted a single BCS report aggregating all building data by variable, making building comparisons not possible.

For these reasons, as interesting as the data is in both tables, the data should be considered with less than a robust degree of reliability. Decision makers should review these two tables and the analysis with both interest and some caution.

Analysis of Tables T2-H and T2-I

Table T2-H on the following page examines district size by individual building including variables of total size of school, number of classrooms, estimated amount of direct instructional space, and student enrollment. The aggregate of all variables for the district is also shared in the final three columns. Table T2-I is very similar, however the 21 districts on this table only show district data including square feet, number of classrooms, and the BCS total instructional space. The data analysis comments below relate to one or both of the tables.

South Seneca Elementary School enrollment of 315 (2022 BEDS) is similar to the 29 similar school average of 320. The **Elementary School identified 26,000 Sq. ft. used for instruction**, just slightly less than the average of the other districts at 28,364. South Seneca's number of classrooms listed on the BCS was 28, less than the elementary group average of 33. It should be noted however, that in the consultant's review of South Seneca elementary classroom space, **24 classrooms are in current use, and 13 additional spaces could function as classrooms** but are instead used for other instructional and student purposes (37 total).

The Middle/High School building enrollment of 321 is similar to the 29 similar district group average of 324. The number of classrooms reported by the Middle/High School was 33, slightly less than the group average of 35 classrooms. However, when instructional space was being reviewed for the study in the Middle/High School building, identified were **12 classrooms in the Middle School, and 33 classrooms or lab classrooms were identified in the high school** section of the building (45 total).

South Seneca, when compared to the 50-district group, appears generally similar except in one specific area - overall school district sizes of the buildings. The South Seneca Elementary School building size is 120,851 Sq. ft. The total square feet of the 29 study districts elementary schools averaged

78,102 Sq. ft. The South Seneca Elementary School size was approximately **55% larger** than the average of the other 29 elementary schools in the study. Similarly, the South Seneca Middle/High School at 188,500 Sq. ft. was **47% larger** than the 127,968 Sq. ft average of the 29 secondary schools in the study. From an aggregate space comparison, the 50 school districts averaged 206, 070 Sq. ft. in total building space. South Seneca aggregate size was 309,351 Sq. ft., or **103,281 square feet larger than the 50-district average.** Using the metric square feet per child to compare size shows the Elementary School as 384 Sq. ft. per child versus the 29-school comparison of 244 Sq. ft., a **difference of 140 Sq. ft. per child.** Similarly, the Middle/High School is 587 Sq. ft. per student compared with the comparison group average of 395 Sq. ft. per student, indicating the **high school uses 192 more square feet per student** than the comparative group.

TABLE T2-H COMPARISON OF DISTRICT SIZE BY SPECIFIC SCHOOL

Comparison of District Size Using Specific School Building Size Data

Based upon BCS Reports Submitted by the District		**BCS Elementary Grades PK to 5 or 6**				**BCS Midle/High School Grades 6 or 7 to 12**				**BCS PK-12 District Totals**		
29 Districts Submitted Building ***Specific*** Data	Total Enroll	Elem. Sq.Ft.	Elem. Enroll	BCS # Classoorm	BCS Inst. Sq.Ft.	MS/HS Sq.Ft.	MS/HS Enroll	BCS # Classoorm	BCS Inst. Sq.Ft.	District Sq. Ft.	BCS Tot Classrooms	BCS Inst. Tot Sq.Ft.
Barker *	671	76,143	353	23	19,330	268,860	318	40	30,471	345,003	63	49,801
Bemus Point	623	63,223	282	36	30,878	117,000	341	33	26,000	180,223	69	56,878
Berlin*	634	42,700	270	22	16,540	92,500	364	35	32,000	135,200	57	48,540
Berne Knox*	705	64,271	378	26	20,100	76,856	327	21	16,170	141,127	47	36,270
Bolivar-Richburg	684	74,000	325	38	26,144	157,700	359	46	34,677	231,700	84	60,821
Candor *	713	83,475	390	34	19,200	150,850	323	38	30,400	234,325	72	49,600
Dalton-Nunda	606	89,993	199	44	23,600	174,485	279	24	19,038	264,478	68	42,638
Duanesburg*	651	58,565	334	20	16,210	91,754	317	17	13,400	150,319	37	29,610
Fabius-Pompey *	637	80,835	280	33	30,389	135,327	357	48	56,234	216,162	81	86,623
Florida *	734	54,654	329	29	17,210	100,553	405	36	59,855	155,207	65	77,065
Franklinville	582	103,387	276	37	33,778	165,275	306	37	26,952	268,662	74	60,730
Hadley Luzerne	651	111,013	339	49	48,000	121,391	312	46	52,700	232,404	95	100,700
Harpursville*	623	90,212	328	38	30,826	118,221	295	26	17,630	208,433	64	48,456
Kendall *	696	115,431	357	40	42,650	96,648	339	29	27,568	212,079	69	70,218
Lake George	645	78,550	290	44	45,000	125,661	355	55	40,000	204,211	99	85,000
Lake Placid *	554	60,000	241	20	24,000	235,000	313	25	30,000	295,000	45	54,000
Marion *	639	96,000	365	52	55,798	115,800	274	48	69,960	211,800	100	125,758
Middleburgh	650	65,374	352	28	36,828	116,283	298	28	32,000	181,657	56	68,828
Morrisville Eaton	592	109,403	301	23	17,565	108,500	291	16	14,480	217,903	39	32,045
Naples *	624	89,047	332	36	44,975	122,047	292	44	52,025	211,094	80	97,000
Newfield *	709	99,538	335	31	24,738	107,030	374	21	17,800	206,568	52	42,538
North Collins *	548	76,540	277	21	16,820	103,465	271	16	13,600	180,005	37	30,420
Northeast	629	29,440	334	14	10,787	123,835	295	23	17,800	153,275	37	28,587
Oriskany	554	64,000	304	29	24,000	91,900	250	34	27,637	155,900	63	51,637
Pavilion	654	76,788	310	35	25,000	146,469	344	55	50,000	223,257	90	75,000
Warrensburg *	671	92,105	357	50	36,508	106,994	314	36	28,951	199,099	86	65,459
Weedsport	715	78,253	324	36	33,600	125,480	391	50	50,940	203,733	86	84,540
Wheatland Chili	670	78,695	332	36	33,218	125,379	338	53	62,336	204,074	89	95,554
Whitehall *	729	63,311	385	23	18,860	89,822	344	22	26,510	153,133	45	45,370
Ave. of 29 Districts	648	78,102	320	33	28,364	127,968	324	35	33,694	206,070	67	62,058
South Seneca	**636**	**120,851**	**315**	**28**	**26,000**	**188,500**	**321**	**33**	**25,256**	**309,351**	**61**	**51,256**

TABLE T2-I: COMPARISON OF AGGREGATE SIZE BY DISTRICT

Comparison of District Size Using Aggregated Size Data Only												
Based upon BCS Reports Submitted by the District		BCS Elementary Grades PK to 5 or 6				BCS Midle/High School Grades 6 or 7 to 12				BCS PK-12 Aggregate Totals		
21 Districts Submitted District ***Aggregated*** Data	Total Enroll	Elem. Sq.Ft.	Elem. Enroll	BCS # Claassoorm	BCS Inst. Sq.Ft.	MS/HS Sq.Ft.	MS/HS Enroll	BCS # Claassoorm	BCS Inst. Sq.Ft.	District Sq. Ft.	BCS Tot Classrooms	BCS Inst. Tot Sq.Ft.
Alfred Almond*	579	**21 Districts Submitted BCS District Aggregated Data not by Specific Building So Excluded from Building Comparisons**								166,649	47	37,365
Chateaugay	533									149,958	47	32,380
Dundee*	644									184,319	70	53,500
Ellicottville*	579									137,760	66	68,849
Fillmore	658									187,262	46	38,650
Genesee Valley *	526									230,450	29	25,000
Hamilton	568									155,366	33	30,396
Heuvelton	533									140,804	66	53,947
Honeoye	537									180,943	123	74,275
Lisbon	573									168,770	57	43,509
Lyndonville	622									186,425	53	71,250
Madrid Wadngtn *	660									162,535	59	50,997
Manchester-Short. *	750									233,000	76	77,989
Moriah *	690									169,236	63	53,930
Mount Morris	558									230,816	79	67,950
New York Mills *	547									123,490	50	56,052
Salem *	564									133,009	60	60,467
Southern Cayuga	642									178,000	38	30,659
West Can. Valley *	615									156,178	50	59,035
Westfield	636									184,159	77	63,607
York *	668									256,300	60	55,460

Sources: *District building Data from BCS District Submissions (2015, 2020, 2021, 2022). Enrollment Data from Basic Educatiional Data System (BEDS) (2022-23 school year). Note: District with * indicates use of the 2015 BCS.*

2.3.3 Enrollment Growth Trend District Comparison

Table T2-J compares enrollment trends and changes over a thirteen-year period, 2010-2023. The fifty school districts are listed in alphabetical order. The data columns list the periodic school years measured, and in between each period, a coefficient is indicated showing the percentage of change between two successive periods. For example, a coefficient trend of .95 would indicate that there was a change or loss of enrollment of 5%. A coefficient of 1.03 indicates an increase of 3% since the last measurement. For summary of data, the bottom two rows show key information of the 50 District Average, and the data immediately below for South Seneca for comparison.

TABLE T2-J: COMPARISON OF ENROLLMENT CHANGES

Comparison: 13 Yr Enrollment Growth Trend (3 & 4 yr Increments)											
	22-23 Enroll	*4 Year Coeff.*	19-20 Enroll	*3 Year Coeff.*	16-17 Enroll	*3 Year Coeff.*	13-14 Enroll	*3 Year Coeff.*	10-11 Enroll	Enroll (Lost)	% Change
Alfred Almond	551	0.890	619	0.983	630	0.912	691	1.080	640	(89)	86%
Barker	643	0.875	735	0.944	779	0.895	870	0.896	971	(328)	66%
Bemus Point	602	0.923	652	0.899	725	0.996	728	0.941	774	(172)	78%
Berlin	668	0.942	709	0.947	749	0.991	756	0.873	866	(198)	77%
Berne Knox	691	0.919	752	0.951	791	0.894	885	0.928	954	(263)	72%
Bolivar-Richburg	704	0.950	741	0.952	778	0.943	825	0.939	879	(175)	80%
Candor	706	0.934	756	1.057	715	0.932	767	0.941	815	(109)	87%
Chateaugay	535	1.068	501	0.980	511	0.952	537	0.961	559	(24)	96%
Dalton-Nunda	544	0.882	617	0.883	699	0.922	758	0.923	821	(277)	66%
Duanesburg	652	0.967	674	0.943	715	0.929	770	0.873	882	(230)	74%
Dundee	654	0.969	675	0.944	715	0.910	786	0.918	856	(202)	76%
Ellicottville	554	0.923	600	0.940	638	1.063	600	1.010	594	(40)	93%
Fabius-Pompey	630	1.031	611	0.943	648	0.908	714	0.907	787	(157)	80%
Fillmore	650	0.925	703	1.075	654	0.940	696	0.982	709	(59)	92%
Florida	709	0.879	807	0.993	813	0.970	838	0.987	849	(140)	84%
Franklinville	601	0.941	639	0.922	693	0.955	726	0.960	756	(155)	79%
Genesee Valley	547	1.021	536	0.987	543	0.917	592	0.897	660	(113)	83%
Hadley Luzerne	644	0.968	665	0.910	731	0.936	781	0.879	889	(245)	72%
Hamilton	559	0.951	588	1.044	563	0.993	567	0.937	605	(46)	92%
Harpursville	597	0.883	676	0.852	793	0.941	843	0.939	898	(301)	66%
Heuvelton	552	1.017	543	1.080	503	0.988	509	0.891	571	(19)	97%
Honeoye	556	0.931	597	1.002	596	0.937	636	0.853	746	(190)	75%
Kendall	685	0.950	721	1.045	690	0.889	776	0.936	829	(144)	83%
Lake George	630	0.873	722	0.906	797	0.949	840	0.876	959	(329)	66%
Lake Placid	567	0.933	608	0.888	685	1.043	657	0.906	725	(158)	78%
Lisbon	560	0.962	582	1.002	581	0.965	602	1.005	599	(39)	93%
Lyndonville	593	0.956	620	0.961	645	1.052	613	0.866	708	(115)	84%
Madrid Waddington	655	0.941	696	1.034	673	0.932	722	0.958	754	(99)	87%
Manchester-Short.	709	0.887	799	0.972	822	0.984	835	0.949	880	(171)	81%
Marion	698	1.016	687	0.923	744	0.936	795	0.905	878	(180)	79%
Middleburgh	651	0.923	705	0.899	784	0.963	814	0.917	888	(237)	73%
Moriah	700	0.992	706	0.979	721	0.970	743	0.936	794	(94)	88%
Morrisville Eaton	598	0.963	621	0.920	675	0.898	752	0.972	774	(176)	77%
Mount Morris	**539**	**1.000**	**539**	**0.985**	**547**	**1.068**	**512**	**1.022**	**501**	**38**	**108%**
Naples	602	0.954	631	0.891	708	0.952	744	0.878	847	(245)	71%
New York Mills	547	1.011	541	1.006	538	0.932	577	1.003	575	(28)	95%
Newfield	689	0.883	780	0.964	809	1.010	801	0.900	890	(201)	77%
North Collins	556	0.959	580	0.940	617	1.020	605	0.957	632	(76)	88%
Northeast	642	0.983	653	0.881	741	0.938	790	0.984	803	(161)	80%
Oriskany	547	0.922	593	1.005	590	0.938	629	0.892	705	(158)	78%
Pavilion	631	0.928	680	0.946	719	0.966	744	0.904	823	(192)	77%
Salem	557	1.002	556	1.009	551	1.131	487	0.863	564	(7)	99%
Southern Cayuga	658	0.939	701	1.077	651	0.927	702	0.902	778	(120)	85%
Warrensburg	663	0.966	686	0.928	739	0.923	801	0.940	852	(189)	78%
Weedsport	703	0.934	753	0.939	802	0.976	822	0.960	856	(153)	82%
West Canada Valley	628	0.921	682	0.947	720	0.978	736	0.946	778	(150)	81%
Westfield	637	0.947	673	0.978	688	0.979	703	0.913	770	(133)	83%
Wheatland Chili	679	1.068	636	0.952	668	0.996	671	0.941	713	(34)	95%
Whitehall	673	0.936	719	0.914	787	0.999	788	1.014	777	(104)	87%
York	682	0.947	720	0.989	728	0.990	735	0.910	808	(126)	84%
District Ave.	625	0.950	660	0.962	688	0.963	717	0.933	771	(146)	81%
South Seneca	636	0.965	659	0.924	713	0.920	775	0.933	831	(195)	77%

Of the fifty school districts plus South Seneca, 98% experienced a loss of enrollment over the thirteen-year period (Mount Morris being the single exception). Over this same period, the average district loss of enrollment was 19%, or 146 students. Comparatively, **South Seneca experienced an enrollment loss of 23%, or 195 students**. Within the comparative district list, 11 school districts experienced a greater enrollment percentage loss than South Seneca. For **South Seneca, the largest loss of students was during the 2013-14 through 2016-17 school years, losing 62 students or 8% of total enrollment** during this 3-year period.

Several possible positive indicators are evident from this table as well as the actual enrollment and future projections found in Table T2-F and tables on live birth previously shared. In Table T2-I immediately above, for the 4-year period 2019-20 through 2022-23, the **coefficient of loss (-3.5%) was less than the average enrollment loss of the other 50 school districts (-5.0%).** Of the four comparison periods, this was the first time that South Seneca trended better than the comparative group. Second, based upon Table T2-F, the actual enrollment in 2023-24 was 689, with a projection to 699 in 2024-25. **These are positive enrollment trends for South Seneca suggesting a leveling or slight enrollment increase moving forward.**

2.4 South Seneca Utilization of Building Space Analysis

Section 2.4.1 briefly reviews some of the primary causes driving the need for more space in our public schools nationwide. This is followed by a detailed analysis beginning in section 2.4.2 on how instructional space is currently being used in both the Elementary and Middle-High School buildings in South Seneca. These sections also provide a partial explanation on how South Seneca loss of student enrollment freed up space for the emerging new demands for school space.

2.4.1 Expectations and Requirements Drive Schools to Require More Space

Across New York State, community members who attended and graduated from the same schools their children or grandchildren attend are sometimes puzzled why today's schools, with smaller enrollments, need so much more space. Although student enrollment in public schools has decreased over the past 20 years, the demands on school building space have dramatically increased. **Current school building planning use requires more spaces for student special services and therapies, learning labs, computer and media labs, as well as more flexible learning spaces to accommodate unique hands-on learning and differentiated instruction**. Older traditional 1950-1960's school building design focused on smaller classrooms, denser student learning spaces, and fewer student tutorial support spaces.

Some examples of additional school space needs in current school buildings include:

- smaller class sizes = more classrooms
- space for county mental health
- school resource officer
- space for county social workers
- record storage & file server rooms
- computer labs, multi-media labs & learning labs
- "hands-on active learning" requires more space
- rooms for resource rooms for special needs
- required services for physical therapy (PT)
- required services for occupation therapy (OT)
- required services for counseling
- required services for speech
- space for school psychologist
- space for fitness rooms or centers
- space for teacher aides/assistants
- teacher and aide work preparation rooms
- behavioral de-escalation rooms
- teacher curriculum materials
- required integrated classrooms
- technology data and wiring or wireless closets
- meeting rooms for parent conferences
- meeting rooms for instructional planning
- required testing accommodation space
- small group instructional spaces
- space for academic support and intervention

2.4.2 South Seneca Elementary School Room Use

Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 provide detailed lists of primarily instructional or administrative spaces in each of the two school buildings in South Seneca. Classrooms and smaller instructional areas in both buildings must be highly flexible in how each space is used year-to-year based upon differing children, learning needs, number of children, recent test scores, or changes in programs.

Working closely with the three school principals in the two buildings, each space was visited and specific purpose(s) were documented. Room use was matched with specific room numbers to update use and improve accuracy. Reviewing the use of rooms and how programs were assigned to spaces was more complex than anticipated. Keeping track of room use during the school year can also be challenging.

Please refer to Table T2-K, Part 1 and Part 2 provided below for detailed information on space use in this building. It was previously shared in this study report that the **Elementary School is about one and one-half times larger than the average elementary building size of the other 50 comparative school districts with** 120,000 square feet and an enrollment in 2023-24 of 317. The smaller enrollment coupled with the very large building size drove a key question regarding how building space was being utilized for instruction.

This building contains the typical spaces of an elementary including cafeteria, gymnasium, nurse, offices, etc. Less common spaces for an elementary school but found within the South Seneca elementary building include an auditorium (3,307 Sq. ft.), stage (1,225 Sq. ft.), second gymnasium (6,553 Sq. ft.), copy room (495 Sq. ft.), multi-purpose SSAFE room (1,917 Sq. ft.), and Learning Center (1,925 Sq. ft.). **This less common space totals 15,422 square feet representing nearly 13% of the entire elementary school. A possible explanation for this uncommon space being in the elementary school in Interlaken is that it once served as the grade K-12 single school district building forming the Interlaken School district prior to the merger into the South Seneca Schools**. Functioning as a grade k-12 district until 1968, it was quite common to have a full auditorium, several gymnasiums, a performance stage, etc.

Regular All Day Classroom Use (24)

During the 2023-24 school year, regular grade level classroom instruction took place in 24 classrooms at the Elementary School. Thirteen other spaces could be potential classrooms but served other instructional or operational purposes. The 24 full size classrooms are used virtually everyday for most or all of the school day. Classroom size ranged from 726 to 1,183 Sq. ft. The grade levels included pre-kindergarten through grade 5, including one 8:1:1 special education integrated room. Rooms for pre-k and kindergarten typically are equipped with a bathroom for each classroom. There were other spaces used for instruction including two spaces designated for small group instruction. The two spaces of 275 quare feet each, are too small for a regular classroom which typically is a minimum of 770 Sq. ft.

Other Classroom Uses (13)

The 13 other classroom spaces that could function as full size regular classrooms ranged in size from 640 to 995 square feet. During the 2023-24 school year, these classrooms were being used for a variety of other instructional and operational needs. Many of the uses did not require a full size classroom. An explantion of the uses of these spaces is more fully detailed below.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Rooms (6)

Six classrooms were used for providing a Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS is a proactive and preventative system that aligns deficits in student performance with targeted instruction addressing the deficit. This ideally maximizes student achievement while also supporting a student's social, emotional, and behavior needs. MTSS is most frequntly used in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA), Math, or other academic areas of need. The MTSS system does not typically need use of a full-sized classroom as most support instruction is in small groups.

Classroom spaces are used periodically during the day and week with some receiving more use than others. Although an initial review might suggest a surplus of these spaces, the number of classrooms is partially explained by the size of the building. More of these spaces are located around the building, reducing the travel time for students and teachers not having to travel from one end of the building to the other. Shorter distances improve child supervision and child safety while increasing teacher instructional time with the students.

IEP Required Speech, OT & PT Services (3)

Three classrooms are used for these therapies required by a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). One or more of these uses could easily operate in a smaller space than a full size classroom.

Miscellaneous Uses (4)

With excess space, staff and the administration found uses for almost all available spaces. The uses included a Behavioral Regulation room for assisting highly agitated children with finding calm, thus ensuring greater safety of the child and others. Other spaces are used for activities including a fitness room, or for staff professional development and training.

Overall consultant observations of the Elementary School were that children were busy, appeared actively involved, with lots of activity and interest. With several exceptions, most space appeared to be recently or currently occupied. The principal and others had a clear understanding and labeling of virtually every space in the building. Observations would suggest that the elementary staff and the principal have been creative in using almost all spaces to enhance instruction as well as enhance the well being of staff. A happy, satisfied and trained staff are more effective as instructors and in supporting learners. **Clearly, there are some activities that use an entire full-size classroom when that program could as easily function in a smaller space.** Further, some dedicated classroom space used for other activities was not occupied every day or for only parts of a day. But excess space also has many benefits. Children can have an indoor dedicated space for mid-day activity during inclement weather. Afterschool programming can have a dedicated space that does not constantly have to be transitioned back to a regular classroom.

Table T2-K: Parts 1 and 2 of Elementary Room Use begins on the following page.

TABLE T2-K: PART 1 OF ELEMENTARY ROOM USE

ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL ROOM USE (2023-24)			
Rm. # 23-24	**Room/Space Use 2023-24**	**Est. Sq. Ft.**	**Type of Use**
101 A	Classroom - Art	1,236	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
102	Classroom - Spec Ed 8:1:1	985	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
104	Office - Dean	385	*Offices & Supervision*
105	Planning Room/Alt. to Suspension	399	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
106	Copy Room	495	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
107	Classroom - Grade 4	780	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
110	Office - Psychologist	536	*Offices & Supervision*
111	Conference Room - Spec. Ed/CSE Meetings	310	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
112 A	Storage	384	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
112 B	Office - PreK	216	*Offices & Supervision*
112	Classroom - Multi-Purpose (SSAFE Room)	1,917	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
113	Office - Spec Ed	242	*Offices & Supervision*
114	Teaching Assistant/Aide Planning Rm	450	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
115 A	Stage	1,225	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
115	Auditorium	3,307	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
116	Classroom - Prof. Dev. Room for Staff	955	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
117	Classroom - Grade 5	848	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
118 A	Office - Technology	253	*Offices & Supervision*
118	SRO (Seneca County Sheriff's Office)	319	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
119	Office - Superintendent	785	*Offices & Supervision*
122	Office - Maintenance	410	*Offices & Supervision*
124 D	Office - Music/Band	160	*Offices & Supervision*
124 E	Storage	471	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
124	Classroom - Band	2,131	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
125	Gymnasium	6,553	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
126	Gymnasium	3,782	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
127	Office - Guidance	211	*Offices & Supervision*
128	Faculty Lounge	460	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
130 A	Office - Principal	234	*Offices & Supervision*
130 D	Conference Room	373	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
130	Office - Main	762	*Offices & Supervision*
131	Kitchen	621	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
133	Classroom - Rti Math Academic Support	781	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
134	Classroom - Music	797	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
135	Classroom - IEP Speech/Language Services	861	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
136	Classroom - Rti ELA Academic Support	871	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
137	Classroom - Gr 2	864	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
138	Classroom - Gr 2 (Integrated Spec. Ed.)	861	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
139	Classroom - Gr 2	873	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
140	Classroom - Gr 2	873	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
144	Office - Seneca Co. Mental Health Counselor	163	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
146 E	Office - Nurse	105	*Offices & Supervision*
146	Office - Health	388	*Offices & Supervision*
147	Office - Director of Special Ed.	296	*Offices & Supervision*
149	Classroom - Pre-K Sp Ed Integrated 149/150	735	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
150	Classroom - Combined Space (149 & 150)	733	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
151 A	Office - Library	224	*Offices & Supervision*
151 B	Professional Room	266	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*

TABLE T2-K: PART 2 OF ELEMENTARY ROOM USE

ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL ROOM USE (2023-24)			
Rm. # 23-24	**Room/Space Use 2023-24**	**Est. Sq. Ft.**	**Type of Use**
151	Library	3,001	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
152	Classroom - Pre-K	733	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
153	Classroom - Pre-K	733	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
154	Classroom - Gr 1	726	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
155	Classroom - Gr 1	869	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
156	Classroom - Occupational & Physical Therapy	870	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
157	Classroom - Gr 1 Spec. Ed.	868	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
158	Classroom - Occupational & Physical Therapy	870	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
159	Classroom - Gr 1	870	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
160	Classroom - Gr K	1,160	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
161	Classroom - Gr K	1,183	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
162	Classroom - Gr K	1,160	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
163	Classroom - Gr K Spec. Ed Integrated	1,183	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
180	Cafeteria	3,875	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
182	Server	443	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
201	Classroom - Gr 3	810	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
202	Classroom - Gr 3	990	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
204	Classroom - Gr 3 & 4 Spec. Ed.	780	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
205	Classroom - Gr 3	730	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
206	Classroom - Fitness Center	995	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
207	Classroom - Rti - Math Academic Support	730	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
208	Classroom - RTI - ELA Academic Support	730	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
209	Classroom - Gr 4	990	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
210	Classroom - Targeted ELA/Math IEP Support	770	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
211	Classroom - Gr 4	740	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
212 A	Classroom - Small Group	275	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
212 B	Classroom - Small Group	275	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
212	Classroom - Multi-Purpose Learning Cntr	1,925	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
213	Classroom - Team Room	300	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
214	Office - Social Worker	590	*Offices & Supervision*
215	Classroom - Behavioral Regulation Room	640	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
216 A	Classroom - Storage	230	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
216	Classroom - Gr. 5	1,150	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
217	Classroom - Gr 5	740	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
218	Classroom - RTI - ELA Academic Support	820	*Direct Classroom Instr.*
342	School Store	347	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
344	Storage	342	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
347	Storage	304	*Other/Non Instr/Services*

2.4.3 South Seneca Middle-High School Room Use

At 188,500 square feet, the Middle-High School building typically houses slightly more than three hundred students in grades 6-12. When comparing the building size to the other similar sized school districts used in the study, **it is nearly one and one-half times larger than the average square footage of the comparative group of school districts**. The data for analyzing space use in the Middle-High School building is shown below in Table T2-L Parts 1-3.

Middle School

The Middle School provides instruction to grades 6-8. Located in the Middle-High School building, it is housed on two floors and had a 2023-24 enrollment of 163. The school principals of the two schools appear to work very cooperatively to ensure that scheduling and any building operations work efficiently and safely in meetings the learning needs of the students. Efforts are made to separate the middle level and high students wherever possible due to the different physical size and maturation levels of both groups of students. The intentional separation does not prevent some sharing of staff between schools or sharing of some space in the building including the library, gymnasiums, etc. Instructionally, some eighth graders may take advanced science or language courses in the high school to meet acceleration requirements.

Regular Classroom (12)

During 2023-24 school year, the middle school accessed 12 classrooms. **The classroom aggregate square footage of 10,681 represents an average of approximately 890 square feet per room**. The only "smaller" room was English at 700 Sq. ft. in room 249. The middle school room size is larger than the typically found in middle schools. The average classroom size is slightly larger than found at the high school (846 Sq. ft.).

Summary

Although the Middle and High School were analyzed separately, the very comprehensive tours of both schools was conducted with both building principals and the building was toured cllectively. Similar to the elementary school, observations were positive and students in both schools appeared to be very respectful and well-behaved. There was no feeling of being in a cavernous empty desolate building. Perhaps far from it.

Overall, space appeared to be used appropriately. Educators are normally not accumstomed to having extra space or large, roomy classrooms. **If extra space is avaliable, staff and principals tend to find ways to use that space instructionally.** As found in both the elementary and high schools, **there are functions that normally require less space than was occupied simply because there is some extra room**. For example, two of the 12 middle level classrooms are used for Resource Room. Both classroms are over 800 square feet. Typically a Resource Room has fewer students than a regular classroom and requires nor more than half the size of a regular classroom. Another example is room 262 for math. The room size of 1,143 Sq.ft. is far larger than a typical 770 square foot regular classroom.

Tables T2-L Parts 1-3 below, provide a list primarily of instructional spaces in the Middle-High School building.

TABLE T2-L – PART 1 OF MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL ROOM USE

MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL ROOM USE (2023-24)				
School	Room# 23-24	2023-24 Room Use	Est. *Sq. Ft.*	Type of Use
H	3	Women's Locker Room	701	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	6	Storage - Athletic	1,231	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	7	Office - Gym	167	*Offices & Supervision*
H	9	Team Locker Room	317	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	10	Gymnasium	12,436	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	11	Men's Locker Room	699	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	14	Football Locker Room	426	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	15	PE Storage	819	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	16	Office - Gym	167	*Offices & Supervision*
H	18	Team Locker Room	317	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	100	Classroom - Flex Lab & LGI	902	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	101	Conference Room	571	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	102	Office - Shared Spec Ed Teachers	511	*Offices & Supervision*
H	102 A	Office - Business Admin	236	*Offices & Supervision*
H	102	Office - Dist. Business	890	*Offices & Supervision*
H	103	Faculty Work Room	313	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	103 A	Office - Supt.	253	*Offices & Supervision*
H	103 B	Conference Room	205	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	103	Office - District	368	*Offices & Supervision*
H	105 A	Classroom - Spec Ed/Resource Room	687	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	105	Classroom - Spec Ed/Resource Room	696	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	106 A	Office - Guidance Office	452	*Offices & Supervision*
H	106 B	Conference Room/Office	106	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	106 D	Office - Guidance Counselor	476	*Offices & Supervision*
H	108	Classroom - Agriculture	759	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	109	Classroom - Agriculture	633	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	110	Classroom - Business	688	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	111 A	Lab - Media Studio	276	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	111	Lab - Media	680	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	112	Classroom - ISS/LGI	754	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	113 A	Office - Spec. Ed Director	168	*Offices & Supervision*
H	113 B	Office - SRO	167	*Offices & Supervision*
H	113 C	Office - Spec. Ed Secretary	154	*Offices & Supervision*
H	113 D	Office - MS Principal	230	*Offices & Supervision*
H	113 E	Student Behavioral De-escalation	130	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	113	Office - Student Services	569	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	115 A	Storage - Tech	171	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	116 B	Lab - Technology	341	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	117 A	Storage/Office	289	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	117 C	Dark Room	276	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	117	Lab - CAD/3D Printing	987	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	118	Classroom - Art	1,674	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	119	Lab - Auto Tech	1,377	*Direct Classroom Instruction*

TABLE T2-L – PART 2 OF MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL ROOM USE

MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL ROOM USE (2023-24)				
School	**Room# 23-24**	**2023-24 Room Use**	**Est. *Sq. Ft.***	**Type of Use**
H	120	Lab - Technology	1,583	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	120	Conference Room	566	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	127 A	Office – Music	235	*Offices & Supervision*
H	127	Classroom - Instrumental Music	2,565	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	128 A	Office – Music	131	*Offices & Supervision*
H	128 B	Lab - Keyboard	230	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	128	Classroom - Vocal Music	2,093	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	131	Storage	389	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	132	Stage	3,027	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	133	Storage	629	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	134 B	Storage	136	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	134 I	Office - Nurse Area	132	*Offices & Supervision*
H	134 J	Drama Changing/Storage	341	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	137	Auditorium	6,361	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	138 A	Concession Stand	398	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	138	Fitness Room/Adaptive PE	2,894	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	140	HS Cafeteria	2,184	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	141	Foyer	603	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	142 A	Kitchen	542	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	142 B	Dish Area	167	*Offices & Supervision*
H	142	Servery	522	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	143 A	Storage – Cafeteria	158	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	144	Lab - Business Computer	1,237	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	145	Receiving/Storage	640	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	145 A	Storage – Music	480	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	162 A	Conference Room MS/HS	261	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	183	Fitness Room	2,372	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	201 A	Science/chemical storage	233	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	201 B	Science Storage	183	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	201	Lab - Chem/Bio	1,156	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	202	Classroom – English	695	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	203	Classroom - Soc Studies	697	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	204	Lab - Earth Science/Physics	1,134	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	205	Lab – Biology	1,132	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	206	Classroom – English	698	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	207	Classroom – Math	695	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	208 A	Required Testing Accommodation Space	226	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	208	Classroom - Social Studies	891	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	209	Math	850	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	211	Classroom – English	1,180	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	212	Classroom - Social Studies	850	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	213	Classroom & Office	1,075	*Direct Classroom Instruction*

TABLE T2-L – PART 3 OF MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL ROOM USE

MIDDLE-HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL ROOM USE (2023-24)					
School	Room# 23-24		2023-24 Room Use	Est. *Sq. Ft.*	Type of Use
H	214		Storage – Library	373	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	216	A	Academic Support	772	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	216		Senior Lounge	651	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	217		Classroom - MS Spanish	767	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	218		Classroom - HS Spanish	760	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	219		Classroom - FCS Foods & Health (Shared)	1,563	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	221		Classroom - Used by County Social Worker	649	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	227		Required Testing Accommodation Space	787	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
H	230		Ancillary Space	167	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	233		File Server Room	189	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
H	237		Library	4,787	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	238		Instructional Space – LMC	572	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	240		Maker Space	497	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
H	280		Science Prep	221	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
H	313		Lab - Mid-Level Computer	761	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	150		MS Cafeteria	2,655	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
M	151		Storage – Maintenance	779	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
M	154		Faculty Room	504	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
M	156		Maintenance Room	168	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
M	157		Work Room	239	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
M	158		Office - Seneca Co. Mental Health Counselor	239	*Instr. Planning & Conf. Rms.*
M	162		HS/MS Office	532	*Offices & Supervision*
M	162	B	Office - Dean of Students	282	*Offices & Supervision*
M	166		Classroom – Art	877	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	168		Classroom - Spec Ed RR	807	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	169		Classroom - Spec Ed RR	838	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	170		Classroom - Soc Studies	815	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	171		Classroom – ELA	808	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	173	A	Office - Girls Locker Room	146	*Offices & Supervision*
M	173		Locker Room – Girls	934	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
M	177		Locker Room – Boys	963	*Student Use/Instr. Support*
M	177	A	Office - Boys Locker Room	122	*Offices & Supervision*
M	180		Office	224	*Offices & Supervision*
M	244		Office – CTS	700	*Offices & Supervision*
M	248		Storage	153	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
M	249		Classroom – English	700	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	250		Classroom - Soc Studies	892	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	251		Classroom – Math	978	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	252		Office - School Psychologist	553	*Offices & Supervision*
M	253		Classroom - MS Counseling	943	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	255		Classroom – Science	985	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	256	A	Storage – District	257	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
M	256		Storage - Misc.	256	*Other/Non Instr/Services*
M	260		Classroom – Spanish	895	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	262		Classroom – Math	1,143	*Direct Classroom Instruction*
M	263		MTTS Room - Academic Support	547	*Student Use/Instr. Support*

High School Overview

The South Seneca High School is for grades 9-12. It's 2023-24 enrollment was 207. The total grade 6-12 enrollment of the Middle/High School building for 2023-24 was 370 students. **A sizable portion of the square footage comprising the high school centers around classroom and lab spaces with 30,341 Sq.ft**. The auditorium, music and vocal space, stage, gymnasium, cafeteria and library collectively occupying another 35,393 Sq.ft.

Regular Classroom & Lab Use (33)

During 2023-24 school year, the high school utilized 24 classrooms and 9 lab rooms for science or technology use. The classroom aggregate square footage of 20,294 represents an average of approximately 846 square feet per room. The nine labs aggregate size was 10,047 Sq. ft. averaging about 1,116 Sq. ft. for each lab. **The combination of space for classrooms and labs represents about 16% of the building for the high school.** Adding in the 12 Middle School classrooms with 10,681 Sq. ft. totals 41,022 Sq. ft. of classroom space for 45 classrooms/labs. This represents **approximately 22% of the total space in the building**.

Conference Rooms and Offices

Two areas that sometimes gain more public attention are spaces used for conference rooms and offices. There are five conference rooms in the Middle-High School. One of these conference rooms is adjacent to the district office and the Superintendent's office. All the conference rooms are shared. **The total square footage used by these conference rooms is 1,709, representing less than 1% of the total space** in the building, while averaging 342 square feet each.

The number of offices in the high school portion of the building (not including the district office) was 13. Examples of office use included: for principals; special education; the various academic programs including music, art and physical education; School Resource Officer, Guidance and offices for Seneca County services to the schools. **The total square footage of these offices was 3,559 Sq. ft. representing less than 2% of the entire building footprint.**

Summary

Overall, space appeared to be used reasonably well. It is common for high schools to require more classrooms than other grades due to the 8-10 period schedule, increased rigorous course and graduation requirements, and need for frequency of course offerings to meet each student's academic schedule. **Overall, classroom sizes are slightly larger than state averages but this was part of planning and design when additions were added.** Further, as a small school district, some advanced classes – especially in science, math and foreign language – can have small number of students which requires an excess of classrooms, and can become costly. The space surplus in the South Seneca Middle-High School building provides more flexibility in scheduling, testing, and meeting student learning needs without compromising an IEP. It also allows placing a child with quickly escalating behavior in a planned room or space to assist in deescalation rather than locating and then moving that child to an open unoccupied classroom.

In the next two sections, 2.5 and 2.6, classroom sizes will be reviewed as well as analysis of period-by-period room use at the high school.

2.5 Classroom Size Comparison with the New York State Minimum

2.5.1 South Seneca Classrooms Size

South Seneca classroom sizes measured in square feet are typically larger than the New York State Department of Education requirements. The chart below highlights some of the differences:

CHART C2-b

ROOM SIZE COMPARISON TO NYS MINIMUM SIZE REQUIREMENTS		
Type of Classroom	Classroom Ave. Size in Sq. Ft.	NYS Min. Size Requirement
Pre-K/Kindergarten Regular	984	900
Grades 1-5 Regular	905	770
Grades 6-12 Regular	860	770
Grade 6-12 Science Labs	1,312	1,200
PK-Grade 5 Art Rooms	1,236	No Requirement
Grade 6-12 Art Rooms	1,276	1,200

The square feet per type of educational use of a school building in New York State is guided by the New York State Education Department. There are few districts in New York State that when building or renovating, would exceed the minimum space allowances because state building aid is capped on these minimum space requirements. Although described as minimum square foot allowances, **they are in fact the maximum size that will be aided by New York State and therefore establishes the virtual average of size for these spaces in schools in New York**. Square footage exceeding these numbers in the chart above are considered unaidable and the full cost of the overage would be the responsibility of the local district taxpayer.

A review of CHART C2-A above indicates that for all types of classrooms including regular, art, science, etc., the South Seneca classrooms are consistently larger than the minimum size state **requirements averaging 10.1% larger, or 99.4 square feet per classroom**. The larger classrooms can be partly explained by several larger classroom spaces in the Elementary School including the Multi-Purpose Learning Center (1,925 Sq. ft.) and the Multi-Purpose SSAFE Room (1,917 Sq. ft.). At the Middle/High School, much larger instructional spaces include an Art classroom (1,674 Sq. ft.), a Lab - Technology (1,583 Sq. ft.) and a Foods & Health classroom (1,563 Sq. ft.). **Even with these larger rooms helping skew room size for South Seneca, the majority of instructional spaces remain larger than the New York State minimum.**

2.6 Classroom Utilization Analysis by Period

Section 2.5 examines the actual use of classrooms by period over the entire school year. The South Seneca High School was the most logical choice for analysis since it fully conforms to a period schedule where students travel individually from class to class. The analysis focused on the classrooms used during the 2023-24 school year for grades 9-12. High schools typically use classrooms and related spaces somewhat flexibly since student needs and requirements change. Therefore, it is noted that several spaces previously used as small or regular classrooms are currently used for supporting instruction or related uses as noted in TABLE T2-I – Part 1-3 above.

2.6.1 High School Classroom Usage

Working with middle-high school guidance, a review of the percentage of classroom use by period was performed. South Seneca employs a 10 period day, using an A, B, C, and D day rotating schedule or roughly 45 days for each rotation per school year (180 day academic year). Analysis was conducted on 38 classrooms/instructional spaces. Instructional spaces were defined as rooms or spaces where teacher/student interactions were instructional in small or large group settings. Four categories were created for analysis:

Full Use - Defined as averaging five (5 or more) periods of classroom use daily.
Medium Use - Averaging four periods of classroom use daily.
Lower Use - Averaging three or less periods of classroom use daily.
Periodic Use - Special purpose rooms/spaces (e.g. required testing accommodation rooms).

Rating Use	# Instructional Classrooms (38)	% Classrooms	Defined As
Full	27	71%	*Used 5 or more periods per day average*
Medium	4	10%	*Used 4 periods per day average*
Lower	1	3%	*Used 3 or less periods per day average*
Periodic	6	16%	*Periodic specfic use as required*

Note: The number of high school classrooms is different than indicated in earlier sections because the room use analysis compiled by guidance included several spaces that could not be used as a regular classroom (Dark Room for example).

Full and Medium use of a classroom comprised 81% of all high school classrooms at South Seneca during the school year 2023-24. Meaning the *vast majority of designated instructional use classrooms were occupied four or more periods per day on average*. **Six classrooms representing 16%, were rated as Periodic** Use. Examples of these rooms include a Behavioral De-escalation room, Dark Room for media and photography, and multiple rooms to meet state and federal requirements for student testing accommodation per an Indiviualized Education Program (IEP).

The rate of room use is influenced by several factors including the size of the school *enrollmen*t, the *richness of course selection*, and the *frequency courses* are offered. As previously discussed several times in this report, a smaller high school enrollment is always challenged to provide a comprehensive offering of courses as well as scheduling flexibility for each student. For example, it is economically challenging to provide advanced classes in world languages, math and science, or Advanced Placement (AP) due to the typically small enrollments. Further, the schedule at best, may only offer a specific low enrollment course once per academic year which severaly limits a student's class schedule, interests and even ability to graduate on time. Finally, smaller, rural school districts struggle to attract and retain teachers for some courses including math and foreign language.

PART 3 – District Options to Optimize School Building Use

3.1 District Options

Hypothetically, if the South Seneca Central School District was formed today and needed to build classrooms to house 680 children, school officials would be strongly advised to build a single building pre-kindergarten to grade 12 school on a single site or campus near the geographical middle of the student population. The facility would likely have structural separation of grades pre-k through grade 5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12. There would likely be separate entrances, and a single bus trip twice per day.

The reality however is much different. The South Seneca Central School District was actually formed through a merger of the Ovid and Interlaken school districts between 1968-1970, *preserving both school buildings and sites*. Like most school mergers, there was some early disagreement among a portion of the residents and parents about merging two school cultures and histories, and linking several towns and villages located within the school district boundaries. But overall it has worked.

Over the last decade, the departure or closure of key area employers siphoned off families and students. Coupled with decreasing birthrates and population shifts out of New York State, **South Seneca has been facing a growing issue for many years – a declining student enrollment housed in school buildings built for a much larger enrollment.** Now with a leveling or very slight student enrollment increase, school officials wanted to review possible options for school building use to ensure academic quality is maintained while remaining careful stewards of public funds.

The options described below are likely not a pancea for all the challenges facing the school district. The Board of Education and other stakeholders can likely discover and explore more possible actions. Some of the options listed carry substantially less risk than others. Some options would be much easier and quicker to implement. All the options would require more review prior to implementation. Some of the options are more complex and would taken up to several school years to accomplish while others are simpler and could be initiated in an upcoming school year. A brief review of each option is described below.

A. Merge with Another School District

Approximately a decade ago, school officials in both the Romulus and South Seneca Central School districts proposed a merger of the two school districts. **A merger in New York State between two school districts provides long-term financial incentive state aid both in the form of incentive reorganizing operating aid and an additional increase in building aid over a typical 14-year time period**. New York State's Education Law 3602 authorizes reorganization incentive aid for school district operating and building expenses. The merging of the districts consolidates declining enrollments, improves a centralized school campus and facilities, reduces some costs, and ideally upgrades program offerings to students.

After a straw vote that was positive in both districts, a formal vote was not passed. More school districts engage in the merger study than actually take the decision to a public vote. Even fewer districts pass the merger resulting by public referendum. School districts when considering a merger are often confronted with the possible loss of school and community identity, loss of control to others

outside the school community, as well as issues of trust. The vast majority of these social and political concerns originate from the adults while students are usually more flexible and open-minded about the transitions.

Although a future study of a possible merger should not be ruled out, timing and planning are pivotal to a successful merger vote. There are also other variables that can alter the voter support for supporting a merger including tax rate adjustments between each original district, sports programs, rivalries, board of education personalities, distance between original districts, reputation of each district, etc. **If the board was looking at a merger to address concerns regarding declining enrollment and excess building capacity, it could take 1- 5 years** to study the possible merger, obtain voter approval, plan on new or renovated facilities, and make all necessary changes to accommodate a merged district.

B. Multi-Age Classrooms

The use of multi-age classrooms is a pedagogical choice for instructing students that focuses more on flexible groupings for students that remain with the same teacher for two years, typically combining either multiple ages or grade levels in a single classroom. The model was actually born from the one-room grade k-12 school houses in rural areas. The model was more prevalent through the late 1990's prior to the "one size fits all" standardized grade level state testing in New York and many other states that has removed some district flexibility in meeting the instructional needs of children.

In a multi-age classroom, a teacher combines flexible fluid groups by skill level in key areas including math and English-Language Arts. **Students are typically from two grade levels, and could range by two or more years in age**. Other subject areas are usually still taught by grade level groups due to most learning materials and textbooks being developed for specific grade levels. **Research has shown that students in these multi-age classrooms do at least as well academically long term** as those in a more conventional grade/age level. Further, the multi-age classrooms provide more student-to-student learning and an increase in social skill development according to the research.

An additional potential benefit of utilizing one or several multi-age classrooms for a school district with smaller grade enrollment is that you **can combine students from multiple grades thus avoiding some very small single grade classes.** This could provide some cost reduction in staffing, create greater efficiencies, but also have the effect of reducing further the number of classrooms needed.

There are several challenges to be addressed if a district pursues this option. A teacher who is successful in managing a multi-age classroom must be flexible, able to plan well, multi-task, and be knowledge of a broader curriculum spanning several grade levels. The selection of interested teachers in this model would be important. **Training and preparation would also need to be planned** as skills and activities in a multi-age classroom expand and challenge a teacher. The consultant has first-hand experience in this model and understands that a successful program requires: 1) on-going training and support of the multi-age teachers; 2) a possible teaching stipend to recognize the additional challenges and planning time required for this position; and 3) additional possible adult support staff time in the classroom.

C. BOCES Rental of Classrooms

Both school buildings in the district could relinquish several classrooms for possible rental to a not-for-profit like a Board of Educational Services (BOCES). BOCES typically creates educational classrooms for children with special learning needs guided by an IEP. **Often these programs are better placed in regular school education settings so that the children with an IEP can be integrated as appropriate in part of a regular school day** in what is considered the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Ideally, the child attending a BOCES special needs program might even be placed in her/his "home district" school. Another advantage is the child's bus trip is usually shorter if the program can be located closer to the child's residence.

Because of South Seneca's location, the TST BOCES or other neighboring BOCES might be interested in placing a program in the district. Rental costs are negotiated with the BOCES and other charges for heat, lights, and custodial can also be charged.

D. Explore Using Space for Area Colleges

Many two- and four-year colleges are interested in campus extension sites. They typically pay a rental fee and utilize portions of a school building when a school district is not normally using the space including evenings, weekends and during the summer. These programs look to attract more non-traditional students and those students who would find it difficult to travel longer distances. Several colleges in the area include Finger Lakes Community College, Keuka College, Tompkins Cortland Community College, and Cayuga County Community College.

E. Explore Inter-Municipal Agreements for Use of Space *(GML Article 5-g Agreements)*

Inter-Municipal agreements in New York State are covered under both NYS Educational Law and NYS General Municipal Law (GML Article 5-g Agreements). These agreements between two or more state municipalities and/or school districts promote sharing of equipment, facilities, and services in order to create greater public efficiencies.

These agreements have become quite common across New York. For example, a group of school districts joining a school health consortium typically utilize these inter-municipal agreements.

In the case of South Seneca, a portion of one or both school buildings could be made available to another outside municipality. For example, the village of Interlaken needs additional upgraded space for its village hall and village garage. The potential advantages of a collaborative agreement could be the reduction of overall costs to the taxpayer, ensuring the fuller use of the elementary school space. Challenges could include creating separate entrances, managing additional traffic and controlling noise.

Another potential multiple use of either the Ovid or Interlaken school building sites might include creating a regional bus maintenance or transportation repair facility. Possible future discussions with Seneca County officials could also explore other possible uses of part of either site.

F. The Board Could Develop a Class Sectioning Policy or Guideline for Determining Teams or "Home Bases"

The South Seneca district does not have any board of education policy language guiding the formation of teams or home bases in grades k-5 and grades 6-8. During the past ten years the school board has remained committed to operating three "home" bases or sections for grades k-5 annually. When enrollment is 45 or higher, each section is a minimum of 15. But since 2014-15, grades K-5 have operated with less than 45 students in more than a handful of times, with several instances of 37 students in a grade level (12 in each regular class and one section with 13 students). At the middle school level, the issue of maintaining 45 or more students has been less of a challenge. There have only been two instances over the past ten years where the cohort number was less than 45 students in a grade level in grades 6-8.

The Board of Education is encouraged to develop written guidance or a formal policy requiring a minimum number of students for forming additional sections when the number of students registered for a grade level falls below 40 or less students in grades K-8. In these scenarios, the district could potentially create two sections or "home bases" instead of three.

G. Consolidating Grade PK-12 to a Single Campus (PK-12) Footprint

It was initially made clear to the consultant that there were no plans at this point for major changes of grade or building use. The primary purpose of this study was to *provide relevant information to assist the Board of Education in making decisions and determine need for a targeted future study.*

The Board of Education has the option to consider consolidation of the Elementary School grades PK-5 into the Middle/High School building forming a single building campus in Ovid. After an extensive analysis and Board of Education decision, it would have implications on the entire district and communities carrying some level of risk.

A decision to consolidate should include consideration of multiple perspectives including: financial costs and real savings; enhancement of instruction; assessment of the political impact on future budget votes and maintaining taxpayer support; community impact if a school is closed; and the impact on the cultures in the communities and in each school.

Possible Advantages & Concerns about The Single Campus Footprint

The Chart C2-c below lists some of the advantages and concerns about consolidating to a single campus, closing the elementary school, and reconstructing and altering the high school. It is by no means an exhaustive list, but possibly begins the district's process for further exploration.

CHART C2-c: EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF OPTION H

SOME POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES	SOME POSSIBLE CONCERNS
Transportation savings - single trip (no double tripping)	Placing much older students on same bus as younger children
Transportation fuel savings and less wear on school buses	Community/parents may hold strong emotions vs. closure
Childcare may be more easily coordinated at single site	Closing building can create community discord
Savings in energy costs for heat, lights, etc. (building closure)	Closing a community school can create "winner vs loser"
Some savings in custodial (fewer Sq. ft. but same # students)	Need to "right size" portions of remaining PK-12 school
Possible sale or rental of closed building – revenue	Possible need for additional art, music and physical ed. space
Could consolidate SRO officers to a single site	Possible need more classrooms, hallways, common spaces
Some possible savings on staffing due to sharing	Will need reconstruction/alteration to pk-12 building
All deliveries to one location	Removes option of any future school district merger
Savings could reduce taxes and reinvest in programs and staff	Reduces flexibility if enrollment increases (unlikely)
All staff on single campus could enhance pk-12 interactions	Likely need for site redesign of roadways and sidewalks
	Likely need for additional parking for staff and visitors
	Likely need for separate entrances for pk-5 students
	Culture of surplus space would be adjustment to less space
	Potential cultural clashes between schools, staff or others
	Building costs confusing taxpayers if space needs being met
	Challenge to preserve separate school identities
	Repurpose, sell or turn over closed building is controversial
	Need to heat, maintain, and repair closed building until sold
	Closed building could be dormant and unoccupied for period
	Building construction could be disruptive to student learning
	District costs for detailed study analysis of this option
	Elementary School has bathrooms attached to 20 classrooms
	Reduced evening and weekend use of gym space force practices into late evenings
	Reduced evening and weekend use would limit community access to gym and fields
	Increase class sizes across grade levels due to limited space

"What if" Scenario: An Estimate of Space Needed for Relocating the Elementary School

Assessing the space use at the South Seneca Elementary School leads to the related estimating of the minimum space requirements for the school if it were hypothetically merging with the Middle/High School building. Assuming that enrollment is leveling or slightly increasing over the next 5-10 years, the amount of space required at the high school for relocating the elementary is estimated for the study provided below. *This is hypothetical. It is a very rough estimate. It has not yet been estimated or calculated by design professionals. It is for discussion purposes only.* Table T2-M can be found on the next page.

TABLE T2-M: SCENARIO OF ESTIMATED MINIMUM SQUARE FEET NEEDED

# Rooms	Type of Use	Est. Sq. Ft.
20	Classrooms Gr 1-5 (full size 850 Sq. ft., 4 extra)	17,000
7	Classrooms PK-K (1,000 Sq. ft. +1 extra) w/bathrooms	7,000
1	Elementary Library (1,300 Sq. ft.	1,300
2	Gymnasium (unless share with MS/HS)	4,800
1-2	Art Rooms	2,000
1-2	Music Rooms	1,800
1	Music Practice Room/Band	3,000
1	Choral Room	1,500
3	Large Bathrooms (5-7 student)	1,200
1	Servery/Multi-Purpose Space (no food prep)	1,500
1	Music/Choral Office Areas	700
1	Elementary Office, Principal Office, Conf. Room	1,600
6	Nurse, Counselors, Testing, Psychologist, etc.	2,250
3-4	Storage Space	2,000
3-4	Rooms for OT/Speech/PT	1,200
1	Large Group Instruction Full Media	1,500
1	Faculty Room, Teacher Work Room, Planning Room	1,500
1	Conference Room	400
2	ComputerLabs	1,800
1	Behavioral De-Escalation Room	400
4	Staff Bathrooms	400
X	Misc. space for copier room, other	500
1	New Entrance for PK-5	450
	Minimum Estimated Elementary School w/o common	57,000
6	Smaller rooms for MTSS (Academic System for Support)	1,200
Est.	Hallways, stairwells, foyer, common areas (30%)	17,100
Est.	**Estimated Square Feet of Space for Elementary School** ***(rough estimate, for discussion only)***	**74,100**

The estimated minimum instructional and operational space is approximately 57,000 Sq. ft. The estimated minimum square footage is a very rough estimate. This number does not include common space including hallways, boys and girls locker room areas, stairs, wiring closets, custodial, or HVAC building systems which could add approximately 17,100 Sq. ft. or more. **That total estimate per Table T2-M would be about 74,100 Sq. ft. of the existing Middle/High School.** Other areas that could also be impacted include adding a playground, fencing, a possible separate building entrance, adding parking, and possibly redesigning traffic flow for parent drop offs, etc.

Obviously, the school architects would need to be actively involved in any future detailed analysis. The planning should also include the principals and staff since the integration of the elementary is essential to the culture of the school. Going from approximately 120,000 square feet in Interlaken to a shared site in Ovid using about 74,000 square feet of space (about a 38% reduction) would be a large adjustment for students and staff that would require detailed planning, communication, patience, and time.

The Middle/High School May Need New Building Addition as Part of any Transition

Under the PK-12 consolidation option to a single PK-12 single campus building, the building footprint would be reduced from 309,351 to 188,500 Sq. ft. The district average of total school building space of the 50 district comparison group (combining elementary and secondary buildijg space) was 206,070 Sq. ft. This suggests that after any consolidation, the district might be about 20,000 square feet short at the single campus building when compared to similar school districts aggregate building size with similar enrollments. Again, this is only conjecture and more rasing a point of awareness that the transition could involve reconstruction and alterations as well as possible new building space. In any future design process, this is where architects use their experience and innovation in creating efficient designs that efficiently maximize use of all space.

The final portion of the study is Part 4. It contains a summary of the key observations, includes the study questions, and concludes with essential findings.

PART 4: Key Observations, Study Questions, and Essential Findings

Part 4 is the culmination of the study. It contains three sections beginning with Section 4.1 - Key Observations, followed by Section 4.2 – Response to the Study Questions, and concludes with Section 4.3 – Essential Findings.

There were obviously many observations and thoughts generated from onsite tours, interviews, informal conversations and the actual data analysis. Section 4.1 includes the parsed key observations the consultant experienced that are closely linked with the essential findings. The observations are less data driven, based on prior experience, and more perceptual. Section 4.2 responds to the five core study questions that were the study foundation. The essential findings in 4.3 differ from observations as they are more data and fact based, have the greatest impact or could lead to changes in policy or decision making of the school district.

4.1 Key Observations *(not listed in any order of magnitude)*

Creative Leaders Take Advantage of Smaller Enrollments & Class Size

Effective school leaders recognize that surplus building space coupled with smaller enrollment and class sizes is an opportunity to be utilized to improve learning outcomes. A New York State middle school requirement is that students must be offered acceleration in math and one other area – typically foreign language or a science. All schools experience difficulty in finding and retaining foreign language teachers including Spanish. This is especially true in smaller more rural districts like South Seneca where a foreign language teacher retirement or resignation could jeopardize students from meeting the foreign language requirement. This is a primary reason the South Seneca Middle School offers high school level Biology to 8th graders to meet the state acceleration requirement. Since the South Seneca High School Biology classes had smaller enrollments, they could easily accommodate the additional 8th grade students. One challenge resolved.

Extra Space in School Buildings Provides Advantages for Learning

The luxury of extra space is far better than cramped spaces, children provided instruction in temporary classrooms, or children receiving test accommodation on the stage or in a hallway. Virtually every space in both buildings has a designated use ranging from a traditional classroom or room for test accommodation, to a space for a Seneca County Social Worker. It is a luxury to designate a space for use that may be only 2-3 days a week, or 2-3 periods per day. The extra space eliminates some need to share spaces between staff and programs – sometimes with simultaneous ongoing student or adult activities causing issues or conflict, constant space juggling, and student and teacher distraction.

Storage space is commonly in short supply in schools since storage space is not typically cost reimbursed by New York State during initial construction. Schools will typically later convert unoccupied spaces into storage areas. **South Seneca has created additional rooms for storage over the past decade**. Schools need storage space for many things including curriculum materials, books, technology, athletic equipment, uniforms, musical productions, records retention, etc. The two buildings combined storage spaces include 16 rooms or spaces, totaling 6,173 square feet, or about 386 square feet per storage area (half the size of

an average classroom). The only downside to having adequate storage space is that sometimes things remain stored when no longer useful or needed.

The converted use of unused classrooms for other smaller group or individual learning support activities is partially explained by the sheer size of both buildings. More of these **spaces located around the building lessens the distance and travel time of students and teachers improving student supervision** while increasing teacher time with students.

Data Indicates Larger than Average Buildings, but it Doesn't Feel that Way

The consultant spent two days onsite in the Elementary School and Middle/High Schools. The data identifies both buildings as being 47-50% larger when compared to a group of similar school districts. However, the spaces felt cozy, busy, with children actively learning. There were few if any areas where it felt desolate, closed off, wasted or unsupervised. The experience of being in each building during the school day belies the data. Without the data, a casual observer would not notice excess or surplus space. Perhaps the students and staff have so seamlessly adapted to the spaces over such a long period, that spaces are creatively used, and flexibility is part of the school culture.

Missing Room Numbers and ADA Signage Might Help Wayfinding

Revising Building Room Numbers would assist with wayfinding. Although not part of the initial study, analysis and tracking of room spaces was sometimes difficult due to a lack of consistent sequential room numbering, or an occassional missing number on entry doors. Both school buildings are relatively large and for new students or visitors, finding one's way can be confusing There were also several instances where room numbers or program use was changed and not reflected on school district architect drawings. This is common when school buildings undergo a series of renovations or additions and where room uses frequently change. The ADA requires that all entry doors include a sign with tactile lettering and braille identifying the room number or space.

South Seneca School District Serves a Much Broader Community Role

It is clear that within this rural area of Seneca County bordered east and west by Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, the South Seneca School District serves a much broader role than education. The school district offers after school programs, summer programs, art and music programs, and community and mental health services. It offers something for all ages. It is the lifeblood of several villages and towns and serves as one of the largest employers in the area.

South Seneca maintains three gymnasiums that are heavily booked by the area community after school hours including weekends. The **gyms collectively measure 22,771 square feet**, representing about 7.5% of the total square footage of the entire school district building space. The size of the main gym in Ovid is 12,436 square feet which would be considered large for the size of the high school enrollment.
Similar to placing a high value on academics and athletics, the communities strongly support a robust music program including vocal, instrumental, and performance. This is based upon both interviews and noting the amount of building space dedicated to the performing arts. The square footage of space dedicated to music instruction and performance at the Elementary School was 7,460 square feet, equivalent to about 10 classrooms. When combining with the Middle-High School space of 14,046 square feet, **makes the aggregate space dedicated to music and performing arts is 21,506, nearly the same space taken up by the three gymnasiums.**

Although these examples above may indicate some luxury of space in both buildings, interviews and observations suggest space is being incorporated into instruction. **If you provide more space for teachers and support staff, they will find ways to use the extra space to advantage children, programs and enhance staff productivity.** Thoughtful and innovative school leaders use resources effectively.

4.2 Response to the Study Questions

The study was guided by the following core questions. Responses are shared below.

1) What is the projected student enrollment by grade levels for the next 5-10 years?
The data suggests a long-term trend increase in district live births, especially when compared to New York State school district averages. *However, enrollment data indicates that live birth data does not necessarily result in more children attending district schools*. The last five-year coefficients showed an average of 1.01 over the five years indicating that incoming grade enrollments over the past five years have averaged an increase of slight less than 1% annually. Therefore, projections include a very small increase or at least a leveling of enrollment. An optimistic projection suggests a slight overall increase in student enrollment to 700-710 through 2030, from the current 689.

2) What commercial or residential development, or other local trends may affect enrollment?
Although there is some uncertainty, there remain development possibilities of the Willard site as well as residential development in the Interlaken areas due to village infrastructure improvements. With economic and political uncertainty, coupled with interest rates, it is difficult to estimate any timing.

3) How is current building space being used?
The two school buildings in South Seneca **exceed the average building footprint** for either an elementary or middle/high school building **by about half** when compared with school districts with similar enrollments. This surplus is caused by several factors including South Seneca experiencing a much larger enrollment loss than other similar school districts. An additional factor is South Seneca averages a larger square foot size for classrooms, labs, fitness centers, and gymnasiums than the comparative group of similar schools.

It was noted that some instructional activities were located in bigger spaces than what would normally be required or primarily used because of surplus space in each building. The larger, somewhat sprawling size of each building prompted locating a specific use in multiple locations across each building. The redundant use was needed to eliminate long travel distances for both students and teachers.

Despite the data that indicates surplus space, casual observations within each school support that activities were properly matched to the type, size and character of space. With few exceptions, spaces had a designated use that was clear to administration, staff and students. Review of data and consultant observations did not support the conclusion of waste regarding space utilization. Space use was reasonably effective. School leaders and staff have long experience the availability of additional space. They see the space as an asset and as an opportunity to be used to help students and support staff.

4) **How is the surplus of school building space perceived by district stakeholders?**
The consultant observed through discussions and select interviews that the excess space in the schools due to declining enrollment is of public interest. There exists a segment of the school community population that favor consolidation of grade levels to a single site while others see the need to retain schools in the two largest communities in the district. Neither position is ruled by facts or a complete understanding of the implications of a grade PK-12 consolidation to a single campus. Without a better understanding of the consolidation issue, it was determined that a public survey of this question might be premature in the review of district options. The data included in this study is a first step towards creating a more informed public on this issue.

5) **What options are available to the board of education to address declining enrollment to ensure educational quality while balancing with financial affordability?**
The study shared seven ideas or options that may assist the school district in the areas of cost reduction, revenue enhancement, and alternate use of school excess space. No option provided is a quick fix for address the issues.

4.3 Essential Findings

Smaller Class Size Results from Smaller Districts Offering Comprehensive Course Offerings

Comprehensive high school course offerings create some small class sizes in smaller districts. All public high schools in New York State must meet the graduation requirements for a high school diploma. School districts similar to South Seneca face the challenge of offering a comprehensive high school program course of study because it requires offering multiple sections of courses required for graduation. **Offering too few sections of a required course makes it difficult if not impossible for some students to "fit" required courses into a schedule**. For example, in 2023-24, the high school offered three sections of Biology although the number of students needed to take the class only warranted two sections. Further, reduced sections often limit a student from exploring other areas for career or personal interest.

The combination of smaller enrollment with the commitment to offer a diverse curriculum at the South Seneca high school results in some classes having small enrollments. This is especially true in advanced courses including Calculus and Spanish 5 – both having two students. An optional elective like Auto Technology, which is of interest to a segment of students, typically has 5-8 students. For courses minimally required in meeting a pathway to a high school diploma, Chemistry and Physics typically have enrollments of 9-15 and average around 12 students per class.

It is more costly for school districts to offer more sections of a course or run a course with small numbers of students. **In smaller school districts, running classes with small course enrollments is a primary cause of the higher cost of education per child when compared with larger school districts.**

Open Enrollment Across School District Boundaries Can Create Enrollment Deficits

Students from neighboring school districts can enroll at South Seneca for all grades PK to 12. The same option is available for students residing in South Seneca. Many parents see this as a big benefit similar to a school choice program. This "open boundary" is more common in smaller, more rural districts where sharing resources and opportunities is essential. *Although the state aid flows through to the school district*

of legal residency, the sending district is typically billed school tuition by the receiving district. **South Seneca typically runs a deficit in the number of students incoming from other districts vs. resident students attending out of South Seneca.** The numbers vary each year. For September 2023-24, there were approximately 18 nonresident students attending South Seneca schools. These out of district students attend for any number of reasons including the student previously attended South Seneca, more program choices, or a disagreement between the parent and the home district. Over the past few years, there are typically 40-50 South Seneca student residents who attend out of district. **Over the past several years, South Seneca has lost both students and revenue through this policy**. *It would be advisable to review the open border procedures.*

South Seneca School Classrooms Larger in Size than Typical New York State Classrooms

New York State provides minimum suggested instructional sizes for space. For example, the minimum recommended grade 1-12 classroom should be 770 square feet. School districts can construct larger classrooms than the minimum but the State of New York will provide any building aid on construction costs that exceed the minimum size classrooms prescribed. **South Seneca classrooms are consistently larger than the minimum size state requirements averaging 10.1% larger, or 99.4 square feet per classroom.**

Some Instructional Activities and Services Housed in Much Larger Spaces Than Needed

Considering the recommended classroom space is 770 square feet**, some instructional activities are being housed in larger spaces than required or needed solely because there is surplus building space.** For example, in the Elementary School in room 135, Speech/Language intervention services would typically occupy far less than the 861 current square feet of room space since small groups of students typically work with a teacher. Room 102 houses an 8:1:1 special need classroom that utilizes 985 square feet. At the Middle-High School, examples include room 118 which is an Art classroom at 1,687 square feet (1,200 is the recommended size for state aid maximum allowance). At the Middle School, room 262 is a math classroom that has 1,143 square feet.

The number of conference rooms and their larger than typical size was also noted. Between the two buildings, there were 6 conference rooms using an aggregated 2,286 square feet, or 381 square feet for each conference room (size equal to about half the size of a full classroom). Several of these conference rooms have a specific purpose and function including regularly scheduled Committee on Special Education/Parent meetings. Another conference room functions as an interview and meeting room for some of the essential activities of both the Superintendent and Business Administrator. Those conference room activities might include bid openings, interviews, legal and financial conferences, etc. Some of the other conference rooms are also regularly used for parent/student/teacher conferences, behavioral conferences, and places for students to receive testing accommodations. Another reason for the number of conference rooms is the sheer size of each building. At a combined total of over 308,000 square feet, staff needing to meet are often on a short time schedule and the proximity to a conference room can be an issue.

Comparisons with Similar Districts Indicates South Seneca Maintains Significantly More Building Space

The comparisons with the group of similar school districts clearly indicated that South Seneca Elementary School and Middle/High School buildings are much larger in square footage than the average of the

comparative group. The Elementary School is **55% larger** than the comparison group, and the Middle/High School is **47% larger** than the high school comparison group of similar school districts. Comparing the amount of square feet per student, the Elementary School was 384Sq. ft. per child with the similar schools' average of 244 Sq. ft. per child, a difference of 140 Sq. ft. per each child. **This difference is equivalent to an extra 10' x 14' room for each elementary child**. For the Middle/High School, at 587 Sq. ft. per child, it is 192 square feet larger per child than the average secondary district in the comparison group at 395 Sq. ft. per child.

A final comparison of school district size measured in square feet is the district aggregate. The South Seneca Central School District maintains 309,351 Sq. ft. versus the average of the 50 school districts in the group which averages 206,070. This is a difference of 103,281. Grade PK-12 students in South Seneca enjoy on average, **162 square feet more space each when compared with the 50-school district average** of the comparison group of similar schools. *It should also be noted that the South Seneca enrollment of 636 (2022-2023) is slightly larger than the average enrollment of the 50-school district group of 625.*

South Seneca maintains an excess of space driven by many factors – some of which are discussed elsewhere in this report. Room sizes are far larger than is required for many learning activities and exceed those recommended by New York State. Some of its learning spaces are excessively large including some of the labs including art and automotive, choral and band rooms, the main High School gymnasium, etc. Some of its largest spaces are not used frequently. To further exacerbate the surplus space, South Seneca's loss of students has been greater than most districts similar in size.

Some Factors Causing Excess School Building Space in South Seneca

Eleven years ago, a study was conducted to look at the growing potential issue of excess or surplus building space. This study was a follow up to the previous study to provide updated information to the Board of Education and administration so the district may better assess how things have changed since 2013 and what are the next steps forward?

The creation of excess school building space is caused by factors including:

- **A.** Declining enrollment – more loss than other districts of similar enrollment
- **B.** Loss of several key employers
- **C.** Building and maintaining much larger than average size spaces for classrooms, gyms, labs, etc.
- **D.** Both buildings were once separate K-12 centralized school district buildings

School Building Space Use Appears Reasonably Effective

Since this surplus space has been a growing and historical problem for nearly two decades, the majority of staff and administration in the district know no other reality than the current generous availability of space. The building culture in each building is accustomed to generally average to small classes, ease of room availability, plentiful storage and office areas, multiple conference rooms, technology labs, academic tutoring and support areas and work rooms. Surplus space is a huge asset and a luxury. Some districts with much extra space might close it off, ignoring the asset that could help children learn and teachers teach. What the South Seneca staff and administration have done is quite impressive. They utilize virtually every space in each building in ways that help students and teachers. The spaces may not be used every period or every day, but each space is designated with a specific purpose(s).

The data indicates South Seneca has significantly more space than a similarly sized school district. However, during the two-day onsite consultant observations, both buildings appeared bustling, active, and few signs of open or unused space.

Can it be concluded that school building space is being wasted? What is the definition of waste? A dictionary definition of waste indicates *to use or expend carelessly, extravagantly, or for no purpose*. **Study analysis, review of data and consultant observations did not support the conclusion of waste regarding space utilization.** Space is being used reasonably effective. Data supporting that observation includes the analysis of high school space by period, full and medium use of a classroom comprised 81% of all high school classrooms at South Seneca during the school year 2023-24. Meaning the vast majority of designated instructional use classrooms were occupied four or more periods per day on average.

Building Space Could be Used More Efficiently

Although excess school building space utilization is reasonably effective, are there instances where building space could be used more efficiently? If one defines efficient as *"capable of producing desired results without wasting materials, time, or energy"*, then one might argue that space could be reduced without compromising student performance and academic achievement. For example, the school district could consolidate services into smaller rooms, reduce the number of conference rooms, eliminate redundancy, etc. However, without detailed comparative data, it remains uncertain if this or related actions would be practical.

The Elephant in the Room: Consolidating Grade PK-12 to a Single Campus Footprint

The study and resulting report primarily focused on assessing school building space and classroom utilization and enrollment projections. The **results of the study provide additional information assisting the Board of Education in making operational decisions and determining need for targeted future study**. It was also clear from the beginning, that the South Seneca Central School District had no plans at this point to change or alter grade levels or building configurations. One of the study goals was to review and briefly explore various options available to the Board of Education as part of their long-term school district planning.

One of the options previously shared in this study report was the possible consolidation of the Elementary School grades PK-5 into space in the Middle/High School building. **A decision to consolidate has several perspectives including financial, instructional and pedagogical, political, social and cultural**. Each of these perspectives would need to be addressed as part of making any balanced decision as part of any future planning process.

Discussion on consolidation is a topic of conversation within the school district including staff, parents, community members, officials and students. To this point, arguments for or against consolidation are based on beliefs, conjecture, assumptions, and opinions. What is missing are objective facts and data, measured opinions, and detailed implications.

As this study report is made available to the public, the data alone indicating the amount of excess space when compared with similar sized school districts, supports the need for more attention and exploration of this issue. As a consultant, I take no position on the school consolidation question. However, **the consultant strongly encouragethe South Seneca Central School District Board of Education and school officials to engage in a deeper analysis and study of consolidating Grade PK-12 to a single campus and building**. Without the detailed objective information, discussions will continue to rely on personal opinions and the "loudest voice".

As previously discussed elsewhere in the study, should this detailed study commence, the **process of study should include participation by the school architect, school attorneys, Board of Education, and school administration**. As a strong advocate for stakeholder input and participation, the **consultant recommends establishing a district committee to review progress and share input and ideas.** The committee would have a broad representation from the participants listed above, as well as staff, students, parents, local officials, community members, and of course, students. This study would supply the much-needed objective facts, measured opinions, and detailed implications needed to ensure doing what is best for the South Seneca school community and students. I will remain available to assist the Board of Administration and district officials or respond to further inquiry. It has been my pleasure to serve you.

Thank you.

Kevin Baughman, Ph.D.
Study Consultant
Dr. Kevin Baughman & Associates

Spring, 2024

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