Hancock Central School District

Hancock, New York

A Study to Examine the Utilization of the District's School Buildings

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CHAPTER 1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hancock Central School District, like many upstate school districts, has recently experienced declining student enrollment and financial challenges impacted by the property tax cap, the COVID-19 virus, and uncertain state aid. To fulfill their responsibilities as stewards of the district's finances and facilities, the Hancock Board of Education chose to engage in a study to ascertain the best use of its school facilities for the future. The main focus of this study was framed by the following "purpose statement" the Board of Education and administration asked that the consultants address:

Given that overall district enrollments could decline in the face of unprecedented economic uncertainty, how can the HCS Board of Education plan to utilize and/or re-purpose existing classroom spaces in the elementary and middle/high school buildings so as to preserve fair, equitable and efficient provision of education programs to our students in the most cost-effective manner?

The timeline called for initiation of this study in March 2020 with the final report due to the Board of Education on June 15, 2020. The Board of Education selected Castallo & Silky LLC, an educational consulting firm from Syracuse, New York to conduct this study. Ms. Deborah Ayers and Mr. Alan Pole conducted this study for the firm.

The district has seen declining enrollments over the past six years. K-12 enrollment has declined from 364 in 2014-15 to 303 in 2019-20) a decrease of 61 students or 16.8%. It is projected that the enrollment for Hancock will continue to decline through the next seven years and reach 234 students in 2026-27, a further decline of 69 students or another 22.8%.

The district's schools are organized into a Pre-K-4 elementary building built in 1964 and a 5-12 middle/high school built in 1932. The district's facilities are generally in good condition.

Options. Over the course of the study, three options were considered. These options included:

Option 1: Close the current elementary school and renovate and move all of the elementary children to the middle/high school.

Option 2: Move some of the elementary school grade levels to the middle/high school.

Option 3: Remain the same….status quo.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the district convene a facilities planning committee whose role it will be to develop and monitor a long term facilities plan for the district. This committee should be provided with annual enrollment projections to guide their planning as they consider topics that might include the use of the school buildings, the scope of work to be performed from the Building Condition Survey, the long term design of appropriate school facilities, and the financing of these initiatives. This committee should be comprised of both school staff and members of the community.

2. It is recommended that the Board of Education implement Option 3 and maintain the status quo. It is further recommended that the district, through its facilities advisory committee, identify those items from the Building Condition Survey that should be addressed to make both of these buildings state of the art facilities.

3. It is recommended that the Board of Education conduct open discourse on these options for the general public to understand the basis for the decisions the board makes.

4. It is recommended that the district engage in annual enrollment projecting with an eye to current demographic trends in the county, school district, and neighboring school districts.

CHAPTER 2
BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This chapter provides background as to the need for the study. It offers a context within which the Hancock board of education can make decisions about how to best utilize its current school buildings from an instructional and financial perspective.

Background

The Hancock Central School District is located in Hancock, New York, a small village in Delaware County on the Pennsylvania border, approximately 45 minutes east of Binghamton. The district encompasses the towns of Hancock, Deposit, and Tompkins, Hancock being the primary town in the district paying approximately 86% of the school tax levy. The district's facilities include the Hancock Elementary School (Pre-K-4) and the Hancock Middle/High School which houses grades 5-12.

The Hancock school community has consistently shown its support for the education of its students. Nevertheless, finding the balance between the provision of a good education and the ability of a local community to provide the financial resources to support that education is an on-going challenge for any board of education and administration. Given the current economic condition of our country and our state and the continuing pressures to educate all children to higher levels, this challenge has become even more daunting and will remain so for the next few years. It is the Board's appreciation and understanding of the fundamental significance of this challenge that served as the stimulus for this study. As with all good boards of education, the Hancock Central School District Board of Education knows that maintaining the status quo for the future may not be possible. As a result, the board chose to examine possible ways to organize its grades and buildings in light of the challenges mentioned above.

The main focus of this study was framed by the following "purpose statement" the Board of Education and administration asked that the consultants address:

Given that overall district enrollments could decline in the face of unprecedented economic uncertainty, how can the HCS Board of Education plan to utilize and/or re-purpose existing classroom spaces in the elementary and middle/high school buildings so as to

preserve fair, equitable and efficient provision of education programs to our students in the most cost-effective manner?

The Board of Education selected Castallo & Silky LLC, an educational consulting firm from Syracuse, New York to conduct this study. Mr. Alan Pole and Ms. Deb Ayers led this study for the firm. Castallo & Silky LLC has extensive experience in working with school districts in New York State that have considered a variety of reorganizational options.

Timeline

The timeline called for initiation of this study in April 2020 with the final report due to the Board of Education by June 15, 2020. The recommendations contained in this advisory report represent those of the consultants and are presented as a vehicle for engaging the Board, the staff, and the community in discussion regarding the best use of its schools and its programs.

Study Guidelines

In order to emphasize the openness of this process, the consultants committed to the following guidelines for the study:

1. The study will be conducted in an open and fair manner;
2. All data will be presented to the Board of Education; and
3. Recommendations will:
    a. benefit student learning,
    b. be sensitive to the unique cultural context of Hancock,
    c. not be influenced by special interest groups,
    d. be educationally sound,
    e. be fiscally responsible and realistic, and
    f. provide a five to seven year perspective.

Acknowledgements

A study with this purpose and magnitude would not be possible without the support, cooperation, and encouragement of district staff. Superintendent Terry Dougherty and his staff,

especially Julie Bergman, were most generous with their time as the consultants often requested information. Without their willingness to accommodate the consultants' requests, the timeliness of this study would not have been achieved.

Finally, we wish to thank the members of the Hancock Board of Education. As is the case with all responsible school leadership teams, they took the risk of examining the use of their district facilities knowing full well that simply asking questions about how to better use these buildings might raise some very uncomfortable issues. Despite this, they supported the study. The board should be applauded for taking this initiative.

Study Methodology

The methodology for this study was based upon what is commonly known as "responsive evaluation." In essence, this methodology requires the design of data collection methods *in response to* a critical study question or issue.

The major activities undertaken as part of the study design began with the gathering of data from the district. These data were summarized and analyzed as they were received. The data gathering was focused by the purpose statement that drove the study.

CHAPTER 3
STUDENT ENROLLMENTS AND POPULATION TRENDS IN THE AREA

This section of the report provides a picture of the current status of the Hancock Central School District's student enrollment as well as an overview of the population trends in the area. Accurate enrollment projections are essential data for district long-range planning. Virtually all aspects of a district's operation (educational program, staffing, facilities, transportation, finances, etc.) are dependent on the number of students enrolled. For this reason, updated enrollment projections are crucial for this study and serve as the launching pad for our analysis.

The procedure for projecting student enrollments is referred to as the Cohort Survival Methodology. This methodology is the most frequently used projective technique for making short-term school district enrollment projections. Any enrollment projection methodology is an inexact science, especially in districts with enrollment less than 600, but the cohort survival method is the best available. To calculate enrollment projections, the following data and procedures are used:

--Six-year history of district enrollment by grade level

--Calculation of survival ratios by grade level

--Kindergarten enrollment projections based on resident live births

A survival ratio is obtained by dividing a given grade's enrollment into the enrollment of the following grade a year later. For example, the number of students in grade 3 in any year is divided by the number of students in grade 2 of the previous year. The ratios indicate the proportion of the cohort "surviving" to the following year. Cohort refers to the enrollment in a grade for a given year.

Using grade-to-grade survival ratios, an average of these ratios for each cohort progression is obtained. This average is referred to as an average projection survival ratio. This ratio is then multiplied by each current grade enrollment to obtain the projected enrollment for the next successive year. This process is continued for each successive year.

Survival ratios usually have values close to one but may be less than or greater than one. Where the survival ratio is less than one, fewer students "survived" to the next grade. Where the survival ratio is greater than one, more students "survived" to the next grade. Grade-to-grade survival ratios reflect the net effects of migration patterns in and out of the school district, the

number of students who are home schooled, promotion/retention policies, transfers to and from nonpublic and charter schools, deaths, and dropouts.

Since estimating births introduces a possible source of error into the model, it is advisable to limit enrollment projections to a period for which existing data on live residential births can be used. This means that enrollment projections are possible for five years into the future for the elementary grades, which is usually sufficient for most planning purposes. Beyond that point, the number of births must be estimated and the projective reliability is greatly reduced. Enrollment projections for grades 7 and 8 and for grades 9-12 can be projected for ten years into the future but elementary projections are limited to approximately a five-year period.

The methodology considered for this study was to extrapolate kindergarten enrollment cohorts from live birth data. Birth data is provided for school districts by the New York State Department of Health and is based upon the address of the mother at the time of the birth. Live birth data for the Hancock Central School District from 2003 to 2017 is shown in the following table:

Table 3.1
Number of Live Births: 2003-2017

Calendar Year	Live Births
2003	37
2004	34
2005	40
2006	37
2007	24
2008	24
2009	29
2010	29
2011	31
2012	28
2013	16
2014	22
2015	19
2016	18
2017	20

Live birth data are obtained from the New York State Department of Health. 2017 is the last year for which data are currently available. Table 3.1 provides a 15-year history of the births in the Hancock Central School District. It is clear from looking at the progression of the numbers that there have been slight year-to-year fluctuations but generally the number of children being born to mothers living in the school district has been declining for the past decade. The average number of births from 2003-2007 was 34.4 while the average number of births from 2008-2012 was 28.2. For the most recent five-year period from 2013-2017, the average number of live births was 19.

An average ratio of live births to actual kindergarten enrollment five years later is calculated. This ratio is then used to project future kindergarten enrollments from actual and estimated live births. For example, babies born in 2015 will be in kindergarten in 2020-21, babies born in 2016 will be in kindergarten in 2021-22 and so on. These projections enable the development of projected future school enrollment as shown in Table 3.2. It should be noted that Pre-K enrollments are not factored into the enrollment projections because Pre-K is a voluntary program and the relationship between Pre-K enrollments and enrollments at other grade levels is questionable at best. An important factor in the analysis of the enrollment projections found in Table 3.2 is the long-standing agreement between the Wayne Highlands School District in Pennsylvania and the Hancock Central School District. Beginning in grade 9, students from the Wayne Highlands School District may attend Hancock. Wayne Highlands is responsible for the payment of the designated tuition for each student for the educational services provided by Hancock. This influx of students in grades 9-12 is evident in Table 3.2 that follows as enrollments for these grades are greater than the grade level enrollments for grades K-8.


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Table 3.2 Hancock K-12 Enrollment History and Projections: 2014-15 to 2026-27													
Grade	2014 -15	2015 -16	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	2019 -20	2020 -21	2021 -22	*2022 -23*	*2023 -24*	*2024 -25*	*2025 -26*	2026 -27
Births 5 Years Before	29	31	28	16	22	19	18	20	19	19	19	19	19
K	21	24	28	33	16	14	18	17	19	18	18	18	18
1	24	19	24	20	29	13	12	15	15	16	15	15	15
2	18	27	16	21	21	28	13	12	15	14	16	15	15
3	27	22	26	15	22	19	28	13	12	15	14	16	15
4	20	25	19	23	16	21	18	27	12	11	14	13	15
5	26	20	24	19	21	17	21	18	26	12	11	14	13
6	29	25	17	30	20	21	17	21	18	27	12	11	14
7	28	24	23	15	29	21	20	16	20	17	25	11	10
8	21	28	24	23	16	29	21	20	16	20	17	25	11
9*	32	30	42	31	33	28	43	32	29	24	30	25	38
10*	46	31	29	35	30	31	26	40	29	27	23	28	23
11*	39	38	30	25	35	26	28	24	36	27	25	21	25
12*	33	41	37	30	24	35	26	28	24	36	27	25	20
K-12 Total	**364**	**354**	**339**	**320**	**312**	**303**	**291**	**282**	**271**	**265**	**246**	**238**	**234**
K-4 Total	110	117	113	112	104	95	89	83	72	74	77	78	78
5-8 Total	104	97	88	87	86	88	79	75	80	76	65	62	50
9-12 Total	150	140	138	121	122	120	123	123	119	115	104	98	107

Note: 2022-23 to 2026-27 births are the average of the five previous years. Consequently, from 2023-24 to 2026-27 the early grade estimates are quite speculative.

* Includes students from Wayne Highlands (PA) School District.

As is apparent from the above table, K-12 enrollment has declined over the past six years (364 in 2014-15 to 303 in 2019-20) by 61 students or -16.8%. Enrollment is projected to continue to steadily decline from current levels through 2026-27. The 2019-20 enrollment is 303 and the projection for 2026-27 is 234, an additional decrease of 69 students or -22.8%. It should be noted that the enrollment estimates for the early grades for 2023-24 through 2026-27 are based on *estimated* live birth rates as opposed to actual live birth rates and are therefore more speculative.

Additionally, when we consider the enrollments by school grade level groups, we see the same general pattern of declining enrollments from the 2014-15 school year to present although the enrollment in grades 5-12 has plateaued for the most recent three years.

Table 3.3 Six Year History of Hancock School Enrollments							
School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	% Change
Grades K-4	110	117	113	112	104	95	-13.6%
Grades 5-8	104	97	88	87	86	88	-15.4%
Grades 9-12	150	140	138	121	122	120	-20.0%
Note: These totals may vary from the district-wide total as ungraded special class students are counted in the numbers above and not in the district-wide table.							

As the focus of this study is on the utilization of facilities for the future, it is important to look at the projections by grade level groupings over the next five to seven years to determine if there are indicators that may cause consideration of changes in facility organization. Table 3.4 provides such a summary for the period from 2019-20 (actual) to 2026-27.

Table 3.4 Enrollment Projection by Grade Level Groups									
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Change from 2019-20
K - 4	95	89	83	72	74	77	78	78	-17 (-17.9%)
5 - 8	88	79	75	80	76	65	62	50	-38 (-43.2%)
9 -12	120	123	123	119	115	104	98	107	-13 (-10.8%)

The enrollments are projected to decrease in the elementary grades by almost 18%, the middle school by over 43%, and the high school by nearly 11%. While the projections are not exact, it is clear that there is a trend of continued enrollment decline in future years.

The overall district enrollment changes cannot be attributed to other factors such as increase of students being taught at home or Hancock students attending non-public schools. The number of home-schooled students has remained stable over the past four years as shown in Table 3.5. Hancock does not have any resident students that have attended non-public or charter schools over the past five years.

Table 3.5 Number of Resident Students Home Schooled 2015-16 to 2019-20	
School Year	Number of Students
2015-16	14
2016-17	11
2017-18	10
2018-19	10
2019-20	11

The next area for consideration relating to enrollment projections is the number of non-resident students attending the Hancock schools. As a district that borders Pennsylvania, Hancock is in a somewhat unique situation of having a substantial number of out-of-state students attending in grades 9-12. This is clearly illustrated in Table 3.2 as the class sizes in grades 9 – 12 are larger than those in grades K-8. Table 3.6 below documents the number of non-resident students attending Hancock in the past five years.

Table 3.6 Non-Resident Students Attending School in Hancock					
District	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Out of State (PA)	51	56	46	42	46
Deposit	1	1	0	0	0
Downsville	0	0	1	0	0
Jeff Youngsville	0	0	1	1	1
Total	52	57	48	43	47

If the current policies and agreements remain intact, the projection data in Tables 3.2 and 3.4 are reasonable. However, it has been noted that the enrollment in the Preston Area School (PA) housing grades K-8 is declining and the school may not be sustainable. Should this school close, it is possible that Hancock may see an increase in its future K-8 enrollment should the Wayne Highlands district offer an option for Preston Area School students to attend Hancock. Conversely, if the Wayne Highlands district decides to require all Preston students to enroll in the Honesdale school (PA), Hancock would experience an additional enrollment decline in grades 9-12. Using the assumption of 10 out-of-state students per grade level, the impact of these scenarios is shown in Tables 3.7 and 3.8 below using 2021-22 as the year of initial implementation.

Table 3.7 Enrollment Projection by Grade Level Groups with Preston Area Students									
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Change from 2019-20
K - 4	95	89	133	122	124	127	128	128	+33 (+34.7%)
5 - 8	88	79	115	120	116	105	102	90	+2 (+2.3%)
9 -12	120	123	123	119	115	104	98	107	-13 (-10.8%)

Table 3.8 Enrollment Projection by Grade Level Groups if no Out-of-State Students Attend									
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Change from 2019-20
K - 4	95	89	83	72	74	77	78	78	-17 (-17.9%)
5 - 8	88	79	75	80	76	65	62	50	-38 (-43.2%)
9 -12	120	123	123	109	95	74	58	67	-53 (-44.2%)

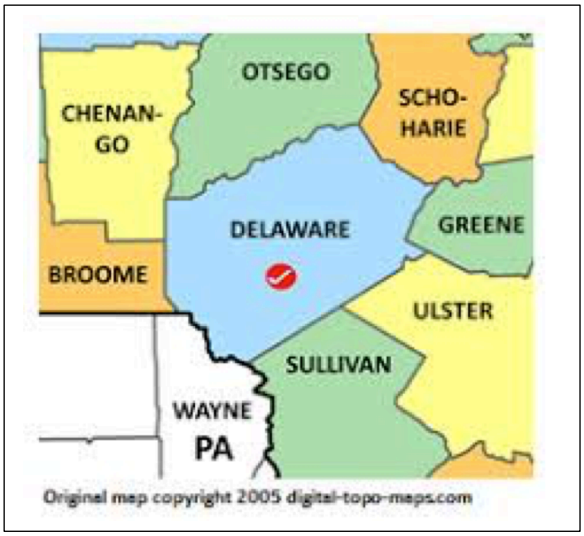
Assumed that Wayne Highlands would allow students currently enrolled in Hancock to complete their high school career in the district. Full grade 9-12 enrollment in 2021-22, followed by a decline of 10 students each year until transition out fully implemented in 2025-26.

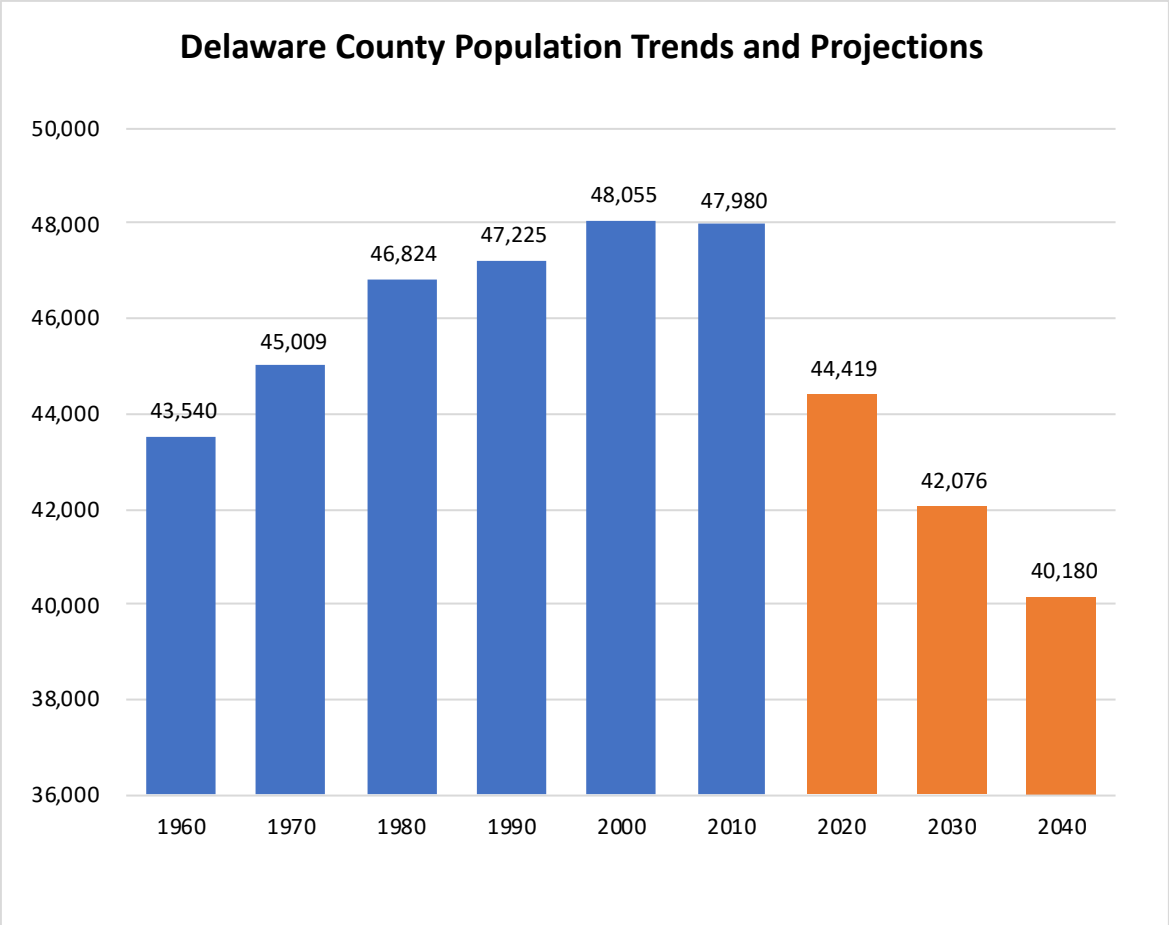
While this is a rough estimate, it is clear that any modification to the current agreement with the Wayne Highlands (PA) district would have a significant impact on future Hancock enrollment.

The enrollment decline in the Hancock schools is also mirrored in other school districts in Delaware County and the surrounding area. As Table 3.9 indicates, all of the districts in the Delaware County area have been losing enrollment since 2004-05 with the decline in enrollment over this 15-year period in Hancock being one of the larger declines in the county. The 5-year history also shows a decline in enrollment in Hancock and the enrollment projections referenced above indicate that the enrollment will likely continue to decline.

Table 3.9 Enrollment History for Area School Districts					
District	2004-05	2014-15	2019-20	15-Year Change	5-Year Change
Hancock	***485***	***382***	***316***	***-169 (-34.8%)***	***-66 (-17.3%)***
Andes	140	99	73	-67 (-47.9%)	-26 (-26.3%)
Charlotte Valley	455	391	412	-43 (-9.5%)	+21 (+5.4%)
Delhi	954	746	746	-208 (-21.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Downsville	392	272	219	-173 (-44.1%)	-53 (-19.5%)
Franklin	327	271	262	-65 (-19.9%)	-9 (-3.3%)
Margaretville	544	376	343	-201 (-36.9%)	-33 (-8.8%)
Roxbury	342	325	251	-91 (-26.6%)	-74 (-22.8%)
Sidney	1321	1069	1090	-231 (-17.5%)	+21 (+2.0%)
South Kortright	367	394	339	-28 (-7.6%)	-55 (-14.0%)
Stamford	478	340	270	-208 (-43.5%)	-70 (-20.6%)
Walton	1133	995	896	-237 (-20.9%)	-99 (-9.9%)
Deposit	715	549	482	-233 (-32.6%)	-67 (-12.2%)
Jeff Youngsville	1507	1105	1068	-439 (-29.1%)	-37 (-3.3%)
Roscoe	297	286	230	-67 (-22.6%)	-56 (-19.6%)

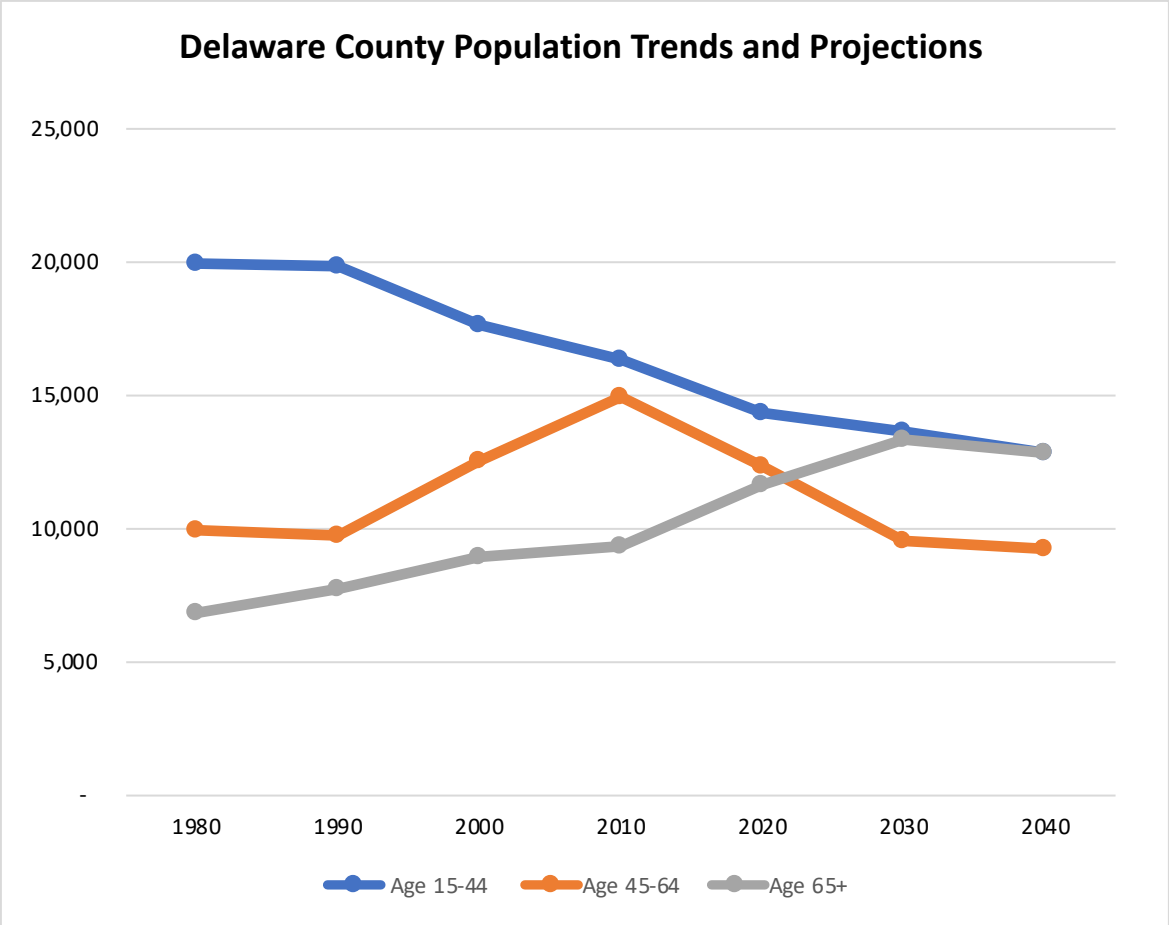
The recent decline in school district enrollment is not surprising given the overall population trends in upstate New York. The population in Delaware County peaked in 2000 followed by a slight decline in 2010. Projection data from the US Census department compiled by Cornell University indicates a significant decline is expected in 2020 followed by two decades of continued decline through 2040.





Source: Cornell Program on Applied Demographics

The graph that follows examines the population trends in Delaware County by age groups (ages 15-44, 45-64, and 65+). When one examines the cohort of adults in various age ranges as is shown in the Age Group graph that follows, a general increase in the cohort of individuals age 65 or greater is projected through 2040 while all other age groups are projected to decline. The decline in the 15-44 age group is significant because this is considered to be the child-bearing age group in most statistical models. With a decline in residents of child-bearing age, it is reasonable to project a commensurate decline in children attending area school districts. This is consistent with the enrollment projection data generated for Hancock using the Cohort Survival Method. The increase in the 65+ age group has very little bearing on district enrollment trends since this population is past child-bearing age.



Source: Cornell Program on Applied Demographics

Given the recent school district enrollment trends, and in light of the demographic variables studied, it does not appear that adjustments in the future enrollment projections provided in Table 3.2 are necessary under the current policies and agreements. However, the future direction of the Wayne Highlands (PA) district could result in the need to modify the projections. The Hancock Central School District is urged to engage in annual enrollment projecting with an eye to current demographic trends in the county, school district, and neighboring school districts.

Summary

- The district has seen declining enrollments in recent years and enrollment projection models indicate further decline through 2026-27.
- Decisions made by Pennsylvania school district officials could have a significant impact on Hancock enrollment.
- Enrollment projections should be updated annually with attention given to demographic trends in the county, school district, and neighboring school districts.

CHAPTER 4
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

This chapter provides selected descriptors of the educational program in Hancock that will assist in making decisions about future facilities use. The information provided is an overview and not an in depth analysis of the educational programs and is designed to highlight certain areas.

The most important function that any school district provides is to give its students a quality educational experience. In today's educational world, school districts are charged with providing an educational program that will ensure that its students are college and career ready. Being ready for college means that a high school graduate has the knowledge and skills necessary to qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses without the need for remedial coursework. Being ready for a career means that a high school graduate has the knowledge and skills needed to qualify for and succeed in the postsecondary job training and/or education necessary for their chosen career (i.e., community college, technical/vocational program, apprenticeship or other significant job training). The Hancock Central School District provides a comprehensive elementary school program for its students as a strong foundation in pursuit of these goals.

The district's schools are organized in a fairly common grade arrangement. Hancock has an elementary school housing grades Pre-K-4 and a middle/high school housing grades 5-12. The middle school includes grades 5-8 and the high school covers grades 9-12.

Table 4.1
2019-20 Hancock Grade Configuration

Building	Grade Levels
Elementary School	Pre-K-4
Middle/High School	5-12

Most school districts consider reorganization due to increases or decreases in enrollment, current buildings not meeting student needs, aging facilities, the desire to enhance facilities to benefit students, or as a means to address financial concerns. An examination of class sizes in the elementary school is important in a facilities study. The following table shows the current class sizes for the elementary school in Hancock.

Table 4.2 Elementary Class Sizes-2019-20	
Grade	Enrollment by Section
Pre-K/K	7/6
K	9
1	5, 8
2	14, 14
3	21
4	10, 11
Total Students	105
Average Class Size	11.7

An examination of Table 4.2 shows that Hancock has an integrated Pre-K/Kindergarten classroom with seven Pre-K students and six Kindergarten students. The table also illustrates that the district has been able to maintain very reasonable class sizes in the elementary school. An average class size of 11.7 students is quite unusual with statewide average class size for elementary schools approximating twice that number.

Elementary programs across New York State tend to have many similarities. The Hancock school district provides a comprehensive program for its elementary school students. All students receive the core instructional program in English Language Arts, math, science, and social studies. In addition, students in grades Pre-K through grade 4 are exposed to the variety of special subjects including art, music, physical education, library, and computers.

As was done with the elementary schools, we now look at the curriculum and section sizes that exist in the Hancock Middle/High School in the tables that follow. The next area for analysis involves the program that is available to the middle school students in Hancock. Middle school students have a very busy schedule because one of the purposes of education at this level is to give students the opportunity to explore a variety of courses. In addition, school districts in New York State are required to allow acceleration into high school level courses in math and at least one other academic area for their eighth grade students. Hancock offers this acceleration in math and Spanish. Table 4.3 that follows shows the courses that are available to middle school students in Hancock as well as the enrollments in each class section.

Table 4.3 Middle School Course Offerings & Section Sizes	
Course	Enrollment by Section
ENGLISH	
English 5	17
English 6	22
English 7	8, 13
English 8	12, 10
English AIS-1/2 year	3, 8, 3, 8
English 7 AIS	6
English 8 AIS	4, 10
SOCIAL STUDIES	
Geography-MS	18, 10, 10
Social Studies 5	17
Social Studies 6	22
Social Studies 7	10, 13
Social Studies 8	12, 18
MATH	
Math 5	19
Math 6	22
Math 7	11, 10
Math 8	13, 11
Finance MS	10, 11
Math 7 AIS	7
Math 8 AIS	5, 3
SCIENCE	
Science 5	17
Science 6	22
Science 7	15, 8
Science 8	16, 14
SPANISH	
Spanish 7	11, 12
Spanish 1-8	15, 14
MUSIC	
Music 5-1/2 year	8, 10
Music 6-1/2 year	11, 11
Music 8-1/2 year	15, 15
Chamber Choir MS	4
Chorus MS 5	5, 2
Chorus MS 6, 7, 8	31, 1
Band MS 5	12, 13
Band MS 6, 7, 8	36

ART	
Art 5	18
Art 6	22
Art 7	10, 11
Art 8	14, 16
PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH	
Physical Education 5	17
Physical Education 6	22
Physical Education 7	13, 10
Physical Education 8	16, 14
Health 7	12, 11
SPECIALS	
Computers 5-1/2 year	7, 10
Computers 6-1/2 year	11, 11
Computers 7-1/2 year	11, 12
Home & Career Skills 6-1/2 year	10, 12
Home & Career Skills 7-1/2 year	10, 13
Home & Career Skills 8-1/2 year	14, 16
Library 5-1/2 year	17
Library 6-1/2 year	22
Technology 7-1/2 year	11, 11
Technology 8-1/2 year	15, 15
SPECIAL EDUCATION	
English 7 SC	2
English 8 SC	2
Math 7 SC	2
Math 8 SC	3
Resource Room 3-6	4, 4, 3, 1, 5, 1, 4, 4, 6, 4, 2, 2
Skills 5	8, 9
Skills 6	7, 1, 2, 2, 2, 1, 3, 4
MISCELLANEOUS	
Study Hall MS	10, 9, 11, 11, 11, 10, 1

Table 4.3 above shows a fairly typical array of course offerings for a middle school in a district the size of Hancock. There are core academic offerings with reasonable class sizes. There are also academic intervention courses in English and math. In addition, there are the specials that are required for all middle school students in New York State.

Table 4.4 that follows provides course offerings and section sizes for the high school students in Hancock. For example, English 9 R has two sections of classes, one with 10 students and one with 23 students.

Table 4.4 High School Course Offerings & Section Sizes	
Course	Enrollment by Section
ENGLISH	
English 9 R	10, 23
English 10 R	7, 5, 13
English 11 R	12, 14, 3
College English 101-1/2 year	18, 7
College English 102-1/2 year	16, 7
Journalism	5
Journalism 2	1
English AIS-1/2 year	3, 8, 3, 8
SOCIAL STUDIES	
Social Studies 9 R	4, 23
Social Studies 10 R	7, 7, 14
Social Studies 11 R	11, 17
Economics 12-1/2 year	14, 18
Government 12-1/2 year	19, 15
Unified Government	2
College Sociology 100-1/2 year	5
College Psychology-1/2 year	5
Social Studies AIS-1/2 year	6, 7, 2, 1, 4, 1, 7, 6, 8, 3, 2, 7
MATH/BUSINESS	
Math 9 S	1
Algebra 1	9
Algebra 1 A	12, 10
Algebra 1 B	5, 14
Geometry	17
Algebra 2	4
College Calculus	2
College Statistics	2
Math 10 S	1
Math 12 S	1
Accounting	6
Business Computer Applications	2, 9
Business Mathematics	10, 9
Consumer Math	9, 8
Keyboarding	10
Pre-Calculus A-1/2 year	4
Pre-Calculus B-1/2 year	4
Math AIS-1/2 year	9, 9
SCIENCE	
Earth Science R	7, 7, 19

Living Environment/Biology	2, 9, 17
Chemistry R	7
Physics R	6
College Biology 101-1/2 year	7
College Biology 102-1/2 year	7
Science Seminar	17
Science AIS-1/2 year	5, 1, 2, 5, 2
SPANISH	
Spanish 1	12, 3
Spanish 2	11
College Spanish 102	10, 7
College Spanish 201-1/2 year	7, 7, 1
College Spanish 202-1/2 year	8, 7, 1
College Spanish 280-1/2 year	8
College Spanish 281-1/2 year	8
MUSIC	
HS Chorus	22
Chamber Choir	5
Chamber Choir-Independent Study	5
HS Band	21
Band-Independent Study	1
ART	
Ceramics	1
Studio in Art	13, 21
Drawing & Painting-1/2 year	4
PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH	
Physical Education 9-12	15, 10, 13, 22, 20, 11, 15, 25, 1
Health	8
College Personal Health 206	11, 8, 7, 2
TECHNOLOGY	
Computer Web Page	8
Pre-Engineering-1/2 year	11
Cabinet Making-1/2 year	11
SPECIAL EDUCATION	
English 9 S	3, 3
English 10 S	4, 3
English 11 S	1
English 12 S	1
Math 12	1
Resource Room	2, 2, 4, 3, 4, 2, 4, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 3, 5, 3, 3, 1, 5, 6, 6, 7, 2, 8, 4
MISCELLANEOUS	
Yearbook	5
Career Readiness	2, 1

Study Hall	33, 3, 14, 16, 22, 18, 19, 12, 10
Study Hall-1/2 year	17, 31, 17, 30, 27, 9, 27, 9, 9, 12, 10, 13, 13, 10, 13, 11, 14, 26, 15, 28, 23, 10, 11, 5, 12, 12, 11, 5, 2, 3, 4, 2, 13, 24, 10, 19, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7
WIN	8, 10, 10, 10, 10, 9, 8, 9, 8, 9, 3, 6, 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 6, 5, 4, 4, 4, 7, 2, 2, 3, 7, 4, 7, 6, 7, 5, 7, 3
BOCES	
Auto Technology	3
Building Trades	2
Child Care	2
Conservation	4
Cosmetology	2
Human Services	2
Computer Networking/Repair	2
Security & Law Enforcement	1
Welding	1
English 12	8
Occupational Math	8
Occupational Science	9

Table 4.4 above shows a fairly typical array of high school course offerings for a district the size of Hancock. The five core academic curriculum areas have the basic courses needed for graduation that are all offered every year. While many smaller districts have cut their business departments over the past decade, Hancock has managed to retain a significant number of business offerings for its students. Spanish is offered as the only language other than English. There are a number of electives, including college courses, that, again, is fairly typical for a district of Hancock's size. On the other hand, larger high schools would be expected to have a larger number of electives than small high schools like Hancock. Nineteen students attend career and technical education courses at BOCES. This represents approximately 31% of Hancock's juniors and seniors.

WIN, or "What I Need," gives Hancock students at the elementary, middle and high school levels an opportunity to learn more during school hours. The district has tailored WIN to address grade-appropriate needs at each level and provides for remediation, support or enrichment in particular areas of study that may or may not be available to students during regular instruction periods. The final observation to be made from the table above is, that in

addition to the time allocated for the WIN program, there are a large number of study halls in the high school.

Now that the course offerings have been identified, we turn to a further analysis of these academic programs. As is the case in most smaller school districts, the number of electives, advanced placements courses, and specialized curricular offerings is somewhat limited. This is simply due to the challenge of programming for small high schools. In addition, with a smaller number of students, there are often a significant number of small classes in small high schools. This is the case with Hancock. Table 4.5 that follows shows the number of core academic classes that have fewer than ten students in the class. This table does not include AIS classes.

Table 4.5
Core Academic High School Section Sizes with Fewer Than 10 Students

Course Area	Number of Sections	Number of Sections with Fewer than 10 Students	Percent of Sections with Fewer than 10 Students
English	14	7	50%
Social Studies	14	6	43%
Math/Business	19	13	68%
Science	11	8	73%
Spanish	13	10	77%
Total	71	44	62%

As seen in Table 4.5, Hancock has 62% of its core academic classes with fewer than ten students. While there is nothing inherently wrong with small class sizes, the challenge for small districts is how long they can maintain these course offerings with so few students enrolled, given the fiscal realities that school districts in New York State face today and will face in the future. When finances are limited and reductions have to be made, classes with very low enrollments are often the first things to be cut. Over time, this has the effect of reducing the number of opportunities for students. This potential is further exacerbated by the enrollment projection that the 9-12 enrollment will decrease from 120 to 107 students over the next six years.

While the limited number of electives and the number of classes with small enrollments is a reality, it should again be emphasized that Hancock is not doing anything wrong; this is simply the effect of a small school district managing declining enrollments in a time of fiscal challenges. However, it is clear that this trend will continue into the future.

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are provided as support for students who need additional help. Because these classes are offered to students in need, it is always the case that these classes have small enrollments. Table 4.6 that follows shows the AIS classes that are offered to Hancock students in the core academic areas in the high school.

Table 4.6
Core Academic High School AIS Sections

Course Area	Number of AIS Sections	Section Sizes of AIS Classes
English	4	3, 8, 3, 8
Social Studies	12	6, 7, 2, 1, 4, 1, 7, 6, 8, 3, 2, 7
Math/Business	2	9, 9
Science	5	5, 1, 2, 5, 2

As Table 4.6 points out, there are 23 sections of AIS classes across the four content areas shown in the table, each having a relatively low enrollment. These enrollments are not at all unusual for this type of support class. However, when coupled with the already low enrollments in the regular core classes, Hancock has a large number of regular and AIS classes with low enrollments. This impacts staffing, finances, future programming, and, the focus of this study….facilities.

Summary

- Hancock offers a fairly comprehensive program for its students at all levels for a district of its size
- Many of the classes at the high school level have very small enrollments
- There are a large number of study halls in the high school

CHAPTER 5
FACILITIES

Since this study focuses on a possible building reconfiguration, the current utilization of district buildings is studied. It is first important to examine how the schools are being used this academic year, and to gauge how enrollments may impact these schools in the future. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the district's elementary and middle/high schools.

Table 5.1
Overview of Hancock's School Buildings

Schools	Elementary School	Middle/High School
Address	206 Wildcat Drive Hancock, NY 13783	67 Education Lane Hancock, NY 13783
Year of Original Building	1964	1932
Sq. Ft. in Current Building	40,073	92,390
Number of Floors	1	3
Grades Housed	Pre-K-4	5-12
Students Served-2019-20	95	208
Overall Condition	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Architect	Highland Associates	
NOTES: All information was taken from the NYS Building Condition Survey completed in 2015 except the enrollments that were drawn from the 2019-20 academic year.		

As can be seen from table 5.1 above, both of the school buildings are aging. The elementary school was built in 1964 and the middle/high school was built in 1932. The middle/high school is a three story building. Both buildings are located on the same campus on the edge of the village of Hancock, New York. A parking lot and the athletic field separate the two buildings.

Given the capacity of the buildings involved in this study, the consultants then determined the current use of the regular classrooms with respect to class sizes and numbers of sections at each grade level. This analysis produced the following table 5.2 for the elementary school grades.

Table 5.2 Elementary Class Sizes-2019-20	
Grade	Enrollment by Section
Pre-K/K	7/6
K	9
1	5, 8
2	14, 14
3	21
4	10, 11
Total Students	105
Average Class Size	11.7

As can be seen in Table 5.2, Hancock has two sections of students at grades 1, 2, and 4. In the 2019-20 school year, Hancock has one section of students at grades Kindergarten and 3. The district also has a multi-age classroom for Pre-K and Kindergarten children. The average class size is a very reasonable 11.7 students per class.

In addition to the grade alignment by building, it is important to determine how each of the district's current buildings is currently being utilized. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 that follow show the 2019-20 school year utilization of the district's two school buildings.

Table 5.3 Elementary School Classroom Usage 2019-20 (Building Also Has Gym, Cafetorium, & Library)			
No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (9)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (5)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Offices
14	Pre-K/K-1 K-1 1-2 2-2 3-1 4-2	Special Education-2 Art/Music-1 Reading/AIS-1 Counselor-1	OT/PT-1 Faculty Room-1 Speech-1 Computer Lab-1

Given today's declining enrollments in school districts, it is not unusual to find elementary school buildings with a number of empty classrooms. However, this does not appear to be the case in Hancock. Table 5.3 shows an elementary school that appears to be well utilized. Each of the grade level classes has its own classroom and full size classrooms are available for special education classes and specials. It is a bit unusual to have a counseling office utilizing a

full size classroom but this is a minor observation given the complete analysis of this building's utilization. The gym that is located in the elementary school is the most modern gymnasium in the district. In addition to hosting elementary school physical education classes, this gym also hosts high school varsity and junior varsity athletic competitions.

The middle/high school building is located on the same campus as the elementary school in Hancock. Table 5.4 that follows shows how the rooms in the middle/high school are being utilized in the 2019-20 school year.

Table 5.4
Middle/High School Classroom Usage 2019-20
(Building Also Has Gym, Cafeteria, Auditorium, & Library)

No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level/Core Academic Classrooms (21)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (25)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Offices
46	5/6 Grade-3 English-4 Social Studies-4 Math-4 Science-4 Spanish-2	Special Education-2 Business-1 Distance Learning-1 Resource Room-1 Technology-2 STEAM-1 Computer Lab-1 Storage-3 Health-1 ISD-1 Home & Career Skills-1 Music-3 Art-1 Superintendent-1 Business Office-1 CSE-1 Staff Room-1 Guidance-1 Cafeteria Manager-1	Math Lab-1 Resource Room-2 Business Manager-1 Special Education-1 Buildings & Grounds-1

The middle/high school has more than double the square footage of the elementary school, a fact that is evidenced by the room utilization in Table 5.4. The middle/high school has 46 full size classrooms compared with 14 full size classrooms in the elementary school; the elementary school appears to be "larger than it really is" because of the square footage of the large gymnasium.

While Hancock's elementary school building appears to be nearly filled, there does appear to be available space in the middle/high school. That is not to say that there is a great deal of empty space. Human nature being what it is, program and services expand to fit the space that is available. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, a district should have an honest assessment of its space utilization as it considers other facilities options for the future.

In assessing Table 5.4, twenty-one of the forty-six full size classrooms are devoted to core academic subjects for grades 5-12. Most of the other twenty-five full size classrooms are used for traditional purposes in providing special education and related courses for students. However, if one were to identify full size classrooms that did not necessarily have to be located in a middle/high school, there are a number of those as well. They include the following:

Resource Room-1*

Storage-3

ISD-1*

(*Standard rooms but often located in rooms that are smaller than full size classrooms)

In addition to the rooms identified above, there are also a number of offices that are located in the middle/high school as follows:

Superintendent-1

Business Office-1

CSE-1

Cafeteria Manager-1

Again, it is not unusual to have offices located in school buildings. However, these offices are located in full size classrooms. In addition, the office of the former business manager is also in the middle/high school and is located in a smaller room. Again, there is nothing inherently wrong with this utilization of space but having full size classrooms for the functions listed above is an arrangement that might provide some options for the district-wide utilization of space should the board decide to do something different and go in that direction.

In addition to the assigned use for each of the rooms in the middle/high school, it is also important to see how often each of these rooms is used on a daily basis. This is a more detailed analysis than simply identifying the major use of the rooms in the building as was done in Table 5.4. For example, the previous tables show us that a room might be used for English but the tables do not tell us whether the room is used every period of the day or not. Table 5.5 that

follows shows that period-by-period utilization for each room in the middle/high school based on a nine period schedule.

Table 5.5
Middle/High School Room Utilization Table
(Does not include Planning, Lunch, Athletic Director, ISD, Department Chair, or Yearbook)

Room	1	2	3	4	5/6	6/7	8	9	10	11	12	Total w WIN	Total w/o WIN
100-HS	x		x	x								3	3
101-HS	x	x	x	x				x	x		w	7	6
115-HS		x	x	x		x		x	x	x	w	8	7
118-HS		x	x					x	x	x	w	6	5
119-HS	x			x		x						3	3
120-HS										x	x	2	2
122-HS	x		x	x	x			x	x	x	w	8	7
125-HS	x	x	x	x	x					x	w	7	6
203-MS		x	x	x				x	x	x	w	7	6
204-MS		x	x	x				x	x	x	w	7	6
205-MS		x	x	x				x	x	x	w	7	6
206-MS		x	x	x		x		x	x		w	7	6
207-MS	x	x		x		x		x	x		w	7	6
208-MS	x	x		x				x	x	x	w	7	6
213-MS	x	x		x				x	x	x	w	7	6
217-MS	x	x		x		x		x	x		w	7	6
227-HS			x	x		x		x	x	x	w	7	6
229-MS	x	x		x	x			x	x	x	w	8	7
231-MS		x	x	x		x		x	x		w	7	6
301-HS			x		x			x	x	x	w	6	5
302-HS	x	x	x	x					x	x	w	7	6
303-HS	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	w	8	7
304-HS	x		x	x				x	x	x	w	7	6
308-HS	x	x						x	x	x	x	6	6
309-HS		x	x	x	x			x	x	x	w	8	7
314-HS*	x	x	x		x			x		x	w	7	6
314-HS*	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	w	8	7
317-HS	x		x	x		x		x		x	w	7	6
318-HS		x	x	x				x	x	x	w	7	6
319-HS	x	x		x		x		x	x	x	w	8	7
320-HS	x	x	x			x		x	x		w	7	6
321-HS	x	x	x	x		x			x		w	7	6
322-HS	x	x	x					x	x	x	w	7	6
												222	193

*2 rooms were listed as Room # 314
x=room utilized for regular class period; w=room utilized for WIN for 20 minutes

There are thirty three classrooms listed in table 5.5 and ten full length periods in the day in addition to a shortened period at the end of the day for WIN. Thirty-three classrooms being available for ten full periods a day would yield 330 possible periods in which to schedule offerings for students. Courses being offered for 193 of the 330 full length periods means that the

middle/high school room utilization is at 58.5%. In looking closer at this table, it is evident that the typical classroom is used for classes for about six periods out of the ten period day. This is consistent with the room utilization calculation of 58.5%.

It is impossible to schedule any school building at 100% utilization. If school districts use their facilities at 80% capacity, it is generally accepted that they are making good use of the buildings. Since the Hancock Middle/High School is scheduled at approximately 60% of the time, it is fair to conclude that while there might be some space available, it would be highly improbable that there would be sufficient room in the middle/high school to move multiple other grade levels into the building. Furthermore, assuming for argument sake, that there was room to move the elementary school to the middle/high school, the room utilization would far exceed the 80% level making the space management of the middle/high school extremely challenging.

In consideration of current space utilization, it is clear that neither the elementary school nor the middle/high school is overcrowded. On the contrary, there appears to be some space in both buildings that could be repurposed if necessary. It is quite clear that if the district was interested in moving a single grade level from the elementary school to the middle/high school, that could undoubtedly be accomplished if the two sections/classrooms of fourth grade were to be moved. However, moving one or even two grade levels from the elementary school to the middle/high school accomplishes little with respect to the district's use of its facilities. Savings would not occur because the elementary school would still be open to house the other grade levels. The only way, from a facilities standpoint, to economize is to move the entire elementary school program into the middle/high school. There are currently 14 full size classrooms in the elementary school and a number of other smaller, related spaces. Without a dramatic reconfiguration of the elementary program, a dramatic reconfiguration of the utilization of the middle/high school, and the relocation of the district offices, there does not appear to be room for the elementary program to fit in the middle/high school. And, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, while facilities might change, closing the elementary school saves the district very little money. Closing the facility that houses the district's main gymnasium would also create challenges.

The Building Condition Survey

In addition to space utilization, another important aspect for determining future facility use is the overall physical condition of the buildings themselves. The New York State Education Department requires all school districts to conduct a Building Condition Survey (BCS) every five years. This survey is an inspection of all school buildings by an architect and an engineer to determine the physical condition of the facility.

The Building Condition Surveys for all school districts were required to be updated in 2015. The table below summarizes the results of the Building Condition Survey and the follow up status of items for Hancock's elementary school.

Table 5.6
Status of Items from 2015 Building Condition Survey for Elementary School

Item Description from 2015 BCS	Cost To Remedy	Covered in 2014 Capital Project?	Remaining Cost to Remedy
Replace incoming water	28,000	No	$28,000
Asphalt Replacement	50,000	Yes	-
Playground Replacement	250,000	Yes	-
Remedy wet crawl space	500,000	No	$500,000
Structure deteriorating	$500,000	Yes	-
Repair cracking	$10,000	Yes	-
Door replacement	$10,000	Yes	-
Window replacement	$500,000	Yes	-
Replace western corridor walls	$750,000	No	$750,000
Replace VAT tile with VCT tile	$200,000	No	$200,000
Door upgrades	$25,000	Yes	-
Replace distribution panels	$26,000	No	$26,000
Lighting upgrades	$60,000	No	$60,000
Replace PA console	$15,000	No	$15,000
Air conditioning for cafeteria, auditorium, and gym	$65,000	Yes	-
Replace unit ventilators	$185,000	Yes	-
Boiler replacement	$150,000	Yes	-
Replace emergency batteries	$5,000	No	$5,000
		TOTAL	$1,584,000

It is clear from Table 6.5 above that a number of items for attention were identified for the elementary school in the 2015 Building Condition Survey. It is also quite clear that many of these items were addressed during the 2014 capital project in Hancock. As a result, only $1,584,000 worth of items remained to be addressed, a relatively small amount of work

compared with other school districts. Not all of these items are urgent. However, in 2019, the voters in Hancock have approved another capital project that will address other items in the elementary school. The bottom line is that the physical condition of the elementary school is in very good condition thanks to the leadership of the administration and the support from the board of education and the community.

The middle/high school, being more than thirty years older than the elementary school, also has issues that need attention. However, much like the situation with the elementary school, the district has been most diligent in keeping its facilities safe and appropriate for its students. Work was done on the middle/high school in 2014 and additional work will be completed with the 2019 capital project. Understanding that the middle/high school is nearly 90 years old, the building is in very good condition.

Finally, a note of perspective is warranted. This study was undertaken to see if there was a better way to utilize the school facilities in Hancock. If any changes could even be contemplated, the changes that might be feasible would be to move some of the elementary school programming from the elementary school to the middle/high school. The elementary school is simply too small to accommodate the middle school or the high school programming. As a result, this study will further examine whether or not it might be prudent to examine moving some or all of the elementary school programming to the middle/high school. Closing the elementary school would, in all probability, result in an empty building on the current campus since there does not appear to be a demand for an outside organization who would be interested in renting or buying the facility. Having an empty building on campus and losing the district's main gymnasium would present significant challenges for the district.

As the district considers options for organizing its schools, understanding the current utility costs for the elementary school is important. Table 5.7 that follows shows the annual utility costs for the elementary school building from June 2018 through May 2019.

Table 5.7
Elementary School Utility Costs-June 2018-May 2019

Electricity	$7,421
Natural Gas	$19,090
Total	$26,511

As can be seen in Table 5.7, the utility costs for the elementary school are $26,511. Even if one were to consider the possible closure of the elementary school, it is important to calculate

the utility cost savings that might accrue to the district. It is assumed that the district will maintain ownership of the closed elementary school, will not be renting the facility, and will be responsible for the cost of the utilities for the closed building so that the building remains in good repair. As a rule, it is estimated that savings of 40% will accrue to the district when comparing an open building with a closed building. Calculating 40% savings on the annual $26,511 utility costs would yield possible savings of $10,604. Given the total financial scope of the district's facilities decisions, these savings that might accrue to the district are fairly insignificant and, from an accounting perspective, be deemed immaterial.

The district has a history of appropriately attending to its facilities. The Hancock community has approved capital projects as follows:

Table 5.8
History of Recent Capital Project Votes in Hancock

Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Amount of Project
2007	407	101	$7.8 Million
2014	105	46	$6.6 Million
2019	104	31	$8 Million

The district has aging facilities with the middle/high school having been constructed in 1932 and the elementary school having been constructed in 1964. School buildings don't last forever and a major decision about these two buildings will have to be made at some point in the future. However, now is not necessarily the time to make the major decision about these buildings. Should the district continue to manage its facilities as it has in the past, the existing buildings should serve the community well for the foreseeable future.

Summary

- Built in 1964 and 1932 respectively, the elementary school and the middle/high school are currently serving the district's students well
- Both the elementary school and the middle/high school are comfortably utilized but are not overcrowded
- The room utilization of the middle/high school is at approximately 60%
- The district has been very conscientious about maintaining and enhancing its facilities and has received excellent support from the Hancock community

- Closing the elementary school would save approximately $10,604 in annual utility costs

CHAPTER 6

STAFFING

Education is a people intensive business. School districts routinely spend 70-75% of their operating budgets on salaries and fringe benefits for the people who work in their schools. As school districts examine how to "educationally and fiscally" reconfigure their facilities, consideration of the staffing needs of the school district is important. This chapter of the report examines staffing patterns in the Hancock schools as well as the staffing implications should changes in facilities be considered. The data associated with Hancock's school staff members can be seen in table 6.1 that follows.

Table 6.1
Elementary School Staffing Overview-2019-20

Title	Number of Staff	Average Salary
Aide	2	18,747
Building Maintenance Aide	2	28,631
Monitor	3	15,898
Nurse	1	27,497
Secretary	1	25,176
Teacher*	16*	57,763
Total Elementary Staff	25	
*Teacher category includes 9 common branch classroom teachers, 2 special ed. teachers, 1 AIS teacher, 1 phys. ed. teacher, 1 librarian, 1 music teacher, and 1 art teacher		

In addition to salaries paid to employees, there are obligations that accrue to the school district for the cost of fringe benefits. In addition to health insurance costs, the district has costs for employee retirement plans, workers compensation, social security, and other related benefits. The percentage cost of fringe benefits varies greatly for each employee group. In general, employees with lower salaries will have higher percentage fringe benefit costs while higher paid employees may have lower percentage fringe benefit costs. For purposes of this study, it will be estimated that fringe benefit costs for the district represent 50% of all salary costs. Table 6.2 that follows shows elementary school staffing costs with fringe benefits included.

Table 6.2 Elementary School Staffing Overview With Fringe Benefit Costs-2019-20				
Title	Number of Staff	Average Salary	Average Position Salary with Fringe Benefit Cost of 50%	Total Salary with Fringe Benefit Cost for Each Title
Aide	2	18,747	28,121	56,242
Building Maintenance Aide	2	28,631	42,947	85,894
Monitor	3	15,898	23,847	71,541
Nurse	1	27,497	41,246	41,246
Secretary	1	25,176	37,764	37,764
Teacher*	16*	57,763	86,645	1,386,320
Total for Elementary Staff	25			1,679,007
*Teacher category includes 9 common branch classroom teachers, 2 special ed. teachers, 1 AIS teacher, 1 phys. ed. teacher, 1 librarian, 1 music teacher, and 1 art teacher				

One of the options that is considered in any facilities study is the possible closure of school building. In Hancock, the only possible closure would be the elementary school building with the current elementary students being moved to the middle/high school. Should the district consider this option, would cost savings in the area of staffing be realized?

In consideration of the impact on staffing, it is assumed that the current educational program currently provided to the elementary school children in Hancock would continue as currently structured. Given this assumption, it can reasonably be concluded that those staff who interact directly with children on a daily basis would continue in that role. Therefore, whether the program provided to the children happens in the elementary school or the middle/high school, it is assumed that the number of teachers and teacher aides would remain the same. As can be seen in Table 6.2, the total cost of salaries and benefits for elementary school staff is approximately $1,679,007. The cost for teachers and teacher aides, the positions that are assumed to be the same regardless of where the elementary program is located, is approximately $1,386,320 or 83% of the total cost of salaries and benefits for the elementary staff.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, staff salaries make up approximately 75% of a school district's budget. If a district is looking to save money by rearranging its facilities, the only way to generate significant savings is to reduce staff salaries and benefits. In the facilities chapter, reference was made to savings that might accrue in utility costs if the elementary school was to be closed…approximately $10,000. This is not a significant amount of savings for a

school district with a budget approaching $12,000,000. Staff savings are the only way to accrue measureable economies. In Hancock's case, the district would have to identify those staff savings that could be generated by closing the elementary school. Where would the savings be? In assuming the teachers and teacher aides would not change, 83% of the salary and benefit cost would carry over to a new location. If the K-12 program was located in one building at the middle/high school, could one nurse handle all the students; could one secretary handle the entire building; could there be fewer monitors? These are all questions that the district would have to address. However, strictly from a staffing standpoint, even if reductions could be made in these areas, the financial savings that would accrue to the district would be relatively minor since 83% of the salary and benefit costs are committed to teachers and teacher aides.

Again, from strictly from a staffing standpoint, there may be areas where the district could realize some savings if finances were the focus of this study. In the elementary school, it has been shown that the class sizes in the elementary school are very reasonable as shown in the following table.

Table 46.3
Elementary Class Sizes-2019-20

Grade	Enrollment by Section
Pre-K/K	7/6
K	9
1	5, 8
2	14, 14
3	21
4	10, 11
Total Students	105
Average Class Size	11.7

The district has two full time teachers for the 22 students who are in the full day kindergarten program and the half-day Pre-K program; there are two full time teachers for the thirteen students in first grade; and there are two full time teachers for the 21 fourth grade students. By any comparison, these ratios of teachers to students are very low and will probably go lower since the K-4 enrollment is projected to go from its current level of 95 students to 78 students. If finances are the focus, savings could potentially be realized by altering these class sizes. However, since this is a facilities study, no benefits appear to accrue to the district from a facilities standpoint from considering any of these staffing changes.

Summary

- Staffing costs for salaries and fringe benefits comprise approximately 70-75% of a school district's budget
- The only way to generate significant savings in most school districts is to reduce staff costs
- Teachers and teacher aides comprise approximately 83% of all salary and benefit costs in the elementary school

CHAPTER 7

FINANCE

Effective management of finances is an important requirement for any school district. It is particularly important in a challenging national and state economy like we have seen over the past decade and especially with what we have seen in the past four months.

As noted previously, one important measure of a board of education's ability to find the balance between the quality of education that the community wants for its children with the community's ability to support this education is the annual school district budget vote. The following table summarizes the results from school district budget votes from 2011 to 2019. As can be seen, the budget has passed by a wide margin every year.

Table 7.1
District Budget Vote History

Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes	% Yes Votes
2019	97	26	123	78.9%
2018	174	55	229	76.0%
2017	98	23	121	81.0%
2016	81	17	98	82.7%
2015	87	5	92	94.6%
2014	109	21	130	83.8%
2013	89	29	118	75.4%
2012	122	32	154	79.2%
2011	112	38	150	74.7%

The Hancock school community has also supported the purchase of school buses for each of the past nine years as shown in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2
Bus Votes

Year	Yes	No
2019	98	26
2018	177	52
2017	89	32
2016	80	18
2015	81	11
2014	97	31
2013	86	37
2012	100	54
2011	125	25

In addition to the outstanding record on school budget votes and school bus purchases, the Hancock community has also supported capital project votes in 2007, 2014, and 2019. All of these affirmative votes are representative of a school district that is strongly supported by its community.

A second window into the district's current fiscal situation is through examination of the history of the full value tax rate for the district. The five-year history of the tax rate is shown in Table 7.3 that follows.

Table 7.3
Five-Year History of Full-Value Tax Rates Per $1,000

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Tax Levy	$6,548,349	$6,547,759	$6,690,500	$6,775,660	$6,882,610
Full Value	$312,717,719	$312,799,219	$308,247,768	$325,442,113	$317,016,381
Full Value Tax Rate	$12.35	$12.35	$12.89	$12.12	$12.49
% Change		0.0%	+4.4%	-6.0%	+3.1%

The full value tax rate is determined by dividing the assessed valuation of taxable property of the district by the equalization rate(s) of the city, town(s), or village(s) that make up the school district. This means that the full value tax rate can be increased either by the tax levy increasing, the full value decreasing, or both. The change in the district's tax rates has been most significantly influenced by changes in property values. The tax levy determined by the district has been essentially flat over this five-year period demonstrating sound fiscal management by the district over time.

To assess the district's overall fiscal position, it is important to focus on the number and amount of restricted fund balance (reserve) accounts the district maintains. Restricted fund balance accounts are similar to a savings accounts for the school district and are defined as part of the total fund balance that a school district maintains. There are different types of reserve accounts; each with a different focus. The reserves, or restricted fund balance, are savings accounts defined for specific purposes that are described in the table that follows. The history of the restricted fund balance account in Hancock is shown below in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Restricted Fund Balance: A Five Year Summary					
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Insurance					$10,000
Tax Certiorari	$163,128	$148,648	$148,648	$133,256	$113,558
Repairs	$90,130	$90,130	$50,255	$50,255	$50,356
Capital Projects	$200,000	$200,000	$610,000	$1,738,166	$1,739,974
Capital Projects - Transportation	$797,869	$541,569	$609,607	$715,384	$682,813
Employee Benefit Accrued Liability	$742,296	$577,434	$574,434	$574,434	$570,072
Unemployment	$33,185	$33,300	$33,307	$33,315	$33,320
ERS Retirement Contribution	$831,000	$1,582,000	$1,382,000	$1,050,000	$1,071,229
TRS Retirement Contribution					$56,485
Total	$2,857,608	$3,173,081	$3,408,251	$4,294,810	$4,327,807

Table 7.4 shows that the restricted fund balance has increased each year over the past five years. The steady increase in the restricted reserves is a very positive indicator and again shows prudent management of the district's financial resources.

Next, we examine the amount of money Hancock uses to hold down the tax rate each year; that is, money the district has on hand at the end of the previous year that it applies to the revenue side of the ledger for the upcoming year. This is called the assigned fund balance. From the 2018-19 general fund budget, Hancock applied $588,080 to hold the tax rate down. If it had not done so, the district would have had to raise this additional revenue from the local taxpayers to support the 2019-20 school year operation. A five-year history of the assigned fund balance is shown in Table 7.5 that follows.

Table 7.5 History of Assigned Fund Balance		
Year ending 6/30	Assigned Fund Balance	
	Appropriated for Taxes	Encumbrances from Prior Year
2015	$455,000	$165,887
2016	$357,114	$58,426
2017	$252,114	$36,246
2018	$182,114	$56,816
2019	$588,080 ($388,080 designated to offset local share of capital project + $200,000 applied to reduce the tax levy)	$73,587

Table 7.5 shows that, over the period of five years, the amount of monies appropriated to control the tax levy has varied depending on the fiscal circumstances of each year. Hancock has been diligent in its examination of budget conditions to determine an appropriate amount of assigned fund balance to be used to control the tax rate increase each year. Again, this is another indicator of planned, prudent management of the district's finances.

A third type of fund balance account that many school districts maintain is the unassigned fund balance. This is often referred to as the 'rainy day fund' since its major purpose is to help school districts deal with unforeseen expenditures that come up during the year and is limited to 4% of the subsequent year's budget. Table 7.6 that follows shows the history of Hancock's unassigned fund balance over a period of the last five years.

Table 7.6 History of Unassigned Fund Balance	
Year ending June 30	Unassigned Fund Balance
2015	$423,604
2016	$426,704
2017	$446,921
2018	$451,659
2019	$377,518

In a time of financial challenges for school districts, it is admirable that Hancock has been able to maintain its unassigned fund balance at a reasonably stable level over the past five years. This is an enviable trend for the school district and again is reflective of a school district that is very well managed with respect to its financial resources. Not all school districts are in this condition! The financial standing of the Hancock Central School District is a tribute to the

board of education and the superintendent for their outstanding leadership in managing the district's finances.

Now that the fund balance accounts have been examined, it is appropriate to look at an overview of the school district's budget. The 2019-20 school budget is $11,590,423, up 2.6% from the 2018-19 budget of $11,291,458. Expense categories for the current budget are as follows:

- Administrative - $1,677,004 (14.5%)
- Program - $7,992,731 (69.0%)
- Capital - $1,920,688 (16.5%)

These data show us that a significant majority of money spent in the school district is for supporting the instructional program. This is not surprising in that the core function of schools is to educate children.

Revenue to support the expenses of the school district comes from the following sources:

- State Aid - $6,759,181 (58.3%)
- Property Taxes - $4,141,242 (35.7%)
- Other Revenues - $340,000 (2.9%)
- Inter-fund Transfer (Reserves) - $150,000 (1.3%)
- Fund Balance - $200,000 (1.7%)

It is interesting to note that more than half of the school district's revenue comes from state aid. This makes future revenue projections quite precarious since state aid can be unpredictable. The economy, competing state and federal priorities, and politics often drive decisions about aid that is very much out of the hands of school district officials. This is a crucial factor for school district leaders who do their best to financially plan for the future. Increasing salaries, health insurance premium increases, and pension cost increases will all drive up school district costs in the future. The property tax cap and uncertain increases in state aid will limit revenues for school districts and will make future financial planning very challenging.

Another important financial variable is the current amount of principal and interest the district carries on former capital borrowing. Regardless of any future options the district endorses concerning grade arrangement and facilities, Hancock will have to engage in future borrowing to

accomplish some amount of capital work as identified in the Building Condition Survey or for the district's programmatic needs. The following table summarizes the current capital debt obligations of the district. In addition, the table also estimates the amount of state aid the district will receive on these payments as well as the net local share taxpayers must contribute. The current debt will be paid off in 2031-32. However, given the algorithm for calculation and distribution of state building aid, the state building aid revenue will likely exceed the debt service payment beginning in 2029-30.

Table 7.7
Summary of Principal & Interest on Capital Debt-Net Local Share

Year	Total Debt Service	Estimated Building Aid	Estimated Net Local Share
2019-20	$816,925	$773,602	$43,323
2020-21	$852,200	$773,602	$78,598
2021-22	$850,100	$773,602	$76,498
2022-23	$849,950	$773,602	$73,148
2023-24	$846,750	$773,602	$73,148
2024-25	$665,300	$609,447	$55,853
2025-26	$666,600	$609,447	$57,153
2026-27	$667,050	$609,447	$57,603
2027-28	$666,650	$609,447	$57,203
2028-29	$648,150	$609,447	$38,703
2029-30	$428,500	$443,304	($14,804)
2030-31	$430,000	$443,304	($13,304)
2031-32	$430,500	$443,304	($12,804)
Totals	$8,818,675	$8,245,154	$573,521

It is important to consult with financial advisors experienced in school district debt service and building aid when planning future obligations to minimize any adverse financial impact on the district.

In summary, we have concluded that the Hancock Central School District is in excellent condition from a financial standpoint. District staff have provided the type of leadership in managing the district's finances that has positioned the district well for the future. Having said that, the financing of public schools in New York State continues to be complex. The uncertainty of state aid, the ever-increasing costs associated with operating school districts, and the local tax cap that limits the ability of a school district to raise local revenues will require continued

planning to ensure the future fiscal stability of the district.

Summary

- The community has been very supportive of the school district as evidenced by its positive votes on referenda for the annual budget, school busses, and capital projects.
- The district has effectively managed its finances as evidenced by the controlled increases in its tax rates.
- The district has effectively planned for its future by maintaining appropriate fund balance accounts.

CHAPTER 8
OPTIONS FOR MAINTAINING AND/OR RECONFIGURING THE DISTRICT'S SCHOOLS

When evaluating the current status of Hancock's school buildings, the consultants first attempted to identify "feasible" options—in other words, how *could* the buildings be arranged. Following this, the next step was to identify the "desirable" options—among the feasible ways, what is/are the option(s) that make the most educational and fiscal sense. Following is a discussion of the "feasible" options with advantages and disadvantages of each followed by the consultants' prioritization of the "desirable" option.

In a discussion of the facilities options that are available to the school district in the future, one important factor, the enrollment of Pennsylvania students in Hancock, must be considered in analyzing all options. Currently, the Preston Area School District in Pennsylvania operates a K-8 school and sends no students to Hancock; however, the sustainability of this school is currently being analyzed. Also, the Wayne Highlands school district in Pennsylvania currently sends approximately 50 high school students per year to Hancock. Will the relationship that Hancock has with the Pennsylvania schools remain the same in the future? If so, the options discussed in this study seem valid. However, should a significant number of elementary school children start coming to Hancock….or should the 50 high school students currently coming to Hancock cease….or both, the options discussed in this study would have to be reexamined.

The Purpose Statement for the Study

Given that overall district enrollments could decline in the face of unprecedented economic uncertainty, how can the HCS Board of Education plan to utilize and/or re-purpose existing classroom spaces in the elementary and middle/high school buildings so as to preserve fair, equitable and efficient provision of education programs to our students in the most cost-effective manner?

Identification and Discussion about Feasible Facility Options

The consultants have identified three options for this study as follows:

Option 1: Close the current elementary school and renovate and move all of the elementary children to the middle/high school.

Option 2: Move some of the elementary school grade levels to the middle/high school.

Option 3: Remain the same….status quo.

***Option 1*- Close the current elementary school and move all of the elementary children to the middle/high school.**

Since at least 1964, Hancock has maintained an elementary school and a middle/high school on the same campus in the village of Hancock. The elementary school houses grades Pre-K-4 and the middle/high school houses grades 5-12. **Option 1** would close the elementary school building and move all of the elementary children to the middle/high school.

Advantages to Option 1:

-Consolidates all the students and staff in one building;

-Eliminates lost time and inconvenience from staff having to walk outside to get from one building to the other;

-Saves approximately $10,604 in annual utility costs for the elementary building;

-Provides increased convenience for parents with students currently located in both school buildings

Disadvantages to Option 1:

-Closes a building that will have emotional attachments for some members of the community and staff;

- Will necessitate a change in culture within the newly configured middle/high school as the current buildings are combined that will likely take some time and require modification to current procedures.

-Closes a building that had millions of dollars spent on capital improvements since 2007;

-Loss of 14 classrooms;

-Loss of 40,073 square feet of school space;

-Loss of primary gymnasium for the district

-Without a dramatic reconfiguration of the elementary program, a dramatic reconfiguration of the utilization of the middle/high school, and the relocation of the district offices, there does not appear to be room for the elementary program to fit in the middle/high school.

***Option 2*- Move some of the elementary school grade levels to the middle/high school.**

Advantages to Option 2:

-None

Disadvantages to Option 2:

-Moves children from primary or intermediate grades out of an elementary setting and into a middle/high school setting

Option 3-Remain the same….status quo.

Advantages to Option 3:

-Creates no controversy in the community;

-Costs no money

Disadvantages to Option 3:

-Does not provide any potential savings from staff reductions or utility costs

Discussion

The Hancock Board of Education has been very astute in being proactive about examining the use of its facilities. Given the district's declining enrollment, the age of the school buildings, and the financial pressures that will face the district in the years to come, this study was a wise activity. Furthermore, the study was undertaken at a time when there is no immediate crisis facing the district; another fortunate circumstance.

In considering the options, there does not appear to be any compelling reason to make changes at this point in time. Moving the entire elementary population to the middle/high school would create a crowded condition in the middle/high school, leave a perfectly good and useful elementary building vacant, and save little, if any, money. The crowding in the middle/high school could be somewhat alleviated by moving the district offices and other offices out of the building but then the cost for renting this office space would, in all probability, exceed what little savings that might be generated from the cost of utilities in the elementary building. There do not appear to be any advantages to moving some of the elementary grades to the middle/high school.

There is one other interesting observation that can be made from this study. At this point in time, school districts all across New York State are redesigning their schools for September as a result of the COVID 19 virus. Regardless of how these redesigned schools will be configured, social distancing of students and adults will undoubtedly be in place when the new school year begins. Hancock, with its very manageable student enrollment and its available space in the buildings, will be better positioned than most districts to implement a new structure when the school year begins in September 2020.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the district convene a facilities planning committee whose role it will be to develop and monitor a long term facilities plan for the district. This committee should be provided with annual enrollment projections to guide their planning as they consider topics that might include the use of the school buildings, the scope of work to be performed from the Building Condition Survey, the long term design of appropriate school facilities, and the financing of these initiatives. This committee should be comprised of both school staff and members of the community.

2. It is recommended that the Board of Education implement Option 3 and maintain the status quo. It is further recommended that the district, through its facilities advisory committee, identify those items from the Building Condition Survey that should be addressed to make both of these buildings state of the art facilities.

3. It is recommended that the Board of Education conduct open discourse on these options for the general public to understand the basis for the decisions the board makes.

4. It is recommended that the district engage in annual enrollment projecting with an eye to current demographic trends in the county, school district, and neighboring school districts.