

# Greater Johnstown City School District

*Facility and Grade Arrangement Study  
September 17, 2019*



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## CHAPTER 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Greater Johnstown City School District, like many upstate school districts, has recently experienced declining student enrollment and significant financial challenges. Realizing that business as usual is not an option for the future, the district chose to engage in a study to ascertain the best use of its facilities for the future. A consulting firm (Castallo & Silky LLC of Syracuse) was engaged to work with a district advisory committee to answer the following questions:

***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district's grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

Six meetings were held with the consultants and the advisory committee to consider a variety of options for answering the study questions. In the end, the following findings, conclusion, and recommendations are made about the school facilities in Johnstown.

### ***Key Findings***

***Finding 1:*** Live births in the City of Johnstown were used to predict kindergarten enrollment five years later. The live birth rate has been dropping slightly since 2011.

***Finding 2:*** The K-12 district enrollment has declined from 1,714 in 2013-14 to 1,575 this past year, or an 8.1% drop most of which was experienced at the secondary level. In 1994-95 the district enrolled 2,264 K-12 students.

***Finding 3:*** Looking out to 2025-26, enrollment projections estimate the district will have approximately 1,498 K-12 students or roughly another 4.9% drop. This drop will primarily be felt at the elementary level.

***Finding 4:*** Examining enrollments at the elementary schools we find that in the past five years enrollment has increased slightly (+4.5%) at Pleasant Avenue, remained quite constant at Warren Street, and declined at Glebe Street (-12.2%).

***Finding 5:*** The number of district residents that elect to home-school their children has remained quite constant over the past five years at between roughly 30-40 students per year.

***Finding 6:*** The number of Johnstown resident students that attend school elsewhere has been increasing over the past four years and in 2018-19 twenty-five students did so.

***Finding 7:*** Fulton County population has declined over the period of 2007 (55,489) to 2017 (53,827) and the U. S. Census projects it will continue to decline through 2040 (52,675).

***Finding 8:*** Like most upstate counties, the median age in Fulton County has been rising from 41.5 years in 2009 to 43.8 years in 2017. Additionally, the Fulton County childbearing age group (25-44 years) has been declining since 2007 (13,972) to 2017 (12,674).

***Finding 9:*** In 2018-19 the elementary schools have reasonable class size averages (Pleasant Avenue, 19.7; Glebe Street, 20.0; Warren Street, 22.3) and because the district has adopted a grade center model, there is a good balance of class sizes at each grade level.



*Finding 10:* In addition to the typical core elementary subjects, the three elementary schools also offer special area subjects at all grade levels including art, music, physical education, computer, and library skills. These special area subjects operate on a 6-day cycle.

*Finding 11:* On the New York State grades 3-8 tests, Johnstown students typically score about as well as Fulton County students in English/Language Arts and Mathematics but lower than the state as a whole.

*Finding 12:* The district educates most of its special needs students in district schools (193 in 2018-19) while sending a smaller number (31 this past year) to out-of-district programs. This rate has been quite constant over the past five years.

*Finding 13:* The Junior High School program is typical for a school district of this size. The High School Program provides many alternatives for students.

*Finding 14:* Class sizes in the junior high and high school are strong.

*Finding 15:* An extensive number of interscholastic athletic opportunities are available to the students in Johnstown.

*Finding 16:* There is an abundance of space in the Johnstown school buildings.

*Finding 17:* Room utilization at the high school is slightly below average.

*Finding 18:* The leasing of Jansen Avenue to BOCES is approximately a break even proposition.

*Finding 19:* School building utility costs are a relatively small expense. If a building is closed, utility cost savings would approximate 40% of the original cost.

*Finding 20:* Prior to the most recent capital project, the 2015 Building Condition Survey identified approximately \$38,000,000 worth of work to be considered; however, much of this work has been accomplished.

*Finding 21:* Fringe benefit costs add approximately 50% to the cost of salaries.

*Finding 22:* Staff reductions are the only way to achieve significant savings in school districts. A combination of involuntary reductions and attrition might be considered for Johnstown given its current fiscal challenges.

*Finding 23:* The district employs a two-tier (double trip) routing plan for daily routes to and from its school buildings.

*Finding 24:* A bus shuttle system is utilized to transport elementary students from neighborhood schools to the school building of attendance.

*Finding 25:* The Johnstown community has supported the district's spending plans until recent circumstances have resulted in above average increases in the proposed tax levy.

*Finding 26:* Restricted fund balance accounts (reserves) have been established and funded by the district but will have to be utilized to fund the general operating budgets in future years if no changes to current expenditure and revenue trends are made.

*Finding 27:* Use of assigned fund balance to support the district spending plan has decreased in recent years.

*Finding 28:* During the five audited years from 7/1/13 – 6/30/18, unassigned fund balance has been maintained at a level at or slightly above statutory limits. It is projected that the unassigned fund balance will decrease in subsequent years.

*Finding 29:* While fluctuating slightly, full value tax rates have been maintained at approximately the same level over the past four years.

*Finding 30:* Johnstown has approximately \$17.1 million in local share of debt service (after estimated building aid) on its current borrowing through 2033-34.





*Finding 31:* External auditors rendered an unqualified (most favorable) opinion in the most recent audit report.

*Finding 32:* Although the district has begun addressing this issue, it is likely that, as projected, district expenditures will continue to increase at a greater rate than revenues over the next five years as evidenced by the chart on page 56 of the report.

### ***Conclusion***

With these findings in mind, the following conclusions—or answers to the key questions that focused this study—have been reached.

***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

As consultants we have concluded that there are two options for arranging the grades and schools to achieve the stated purposes outlined above. While several “feasible” options were explored in depth, only two provide a “desirable” direction in our opinion for the district to pursue in light of the desire to maintain or improve the education of Johnstown students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayer.

### ***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 will include the closure of Glebe Street School, the scope of work to be performed from the 2015 and next 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 consider the following options as both “feasible” and “desirable” as it looks to the future.

- Option 1: Move the sixth grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close Glebe Street Elementary School. Pleasant Avenue would then house grades K-2 while Warren Street Elementary would educate students in grades 3-5.
- Option 2: Move the sixth grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close Glebe Elementary School. Pleasant Avenue would then house all PreK-1 grade students while Warren Street Elementary School would educate students in grades 2-5.

Given the district’s current difficult financial situation, these options were deemed most desirable from a financial standpoint. Maintaining the status quo (keeping all buildings open and continuing with the same grade arrangement) is not fiscally responsible. Quite simply, the district does not need all of the space available in the current buildings. In addition, unless elementary class sizes are increased (which the Advisory Committee made clear is undesirable)



the current arrangement offers no financial savings at a time when the district is facing severe financial challenges in the near future.

The following table summarizes the financial impact to the taxpayer if either of these options had been adopted and implemented in the 2018-19 school year. The actual tax levy for 2018-19 was \$8,604,157 and the full-value tax rate was \$14.42. Table 13.1 illustrates how each option’s cost savings could have reduced the tax levy and therefore reduced the full-value tax rate thus benefiting the taxpayer. However, it should be kept in mind that the district could have chosen to apply some of the savings to maintain and perhaps improve program.

<b>Table 1.1</b>				
<b>Impact to the Taxpayer by Option if Implemented in 2018-19</b>				
<i>Option</i>	<i>Option Savings</i>	<i>Revised Levy</i>	<i>Revised FV Tax Rate</i>	<i>Savings to \$100 K Homeowner</i>
1	\$355,477	\$8,248,680	\$13.83	\$59
2	\$355,477	\$8,248,680	\$13.83	\$59
<u>Assumptions</u>				
1-All the projected staff savings were realized in the first year of implementation of each option.				
2-All savings were used to reduce the tax levy.				
3-Any closed building was not sold or leased which could yield additional revenue for the district.				

3. It is recommended that Johnstown use attrition as the method for reducing staff whenever possible. Furthermore, it is realized that attrition might not occur quickly enough to meet the financial challenges faced by the district. In these cases, it might be necessary to invoke involuntary staff reductions.

4. It is recommended that the Board of Education conduct at least one public hearing/comment period on these options for the general public to express opinions.

5. It is recommended that the district implement these options in the 2020-21 school year. This will allow for adequate time to conduct one or more hearings to permit the public to make concerns and comments known about each of the options under consideration and for sufficient planning time to finalize implementation details so that the transition is as smooth as possible. Implementation details may involve some minor renovations to the elementary schools and/or to Knox Junior High. However, it is likely that the majority of these renovations could be handled internally by district staff.

6. Should either of our recommended options be endorsed by the Board of Education, we also recommend the district should first consider attempting to either secure a buyer for the Glebe Street building OR a lessee to ensure the school is put to productive use. After a reasonable period of time if the school is not closed or rented the district should consider moving the District Offices and the currently rented Maintenance Facility to the vacant school.



## CHAPTER 2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study with this purpose and magnitude would not be possible without the support, cooperation, and encouragement of many individuals. We would first like to express our appreciation to the members of the advisory committee appointed by the Johnstown Board of Education. The members of the committee included:

Dave Wood	Susanne Fitzgerald
Jennifer Spinnoble	Kathy Zajicek
Meredith Fagan	Jessica Stock
Robert Kraemer	Dino Vahaviolos
Michael Satterlee	Melissa Cornell
Nicole Panton	Joe LoDestro

These committee members gave generously of their time to help ask the right questions and to provide direction in finding answers. Without their assistance this study would not be nearly as complete and responsive to the information needs of the Board of Education and residents of the Greater Johnstown City School District.

Superintendent Dr. Patricia Kilburn, her most helpful Assistant Superintendent Ruthie Cook, and her staff were also generous with their time as we often requested information. Without their willingness to accommodate our requests, the timeliness of this study would not have been achieved.

Finally, we wish to thank the members of the Greater Johnstown Board of Education. As 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 district buildings might raise some very uncomfortable issues. Despite this, they supported the study and actively followed the progress of the study, while always ensuring that all members of the community would be heard on this most important issue. This was no easy task, but they accepted the challenge and allowed the study process to run its course!



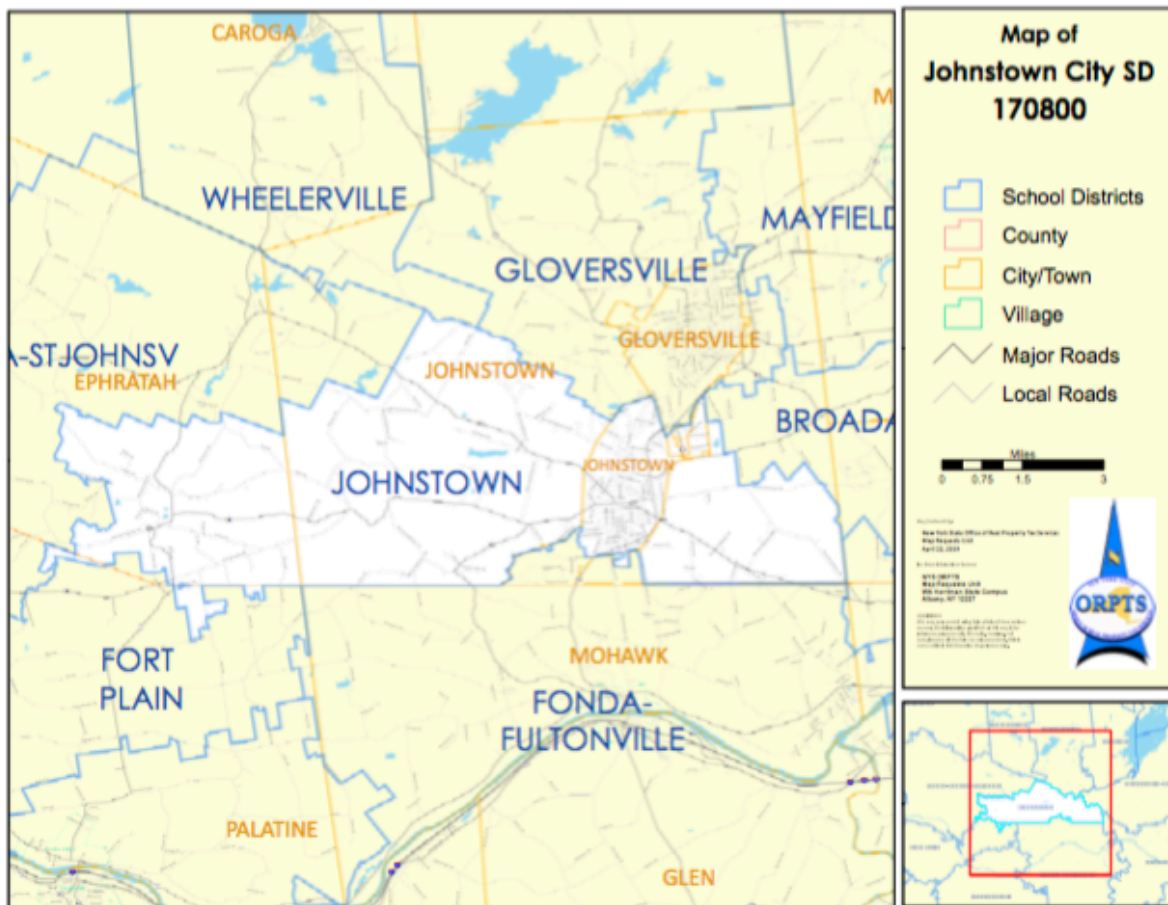


### CHAPTER 3 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This first chapter provides background as to the need for the study. It offers a context within which to place the consideration of various grade/facility options and associated costs and benefits. This context offers perspective for the decisions the Greater Johnstown City School District Board of Education has before it over the next few years.

#### Background

The Greater Johnstown City School District is located in Fulton County and covers approximately 46 square miles serving primarily the townships of Johnstown, Johnstown City, Ephratah, Palatine and Gloversville City. The district's facilities include three active elementary schools (Pleasant Avenue grades PK-1, Glebe Street grades 2-3, Warren Street grades 4-6), a 7-8 Junior High School (Knox), and a 9-12 High School. Additionally, the district owns the Jansen Avenue school building that is currently leased to HFM BOCES. A map of the district follows.





The Greater Johnstown School District community has consistently shown its support for the education of resident students as noted in the historical budget voting pattern in the following table. Residents have passed school budgets on the first vote in eight of the past ten years as shown in Table 3.1. Both of the two votes that were not successful on the first attempt passed resoundingly on the second vote. In addition, district residents have also passed three capital projects since 2005 (2005, 2007 and 2014) as well as 7 of 7 bus propositions since 2006.

Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes
2019	1,150**	1,147	2,297
2018	461*	439	990
2017	340	194	534
2016	340	101	441
2015	350	95	445
2014	311	100	411
2013	293	107	400
2012	404	109	513
2011	475	160	635
2010	600	284	884
2009	507	203	710

\*NOTE: In 2018 the budget did not pass since the district needed a supermajority of 60% for passage; a second vote passed 924 yes to 388 no.  
 \*\*NOTE: In 2019 the budget did get majority support however the district needed the supermajority for it to pass. The district did pass a budget under the state cap on the second try in June 2019 by a vote of 1,393 yes to 803 no.

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**Until recently the Johnstown school community  
has consistently supported district spending**

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Nevertheless, finding the balance between the provision of a good education and the ability of a local community to provide the financial resources 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, as well as the financial conditions of Johnstown schools specifically, this challenge has become even more daunting over the past 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 Greater Johnstown City School District Board of Education chose to examine possible ways to organize grades and buildings in the district in light of the challenges mentioned above.



The main focus of this study was framed by the following “critical questions” the Board of Education and administration asked that the consultants address:

***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

The timeline called for initiation of this study in early January 2019 with the final report due to the Board of Education in September 2019.

The Board of Education selected Castallo & Silky LLC, an educational consulting firm from Syracuse, New York to conduct this study. Mr. Alan Pole, Ms. Deborah Ayers and Dr. William Silky 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.

To answer the “critical study questions,” a study design, which is presented in the next chapter, was developed with the express purpose of being transparent and complete. 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 Johnstown,
  - 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.

The study concludes with this final report to the Board of Education. While the advisory committee had significant input into the development of this study, the recommendations contained in this document 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 organization of the district, its programs, and its facilities.



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**While the Advisory Committee had significant input into the development of this study, the recommendations represent those of the consultants.**

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## CHAPTER 4 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. In this specific study, the Board of Education posed the following questions that drove this study.

***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

The following is a summary of the major activities undertaken as part of the study design. The consultants gathered considerable data from the district and other agencies. These data were summarized and analyzed as they were received. The data gathering was focused by the questions that drove the study. In addition, the consultants conducted interviews with key district staff to gather perspectives on the various issues under study and to understand completely the meaning of the data that was gathered. A Board-appointed advisory committee met with the consultant team on six occasions to review data that had been gathered, share thoughts and opinions, and to critique tentative recommendations before the study was concluded. Finally, a draft of this report was shared with the advisory committee to seek final thoughts from the group.

The final report was presented to the Board of Education in a public session on September 17, 2019







## CHAPTER 5 STUDENT ENROLLMENTS AND POPULATION TRENDS IN THE AREA

This section of the report provides a picture of the current status of the Greater Johnstown City School District's student enrollment as well as an overview of the population trends in the geographic area.

### Student Enrollment History and Projections

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 highly reliable and is the most frequently used projective technique for making short-term school district enrollment projections. 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. The multiplicative 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 deaths, dropouts, the number of students who are home schooled, promotion/retention policies, transfers to and from nonpublic schools, and migration patterns in and out of the school district.

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.





The methodology considered for this study was to extrapolate to kindergarten enrollment cohorts from live birth data. Live birth data for the Greater Johnstown City Schools from 2004 to 2017 is shown in the following table:

<b>Table 5.1 Number of Live Births, 2004 -2017</b>	
Calendar Year	Number
2004	104
2005	125
2006	137
2007	120
2008	139
2009	107
2010	103
2011	129
2012	96
2013	112
2014	100
2015	97
2016	102
2017	113
NOTE: As of 11/6/18 the 2017 live births are preliminary and subject to change.	



Live births are then compared with the kindergarten enrollment five years into the future. ...babies born in 2014 will be in kindergarten in 2019-20, babies born in 2015 will be in kindergarten in 2020-21, and babies

born in 2016 will be in kindergarten in 2021-22. An average ratio of live births to kindergarten enrollment five years later is then calculated. This ratio is then used to project future kindergarten enrollments from actual and estimated live births. Now that we can predict future kindergarten enrollments we are able to complete the full table of future school enrollment as shown in the following table. It should be noted that Pre-K enrollments are not factored into the enrollment projections because Pre-K, being a voluntary program, the relationship between Pre-K enrollments and enrollments at other grade levels is questionable at best.

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## Live Births Are Used to Project Kindergarten Enrollment Five Years Hence

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<b>Table 5.2 Johnstown K-12 Enrollment History and Projections-2013-14 to 2025-26</b>													
Grade	2013 -14	2014 -15	2015 -16	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	2019 -20	2020 -21	2021 -22	2022 -23	2023 -24	2024 -25	2025 -26
Year/ Births	2009/ 107	2010/ 103	2011/ 129	2012/ 96	2013/ 112	2014/ 100	2015/ 97	2016/ 102	2017/ 113	2018/ 105	2019/ 105	2020/ 105	2021/ 105
K	123	113	87	126	122	125	105	102	107	119	111	111	111
1	119	120	110	91	131	119	125	106	102	108	119	111	111
2	133	118	120	113	89	131	119	125	105	102	108	119	111
3	113	139	113	109	112	90	129	117	123	104	101	106	117
4	104	112	148	117	109	112	92	131	119	125	106	102	108
5	119	110	108	135	115	114	111	91	130	118	124	105	102
6	119	120	118	106	131	117	115	112	92	131	119	126	106
7	126	132	127	113	113	140	123	121	118	97	138	126	132
8	145	121	123	121	109	110	134	118	116	113	92	132	120
9	170	176	166	142	128	133	132	161	142	139	136	111	159
10	156	146	138	132	137	129	117	117	142	125	123	120	98
11	125	133	133	127	113	112	112	102	102	124	109	107	105
12	162	137	140	146	134	143	125	125	114	113	138	121	119
K-12 Total	1714	1677	1631	1578	1543	1575	1540	1528	1513	1519	1524	1496	1498
K-6 Total	830	832	804	797	809	808	796	784	778	807	788	780	766
7-8 Total	271	253	250	234	222	250	257	239	234	210	230	258	252
9-12 Total	613	592	577	547	512	517	486	505	500	501	506	459	481
Notes: (1) Ungraded special needs students are not included in these totals; (2) 2022-23 to 2025-26 births are the average of the five previous years. Consequently, from 2023-24 to 2025-26 the early grade estimates are quite speculative; (3) additionally, the 2017 live births are unaudited as of this writing.													

As is apparent from the above table, K-12 enrollment has declined over the past six years (1,714 in 2013-14 to 1,575 in 2018-19; -139 students/-8.1%). This decline is projected to continue through 2025-26 (-77 students/-4.9%). This future decline will be felt at the elementary and high school levels. The longer-term enrollment trend for the district illustrates this continual decline as illustrated in Table 5.3.



<b>Table 5.3</b>													
<b>Johnstown K-12 Total Enrollment 1994-95 to 2018-19</b>													
Year	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
K-12 Total	2264	2255	2207	2215	2211	2172	2162	2121	2070	2040	1965	1968	1926
Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
K-12 Total	1928	1895	1839	1804	1833	1797	1726	1693	1640	1593	1559	1592	

NOTE: These totals include ungraded special education students that are not included in Table 5.2.

Additionally, when we just consider the three elementary schools, we see that over the past five years Warren Elementary enrollment has remained stable overall, Pleasant Avenue has increased slightly, while Glebe Elementary has seen a fairly significant decline. These trends are summarized in the following table.

<b>Table 5.4</b>						
<b>Five Year History of Elementary School Enrollments-2014-15 to 2018-19</b>						
<i>School</i>	<i>2014-15</i>	<i>2015-16</i>	<i>2016-17</i>	<i>2017-18</i>	<i>2018-19</i>	<i>5-Year % Change</i>
Pleasant	235	201	222	253	246	+4.5%
Glebe	254	220	218	203	223	-12.2%
Warren	348	377	362	358	346	-0.5%
Total	837	798	802	814	815	-2.6%

NOTE: These totals may vary slightly from those in Table 5.2 for a variety of reasons such as the count of special education students; these counts do not include Pre-K students at Pleasant Avenue School.

The overall district enrollment decline cannot be attributed to other factors such as increase of students being taught at home or non-resident students no longer attending the district. Table 5.5 provides a recent history of both home-schooled students and students that have been non-resident students attending Johnstown. The number of home-schooled students has remained fairly constant over the past five years (between 30 and 40 students per year) while Johnstown resident students attending non-public schools increased the last two years but still is a relatively small number. The Board of Education policy (#7131) does permit non-resident students to attend the district as well as children of district employees. The children of district employees are not assessed a fee for attending while other non-resident students' families are charged an annual fee of \$3,514. Additionally, three districts tuition their grades 9-12 students to Johnstown High School, the majority of which (53) are residents of the Wheelerville UFSD with a few students from Lake Pleasant and Piseco. The tuition for students enrolled from these

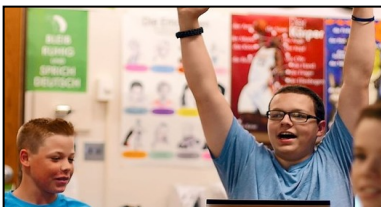
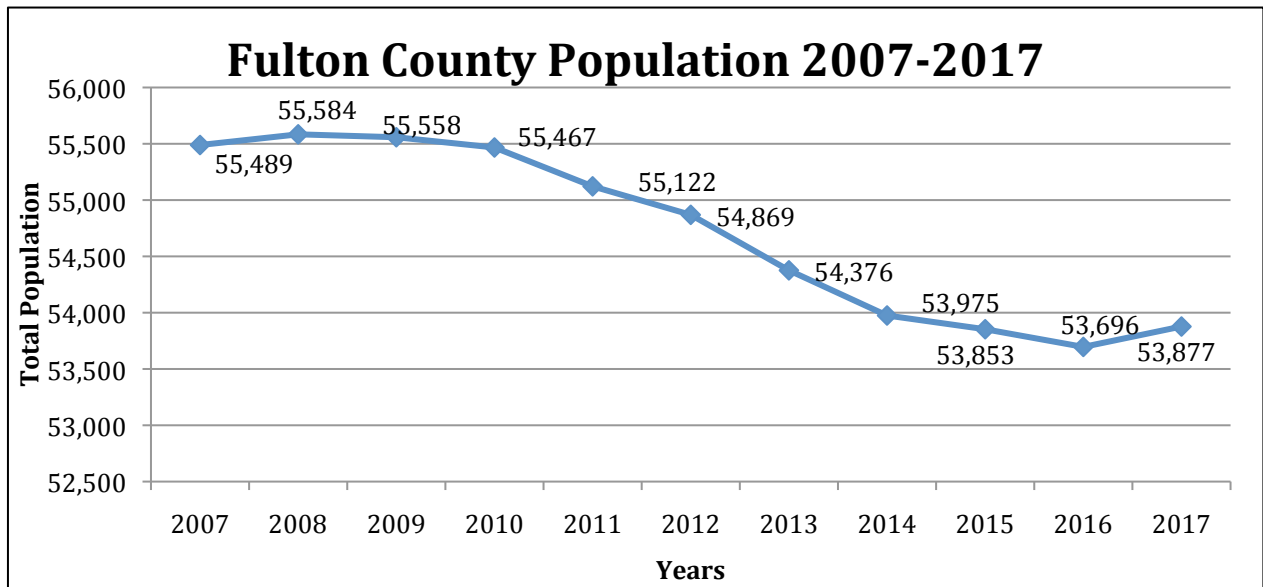


districts is \$2,200 per year. Each year there is also one or two special needs students from other districts that attend Johnstown as well.

<b>Table 5.5 Five-Year History of Resident Home-Schooled and Resident Students Attending Elsewhere</b>		
<i>School Year</i>	<i>Home-Schooled Students</i>	<i>Resident Students Attending Elsewhere</i>
2014-15	30	
2015-16	40	10
2016-17	43	12
2017-18	36	15
2018-19	32	25

The recent decline in school district enrollment is not surprising given the overall Fulton County population trends. As the graph that follows shows, the total county population gradually decreased from 2007 to 2016 with a slight increase in 2017.

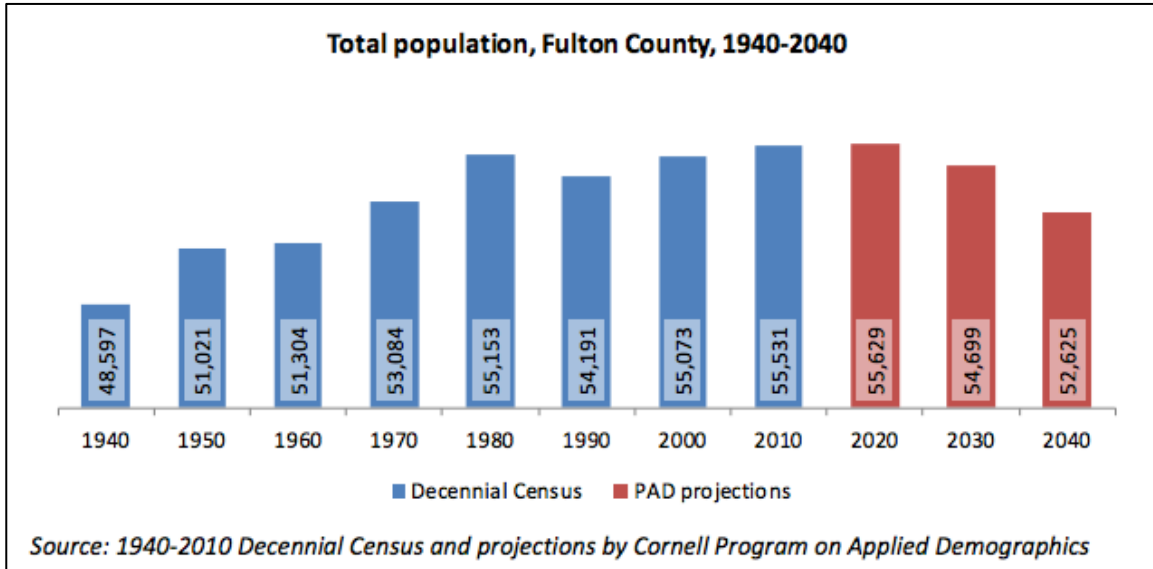
**Graph 1: Fulton County Population 2007-2017**



Looking to the future, Fulton County total population is projected to continue to decline out to 2040. See Graph 2 that follows for these census projections.



**Graph 2: Fulton County Total Population Trend and Projection to 2040**



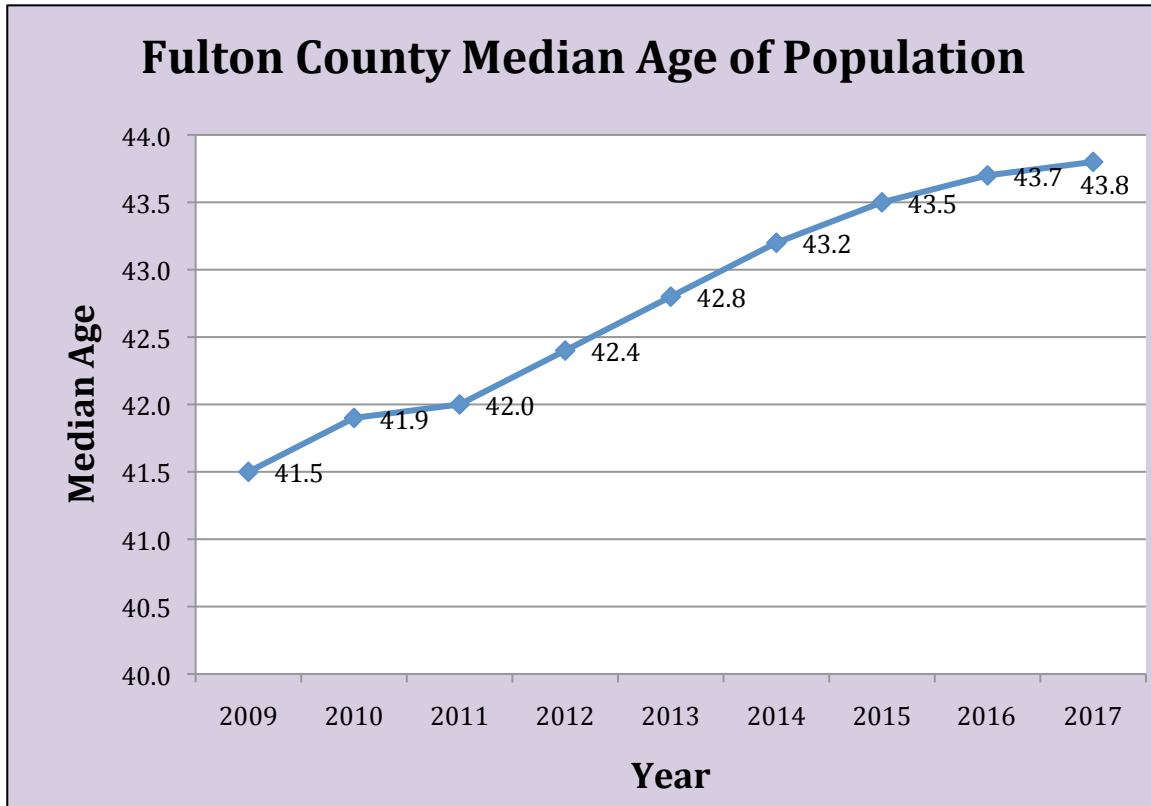
It is important to also examine the median age of Fulton County residents since this provides some insight into future school enrollments. Populations that are aging generally mean that there is likely an out-migration of younger residents, hence fewer families that likely will have children entering the school system. In upstate New York, it is very common to find most communities that are experiencing this type of out migration and hence aging local populations.

Graph 3 that follows presents the trend in Fulton County’s resident median age. Spanning 2009 to 2017 we can see that the median age of county residents rose from 41.5 to 43.8. It is clear that the county population is aging like most Upstate New York communities.

**It is clear that the Fulton County population, like most upstate New York communities, is aging.**



Graph 3: Median Age of Fulton County Residents 2009-2017



Lastly, it is also important to examine the cohort of adults in the typical childbearing age group. Adults in this age group are 25-44 years of age. This is the cohort of adults who are most likely to have children, a factor that would influence the number of children being educated in the school district. As the graph below illustrates, the number of Fulton County residents in this critical age range has declined somewhat over the past 10 years. This indicates a trend that may have some bearing on the Greater Johnstown City School District’s future enrollment.

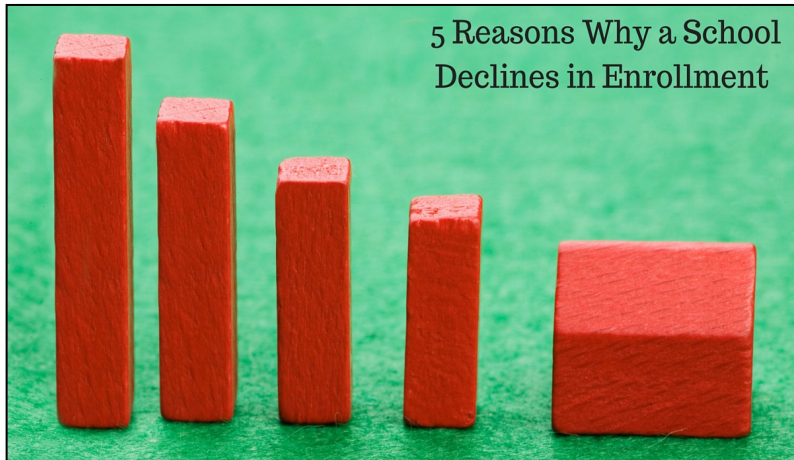
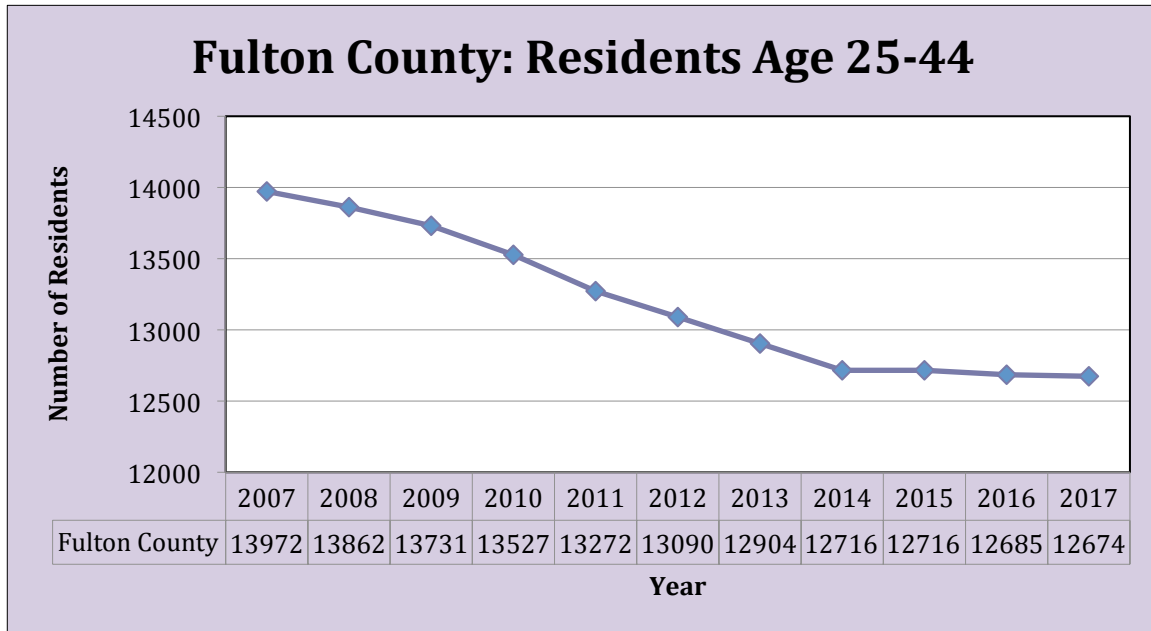
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**The number of Fulton County residents in the 25-44 age range has been declining for the past ten years. As members of this age group are typically of childbearing age, this trend may have some bearing on future school enrollments in Greater Johnstown City Schools**

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**Graph 4: Fulton County Childbearing Age Group-2007-2017**



While there are many excellent qualities about Fulton County and a concerted effort to market itself to prospective residents and employers (as noted in *Fulton County Housing Strategy, August 2018*) it is yet to be seen that these efforts are yielding dividends that would result in a significant impact on Johnstown School District enrollment.

In summary, given the recent school district enrollment trends, and in light of the demographic variables studied, we do not believe adjustments in the future enrollment projections provided in Table 5.2 are appropriate. However, if the Wheelerville UFSD at some point in time elects to send its high school students elsewhere, it would result in a significant adjustment in future enrollment estimates for grades 9-12. We also caution the district to engage in annual enrollment projecting with an eye to current demographic trends in the county and school district.



**CHAPTER 6  
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

The most important function that any school district provides is to give its students a quality educational experience. In today’s 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 Greater Johnstown City School District provides a comprehensive program for its students in pursuit of this goal.

Johnstown has three elementary schools organized in a grade center concept-each serving all district students in specific grades. The Knox Junior High School houses grades 7-8 and Johnstown High School educates students in grades 9-12. This is not an unusual grade level pattern for school districts in New York State, even though researchers agree that there is no “one best way” to organize grades.

The elementary schools have multiple self-contained classrooms at every grade level as evidenced by the following table.

<b>Table 6.1 2018-19 Class Sizes for Each Elementary School-38 Sections K-6</b>				
Grade	Pleasant Avenue	Glebe Street	Warren Street	Average
Pre-K	14, 16, 17			15.7
K	21, 21, 20, 19, 23, 16			20.0
1	21, 14, 22, 16, 22, 21			19.3
2		24, 24, 17, 24, 24, 18		21.8
3		17, 15, 19, 19, 19		17.8
4			21, 18, 24, 23, 23	21.8
5			21, 22, 23, 25, 21	22.4
6			22, 22, 23, 24, 23	22.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	12/236 (19.7 avg)	11/220 (20.0 avg)	15/335 (22.3 avg)	
Average common branch class size in Fulton County=20 (2016-17)				
Average common branch class size in NYS=22 (2016-17)				

An examination of table 6.1 shows that the district has been able to maintain very reasonable class sizes in the elementary schools. Primarily because the district uses a grade center plan, it makes it much easier to ensure all grade levels have similar size section enrolments. In 2016-17, the average elementary class size of all school districts in Fulton County was 20 while the statewide average was 22 students per class in 2016-17 (latest available figures).





An examination of class sizes in the elementary school is important in a facilities study. If class sizes are reasonable or small, it is generally accepted that reorganization of the elementary grades is at least a topic for consideration. On the other hand, if class sizes are very large in the elementary grades, it might be difficult to reorganize grades to achieve any efficiency. In Johnstown, we find very reasonable class sizes that would at least allow discussion on whether or not elementary school grades could be reorganized.

In the 2019-20 school year, the district is anticipating that there will be a reduction in one section of elementary classes. Table 6.2 that follows shows what the anticipated elementary school class section sizes will be for 2019-20.

Table 6.2 2019-20 Class Sizes for each Elementary School-37 Sections K-6 Approximately 21 Students/Classroom				
Grade	Number of Sections and Class Size of Each Section			Average Class Size
	Pleasant Avenue	Glebe Street	Warren Street	
K	21, 21, 21, 21, 21			21.0
1	21, 21, 21, 21, 21, 20			20.8
2		20, 20, 20, 20, 20, 19		19.8
3		21, 21, 21, 22, 22, 22		21.5
4			23, 23, 23, 23	23.0
5			22, 22, 22, 22, 23	22.2
6			23, 23, 23, 23, 23	23.0
K-6 Total	11/230 (20.9 avg)	12/248 (20.7 avg)	14/318 (22.7 avg)	

A comparison of tables 6.1 and 6.2 shows that the number of elementary classroom sections for regular education will decrease from 38 sections in 2018-19 to 37 in 2019-20.



The district also provides a very typical program for its elementary school students as evidenced by the following table of special area subjects (all schedules are on a six day cycle). Due to the fact the elementary school schools are organized as grade centers there is comparability in the amount of time for special area subjects at each grade level. Instrumental lessons, band and chorus begin at grade 4.



Table 6.3 Elementary Schools Special Area Schedules 2018-19					
Grade Level	Art	Music	PE	Computer	Library
K	None	2 times in 6-day cycle	3 times in 6-day cycle	1 time in 6-day cycle	1 time in 6-day cycle
1	1 time in 6-day cycle	2 times in 6-day cycle	2 times in 6-day cycle	1 time in 6-day cycle	1 time in 6-day cycle
2-3	1 time in 6-day cycle	2 times in 6-day cycle	3 times in 6-day cycle	1 time in 6-day cycle	1 time in 6-day cycle
4-6	1 time in 6-day cycle	1 time in 6-day cycle	3 times in 6-day cycle	1 time in 6-day cycle	

The next point of analysis examines the performance of Johnstown’s elementary students on New York State’s English-Language Arts and Mathematics assessments that are offered in grades 3-8. Student performance on these state assessments is graded on a Level 1 to Level 4 continuum. The following are the performance descriptors for these assessments.

**Level 1-Not Meeting Learning Standards-***Student performance does not demonstrate an understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.*

**Level 2-Partially Meeting Learning Standards-***Student performance demonstrates a partial understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.*

**Level 3-Meeting Learning Standards-***Student performance demonstrates an understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.*

**Level 4-Meeting Learning Standards with Distinction-***Student performance demonstrates a thorough understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.*

Because students scoring at Levels 3 and 4 are most on target to successfully complete their educational program, the following tables show the percentages of students scoring at those levels for the past four years. Caution should be noted however; these are only one limited measure of student performance in these critical areas of instruction. That said, it does provide some insight into how Johnstown students are achieving.

Table 6.4 % of Students Scoring at Levels 3 & 4 3-6 NYS Assessments in ELA				
Grade Level	2015	2016	2017	2018
3	24% (28)	27% (30)	23% (22)	49% (53)
4	24% (16)	19% (22)	19% (21)	19% (18)
5	27% (25)	22% (17)	21% (24)	23% (25)
6	33% (26)	34% (33)	23% (19)	27% (32)
() Number of Students Scoring Proficient				
NOTE: While we can compare across elementary schools, it is important to note that the small number of students tested in each grade at many schools makes these comparisons very speculative. And, it is important to note that due to changes in the tests themselves, it is not a fair to compare 2016 results to previous years.				
SOURCE: The State Education Department.				



<b>Table 6.5</b> <b>% of Students Scoring at Levels 3 &amp; 4</b> <b>3-6 NYS Assessments in Math</b>				
Grade Level	2015	2016	2017	2018
3	37% (42)	37% (44)	36% (34)	51% (57)
4	23% (15)	27% (31)	20% (22)	26% (24)
5	27% (22)	29% (22)	22% (25)	22% (23)
6	44% (33)	30% (29)	31% (26)	37% (43)
( ) Number of Students Scoring Proficient				
NOTE: While we can compare across elementary schools, it is important to note that the small number of students tested in each grade at many schools makes these comparisons very speculative. And, it is important to note that due to changes in the tests themselves, it is not a fair to compare 2016 results to previous years.				
SOURCE: The State Education Department.				

Another way to look at these performance results is by considering all students in grades 3-8 and the percentage that tested proficient. The next table offers this summary.

<b>Table 6.6</b> <b>% of All Students Scoring at Levels 3 &amp; 4</b> <b>3-8 NYS Assessments in ELA and Math</b>				
	2015	2016	2017	2018
ELA	25% (135)	26% (152)	25% (152)	30% (185)
Math	27% (128)	29% (160)	24% (135)	30% (182)
( ) Number of Students Taking the Test				

Lastly it is interesting to examine how Johnstown grades 3-8 students have performed when compared to all students in Fulton County and New York State on these same measures. The following two graphs (one ELA and the other Math) offer these comparisons.

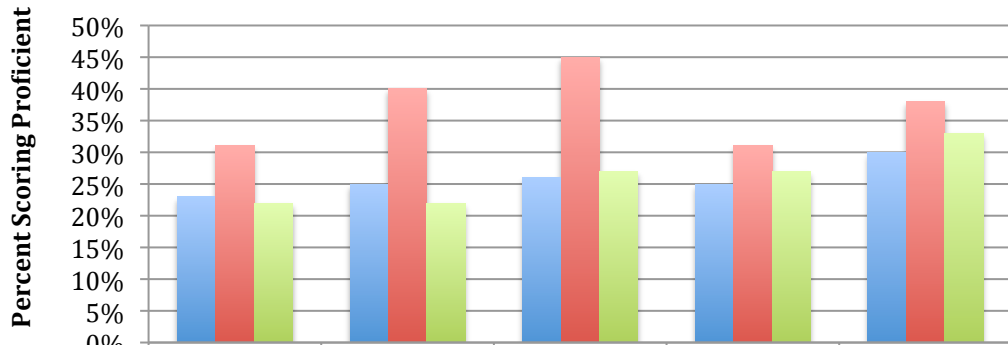
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**It is important to see how Johnstown students performed compared to Fulton County and NYS students as a whole**

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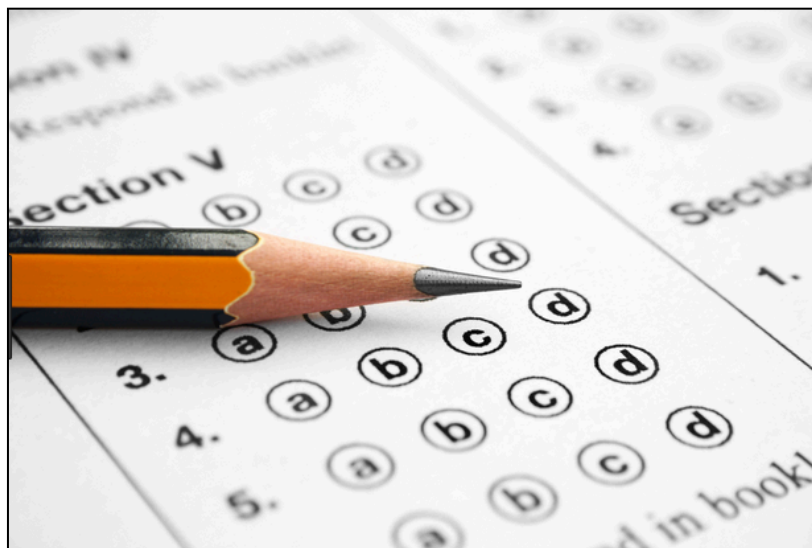
### 3-8 ELA Results: Percent Scoring Proficient (Levels 3 & 4)

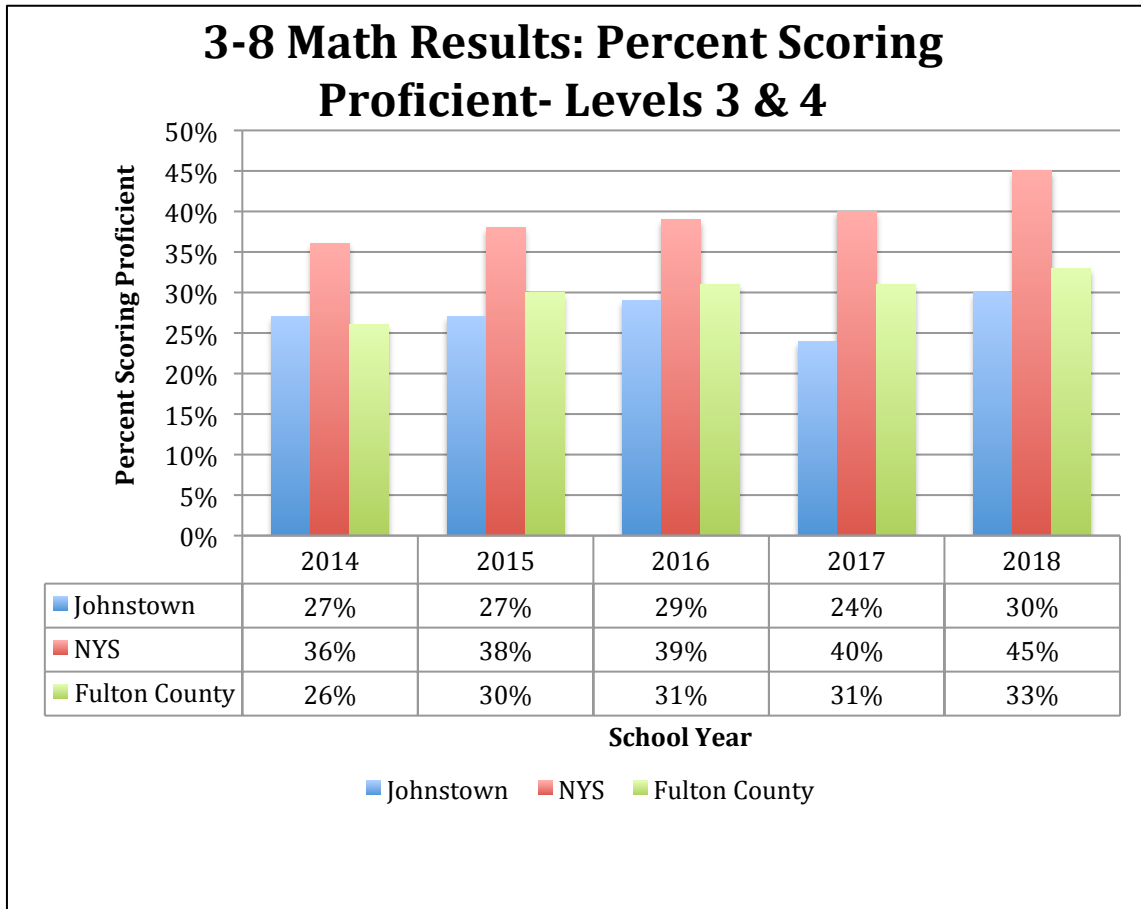


	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Johnstown	23%	25%	26%	25%	30%
NYS	31%	40%	45%	31%	38%
Fulton County	22%	22%	27%	27%	33%

School Year

Johnstown NYS Fulton County





In summary for the elementary grades, Johnstown has a very typical elementary program. Student achievement in English-Language Arts and Mathematics is fair when compared to Fulton County as a whole, and somewhat lower than students in all New York State school districts..

The next area for analysis involves the program that is available to the junior and senior high school students in Johnstown. Junior high 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. Johnstown offers this acceleration in math and Spanish. Table 6.7 that follows shows the courses that are available to students in Knox Junior High.



<b>Table 6.7</b>	
<b>Grades 7-8 Course Offerings-2018-19</b>	
Course	# of Sections & Section Sizes
<b>ENGLISH</b>	
ELA 7	25, 22, 25, 25, 19, 23
ELA 8	23, 20, 21, 23, 22
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>	
Social Studies 7	24, 25, 25, 24, 22, 19
Social Studies 8	23, 21, 20, 24, 21
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	
Math 7	25, 26, 21, 21, 22
Math 7A	24
Math 8	21, 22, 24, 21
Algebra 8	21
<b>SCIENCE</b>	
Science 7	25, 25, 24, 19, 22, 24
Science 8	22, 21, 21, 21, 24
<b>SPANISH</b>	
Spanish 8	22, 19, 15
Spanish 1	24, 24
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	
Tech 7	22, 25, 23, 15, 17
Computer Science	12, 24
<b>MUSIC</b>	
Band 7-A/B	13, 28
Band 8-A/B	20, 37
Chorus 7-A/B	36, 62
Chorus 8-A/B	21, 38
<b>ART</b>	
Art 7-1/4/year	15, 14, 11, 12, 14, 9, 19, 20, 13, 12
Art 8-1/4/year	11, 10, 12, 9, 14, 13, 10, 8, 11, 10
<b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION, HOME &amp; CAREER SKILLS, &amp; HEALTH</b>	
Physical Education-A/B Days	20, 18, 10, 14, 21, 18, 14, 11, 22, 13, 18, 10, 18, 21, 14, 15
Home & Career Skills-1/4/year	15, 12, 11, 14, 9, 14, 19, 20, 13, 12
Life Studies-1/2/year	10, , 9, 13, 9, 10
Health	14, 23, 20, 19
<b>OTHER</b>	
Computer Applications-1/4/year	11, 10, 12, 9, 14, 13, 10, 9, 11, 10
<b>NOTES</b>	
-The data source for this table was the 2018-19 master schedule.	
-Not included in this table are 10 AIS classes and 3 study halls	



The purpose of a high school course of studies is to provide students with the courses necessary to achieve a high school diploma and to provide a variety of electives in order to enrich the high school experience for these students. A complete overview of the high school program in Johnstown is provided in table 6.8 that follows.

<b>Table 6.8</b>	
<b>Grades 9-12 Course Offerings-2018-19</b>	
<b>Course</b>	<b># of Sections &amp; Section Sizes</b>
<b>ENGLISH</b>	
English 9	18, 16, 23
English 9 Honors	22
English 10	19, 30, 25, 19, 21
English 10 Honors	18
English 11	13, 16, 20, 24, 18
Master Classics and Film-1/2 year	29, 18, 17
Creative Writing-1/2 year	30, 19, 14
Advanced Composition-1/2 year	17, 17
AP Advanced Composition-1/2 year	17, 17
Speech-FMCC-1/2 year	11
Myths & Legends-1/2 year	15
Current Issues in Society-1/2 year	26
AP Literature	11
Literature in Sports-1/2 year	30
Reading	10
AIS ELA-A/B	6, 6
P-tech English	20, 20, 20
P-tech English-Year 1	20, 20, 20
Pathways English-Year 2	10, 10, 10, 10, 10
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>	
Global History 9	10, 21, 25
Global History 9 Honors	25
Global History 10	22, 28, 24, 28
Global History 10 Honors	27
US History & Government	21, 21, 30, 29
UHS US History & Government	29
Government, Economics, & Mentoring	28, 30, 24, 15
AP Politics, Leadership & Economics	10
The 60's-1/2 year	9
UHS Psychology-1/2 year	27, 24
Abnormal Psychology-1/2 year	9
UHS Sociology-1/2 year	19, 20
P-tech Social Studies-Year 1	20, 20, 20, 20
Pathways Social Studies-Year 2	10, 10, 10, 10, 10



<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	
Algebra	16, 16, 25, 10, 13, 24
Pre-Algebra	21, 15
College Algebra	19
Practical Math	29
Algebra 2	26, 9, 24
Gaming Algebra	20
Geometry	19, 17, 22, 17
Pre-Geometry	17
Pre-Calculus	19
UHS Calculus	11
Statistics	18
Computer Applications-1/2 year	13
Computer Information Systems	10, 20
Math AIS-A/B	7, 5, 7, 8
P-tech Math	20
<b>SCIENCE (*-Courses with labs)</b>	
Earth Science*	14, 25, 29, 21
Living Environment*	10, 16, 19, 18, 16, 26
Living Environment-Honors	17
Living Environment AIS	15
AP Biology*	19
Chemistry *	20, 19, 19
Physics *	12
Gaming Physics	20
Science in Society	16, 21
Science Explorations	21, 19
Forensics	25
<b>SPANISH</b>	
Spanish 1	19, 14, 10
Spanish 2	22, 20, 28, 22
Spanish 3	12, 27
UHS Spanish 4	24
UHS Spanish 5	10
P-tech Spanish	19
English as a New Language	3, 3
<b>BUSINESS</b>	
Business Math	30
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	
Design & Drawing for Production 1-1/2 year	21, 18
Design & Drawing for Production 2-1/2 year	21, 18





Computer Aided Design 1-1/2 year	9
Computer Aided Design 2-1/2 year	9
Computer Aided Design 3-1/2 year	8
Computer Aided Design 4-1/2 year	8
Transportation Systems-1/2 yea	19
Land Transportation-1/2 year	19
<b>MUSIC</b>	
Concert Choir	66
Advanced Choir	47
Wind Ensemble	46
Symphonic Band	29
Music Theory	5
<b>ART</b>	
Studio Art 1-1/2 year	31, 30
Studio Art 2-1/2 year	31, 30
Painting & Drawing 1-1/2 year	24
Painting & Drawing 2-1/2 year	24
Ceramics-1/2 year	18
Sculpture-1/2 year	18
Digital Art-General Ed-1/2 year	11
Digital Art-P-Tech	20
Advanced Art 1-1/2 year	6
Advanced Art 2-1/2 year	6
<b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION, FAMILY &amp; CONSUMER SCIENCE, &amp; HEALTH</b>	
Physical Education-A/B Days	4, 6, 6, 6, 18, 16, 17, 14, 22, 14, 17, 14, 20, 20, 20, 20, 17, 20, 17, 20, 15, 14, 26, 34, 26, 34, 26, 31, 22, 17, 20, 20, 26, 27, 24, 23, 25, 26, 16, 15, 18, 12, 14, 9, 10, 10, 7, 17, 7, 16, 7, 5, 9, 7
Personal Fitness	3, 4, 4, 3, 26, 26
Adaptive Physical Education	10
Health-1/2 year	21, 8, 17, 6, 20, 16, 16, 11, 21, 23
<b>OTHER</b>	
Freshman Academy	22, 22, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19, 19
P'tech	20
P-tech Gaming & Coding-Year 1	20, 20, 20
Pathways Gaming & Coding-Year 2	10, 10, 10
Gaming & Coding 3	20
Computer Information Systems 115	10
Computer Information Systems 120	20
Digital Art	11
P-tech Digital Art	20



NOTES
-The data source for this table was the 2018-19 master schedule.
-Courses with science labs have an equal number of students in labs and are denoted with an *.
-Not included in this table are the academic and career education courses offered at the Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES.
-Table does not include study halls and music lessons

Table 6.8 above shows a very comprehensive program that is available to the high school students in Johnstown. In examining the table of high school courses above, we notice that the district has been able to maintain a very comprehensive list of offerings for its students. In the core academic subjects, P-Tech and advanced placement courses are all part of the course of study. The district also has an impressive array number of technology courses for its students. Numerous electives are also available for the students in Johnstown.

In addition to the program offered at the high school, Johnstown students have the opportunity to take career and technical education classes at the Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES. Thirty-two percent of the district’s juniors and nearly 36% of the seniors took advantage last year of the career and technical education courses as evidenced by the following Table 6.9.

<b>Table 6.9</b>		
<b>BOCES Participation- Career &amp; Technical Education Classes</b>		
<b>2018-19</b>		
	Juniors	Seniors
# of students in class	112	143
# of students attending BOCES CTE	36	51
% of student attending BOCES	32.1%	35.7%
Overall BOCES CTE participation	34.1%	

In order to provide a well-rounded education for its students, school districts endeavor to provide a comprehensive extra curricular program in addition to its academic program. Johnstown is no exception. Table 6.10 that follows describes the very comprehensive extra curricular opportunities that are available to the students in Johnstown.



<b>Table 6.10 Athletic Participation</b>			
<b>Sport</b>	<b>Varsity</b>	<b>Junior Varsity</b>	<b>Modified</b>
Baseball	13	13	13, 13
Basketball, Boys	13	15	18
Basketball, Girls	13		11
Bowling	7	7	
Cross Country	21		10
Field Hockey	23	13	25
Football	23	20	38
Golf	15		
Lacrosse, Boys	24	16	21
Lacrosse, Girls	24	13	18
Skiing, Alpine	14		
Skiing, Nordic	12		9
Soccer, Boys	18	14	13
Soccer, Girls	17	13	15
Softball	14	13	17
Swimming, Boys*	11		21
Swimming, Girls*	9		
Track, Boys	21		
Track, Girls	18		
Volleyball	11	10	16
Wrestling*	13		13
*Merged teams with Fonda-Fultonville			

In addition to the educational program that was provided for regular education students, in 2018-19, the district had 224 special education students. Table 6.11 shows the percentage of special education students the district has educated in each of the past five years and whether they were placed in district programs or elsewhere.

<b>Table 6.11 Summary of Special Education Students 2014-15 to 2018-19</b>					
<b>Placement</b>	<b>Percent of Special Needs Students by School Year &amp; Percent of Time in Special Education</b>				
	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
In-District	187	194	197	193	193
Out-of-District	38	33	34	33	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>224</b>
NOTE: The percentage of student identified as special needs average approximately 13%-14% of the overall district enrollment. SOURCE: SED					



Johnstown City Schools, like all school districts is committed to placing students in the “least restrictive environment”. While every school in the district has a 12:1:1 special class, a few special needs youngsters are placed in other separate settings for their educational program. However, in a few instances out-of-district placement is determined by the Committee on Special Education to be the most appropriate educational setting. In 2018-19 the district had 31 special needs students in out-of-district placements in 15 locations including various BOCES programs, the Center for Disability at Langan School, Gloversville High School, Harry Hong School, Hillcrest Education Center, Jansen Avenue PTech, Northeast Parent and Child Society, Ag PTech, and Tradewinds. The district averages approximately 13%-14% over the total student population in need of special education services; this is approximately what the state averages overall.



We now turn to a description of the organization of Johnstown school grades and buildings.



**CHAPTER 7  
BUILDING AND GRADE ORGANIZATION**

Since this study focuses on a possible grade and/or building reconfiguration, the current utilization of district buildings is studied. It is first important to examine how the schools were being used this past academic year, and to gauge how enrollments may impact them in the future. Table 7.1 provides an overview of the district’s schools.

<b>Table 7.1 Overview of Johnstown School Buildings</b>						
Schools	Glebe Street	Jansen Avenue	Pleasant Avenue	Warren Street	Knox Junior High	High School
Address	502 Glebe St	305 Jansen Ave	235 Pleasant Ave	110 Warren St	400 S Perry St	1 Sir Bills Circle
Year of Original Building	1966	1966	1955	1966	1932	1962
Sq. Ft. in Current Building	32,420	32,420	45,000	57,402	74,813	169,080
Number of Floors	1	1	1	1	4	2
Grades Housed	2-3	-	Pre-K-1	4-6	7-8	9-12
Students Served	221	0*	291**	343	250	517
Architect	CS Arch					
*Jansen Avenue is leased to BOCES for the P-Tech Program						
**Includes 47 Pre-K students who are half time						
NOTE: All information was taken from the NYS Building Conditions Survey completed in 2015 except the enrollments that were drawn from the 2018-19 academic year.						



As can be seen in table 7.1, except for Knox Junior High that was built in 1932, the other Johnstown buildings were all constructed between the mid-50’s to the mid-60’s. The Jansen Avenue school no longer houses Johnstown students; the entire building is currently leased to BOCES for its programming. This means that Glebe Street is the smallest elementary school being used for Johnstown students in the district; Warren Street is the largest elementary building. Table 7.1 also illustrates the Princeton Plan or grade center plan that is utilized by Johnstown for its elementary program. Rather than organizing its elementary schools by neighborhood like many school districts, Johnstown organizes its programs by grades. As a result, Pleasant Avenue houses all of the districts Pre-K-1 classes, Glebe Street houses grades 2-3, and Warren Street houses grades 4-6. Given this structure, the following table 7.2 shows that enrollment of the district’s elementary schools for the 2018-19 school year.



<b>Table 7.2</b>				
<b>2018-19 Class Sizes for Each Elementary School-40 Sections Pre-K-6</b>				
Grade	Pleasant Avenue	Glebe Street	Warren Street	Average
Pre-K	14, 16, 17 (1/2 day)			15.7
K	21, 21, 20, 19, 23, 16			20.0
1	21, 14, 22, 16, 22, 21			19.3
2		24, 24, 17, 24, 24, 18		21.8
3		17, 15, 19, 19, 19		17.8
4			21, 18, 24, 23, 23	21.8
5			21, 22, 23, 25, 21	22.4
6			22, 22, 23, 24, 23	22.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	14 (P-6)/236 K-6 (19.7 avg-K-6)	11/220 (20.0 avg)	15/335 (22.3 avg)	
Average common branch class size in Fulton County=20 (2016-17)				
Average common branch class size in NYS=22 (2016-17)				

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 7.3-7.6 that follow show the 2018-19 school year utilization of the district's three elementary schools.

<b>Table 7.3</b>				
<b>Pleasant Avenue Elementary School Classroom Usage 2018-19</b>				
<b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (14)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (5)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Pleasant Avenue	19	Pre-K-2 Kdgn-6 1 <sup>st</sup> -6	Special Education-1 OT/PT-1 Computer Lab-1 Music-1 Art-1	Speech-2 Resource-1 AIS-3 Teachers' Lounge



<b>Table 7.4</b> <b>Glebe Street Elementary School Classroom Usage 2018-19</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (11)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (5)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Glebe Street	16	2 <sup>nd</sup> -6 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5	AIS-1 Special Education-1 FLEX-1 Computer Lab-1 Art-1	OT/PT-1 Special Ed-1 Reading-1 Psychologist-1 Speech-1

<b>Table 7.5</b> <b>Warren Street Elementary School Classroom Usage 2018-19</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (15)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (11)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Warren Street	26	4 <sup>th</sup> -5 5 <sup>th</sup> -5 6 <sup>th</sup> -5	AIS-2 Flex-2 STEM-2 Life Skills-1 Vocal Music-1 Instrumental Music-1 Art/Music-1 Storage-1	Remedial-1 Resource -1 Speech-1 Staff Lounge-1 Storage-1

In looking at tables 7.3 through 7.5, the following table 7.6 shows how many more full size classrooms each elementary school has in addition to those spaces devoted to K-6 education.

<b>Table 7.6</b> <b>Summary of Elementary Class Sections by Building</b>			
School	# of Students	# of Common Branch Sections P-6	# of Full Size Classrooms
Pleasant Avenue	236	14	19
Glebe Street	220	11	16
Warren Street	335	15	26



The previous four tables need additional clarification:

- ✓ Pre-K is a half-day program at Pleasant Avenue with 3 half time sections occupying 2 classrooms;
- ✓ As described in the Program chapter of this report, right sizing the classrooms according to enrollment for the 2019-20 schools year will result in 37 sections in grades K-6, one less than the 38 sections in 2018-19;
- ✓ The district is desirous of running a full day Pre-K program in the future. This would require four full size classrooms;
- ✓ Pleasant Avenue and Glebe Street each have one stand-alone special education classroom;
- ✓ Each of the three elementary schools has a dedicated art room; Pleasant Avenue and Glebe Street have a computer lab; Warren Street has two STEM classrooms;

Table 7.7 shows how the space in the Knox Junior High School is currently being used.

<b>Table 7.7 Knox Junior High School Classroom Usage 2018-19 (Includes Gym, Cafeteria, Auditorium, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Core Academic Classrooms (16)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (21)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Knox Junior High	37	ELA-2 Social Studies-2 Math-2 Science-2 Spanish-1 Special Ed-1 Classroom-6	AIS-2 Health-1 ISS-1 CAD Lab-1 General Shop-2 Computer Room-1 Art-1 Music-1 Homemaking-1 BOCES/Science-3 Storage-3 Weight Room-2 Multi-Purpose Room-1 Faculty Lounge-1	3 classrooms on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> floor are not in use

As can be seen from table 7.7 above, there are 37 full size classrooms, 16 of which are being used for core academic classrooms. There are 21 other classrooms that are being used for related instructional services including two AIS rooms, three storage rooms, a multi-purpose room, a faculty lounge, and three classrooms that are currently leased to BOCES. If one of the





options to be considered in this facilities study is to move a grade level into the junior high school and create a middle school, there certainly appears to be room to do that.

In addition to the junior high school, table 7.8 that follows shows the current utilization of rooms in the high school.

<b>Table 7.8</b> <b>High School Classroom Usage 2018-19</b> <b>(Includes Gym, 2 Cafeterias, Auditorium, Swimming Pool, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Core Academic Classrooms (27)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (21)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
High School	48	ELA-5 Social Studies-5 Math-6 Science-7 Foreign Language-4	Special Ed-2 Study Hall-1 Health/Life Skills-3 P-Tech-2 Music-2 Art-2 Shop-2 CAD Lab-1 Computer Classroom-2 Computer Lab-1 Distance Learning-1 Large Group Instruction-1 Weight/Fitness-1	Special Ed-3 Conference Room-1 Credit Recovery-1

In addition to the assigned use for each of the rooms in the high school, it is also important to see how often each of these rooms is used daily. This is a more detailed analysis than simply identifying the major use of the rooms in the building. 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 7.9 that follows shows that period-by-period utilization for each room in the high school based on a nine period schedule.





Table 7.9 High School Room Utilization											
Room/Period	1	2	3	4	E	5,6	7	8	9	Periods in Use	% Used
A103	1	1		1	1	1	1		1	7	78%
A104	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	7	78%
A105	1		1	1	1	1		1	1	7	78%
A106					1	1	1			3	33%
A107		1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7	78%
A108	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	7	78%
A110				1	1	1		1		4	44%
A111	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		8	89%
A112/113	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	8	89%
A114	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	7	78%
A115	1	1	1		1		1	1		6	67%
A116	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	7	78%
A117	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	7	78%
A118		1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7	78%
A119	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		7	78%
D110	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	8	89%
D109					1					1	11%
D108		1	1	1	1	1		1	1	7	78%
D107	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	100%
D106						1		1	1	3	33%
D104/105		1	1	1	1					4	44%
A122	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		7	78%
A172B										0	0%
B115	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	89%
B118		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	89%
A205	1	1	1		1					4	44%
A206					1	1	1	1	1	5	56%
A207	1		1	1	1	1		1	1	7	78%
A208	1	1		1	1	1			1	6	67%
A210		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	7	78%
A281		1	1	1	1	1	1		1	7	78%
A282	1		1		1		1	1	1	6	67%
A211	1	1	1		1	1		1	1	7	78%
A213	1	1		1	1	1	1		1	7	78%
A214		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	7	78%
A215	1		1	1	1	1		1	1	7	78%
A216	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		7	78%
A220	1		1	1	1	1		1	1	7	78%
A221	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		7	78%
A222	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	8	89%
										AVERAGE	70%

The data from table 7.9 shows that the typical classroom in the high school is used an average of 70% of the time. In looking closer at this table, it is evident that the typical classroom is used for classes for about seven periods out of the nine period day. It is impossible to schedule



any school building at 100% utilization. If school districts use their facilities to 80% capacity, it is generally accepted that they are making good use of the buildings. Since the Johnstown High School is scheduled at approximately 70% 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 high school to move another grade level into the building. In addition, and as a part of this study, the high school principal was asked the following two questions regarding the capacity of the high school:

- ✓ *Is there room in the high school to fit the 8<sup>th</sup> grade?*
- ✓ *Would there be room in the high school to fit the 8<sup>th</sup> grade if the district offices were to move out of the high school?*

The high school principal concurred with our analysis that there was not room for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the high school as currently configured. If the district offices were to move out of the high school, there might be room for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade core academic classrooms but ancillary space for special subjects might be difficult if not impossible to find. As a result, for purposes of this study, it is being assumed that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade could not fit into the high school. (The appendix contains floor plans for each building showing the square footage of each room).

### ***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. Until just recently, the New York State Education Department has required all school districts to conduct a Building Condition Survey (BCS) every five years.

The surveys for all school districts were required to be updated in 2015. The table 7.10 that follows summarizes the most significant improvements and related estimated costs for each of Johnstown's schools.

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**Until recently, the State Education Department required all school districts to conduct a Building Condition Survey (BCS) every five years. Now the BCS is done on a rotating year basis.**

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<b>Table 7.10</b> <b>Summary of 2015 Building Condition Survey</b>		
Building	Estimated Capital Construction Costs Through 2020-21	Examples of Cost Items
Glebe Street	\$4,271,237	Fuel oil tank removal, paving, playground upgrades, door replacement, roof replacement, wall replacement, carpeting, vinyl floor replacement, electrical upgrades, wireless upgrades, HVAC, plumbing
Jansen Avenue	\$1,916,713	Drainage improvement, paving, sidewalk repair, playground upgrades, masonry repairs, roof replacement, door replacement, lighting upgrades, wireless upgrades, hot water heater replacement, plumbing, HVAC, kitchen fire suppression system
Pleasant Avenue	\$2,869,000	Paving, sidewalk repair, playground upgrades, door repair, window replacement, roof replacement, carpeting, vinyl floor replacement, ceiling repair, lighting upgrades, wireless upgrades,
Warren Street	\$4,117,200	Fuel tank removal, paving, sidewalk repair, playground upgrades, soffit repair, door replacement, roof replacement, carpeting, wireless upgrades, hot water heater replacement, plumbing, HVAC, kitchen fire suppression system, lighting upgrades
Knox Junior High	\$7,931,786	Electrical upgrades, paving, sidewalk repair, playground upgrades, bleachers, repointing brick, stair reconstruction, window replacement, roof repair, carpet replacement, vinyl floor replacement, ceiling repair, locker replacement, elevator upgrades, lighting upgrades, PA upgrades, plumbing, HVAC
High School	\$17,417,478	Culvert repair, paving, sidewalk repair, repair basement walls, replace pool chimney, replace entry doors, roof replacement, toilet partition replacement, carpeting, refinish gym floor, ceiling replacement, locker replacement, PA upgrade, swimming pool upgrade, plumbing, HVAC, lighting upgrades
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$38,523,414</b>	



The district has recently completed a major capital project. In this project, most of the items identified in table 7.10 from the Building Condition Survey have been addressed. As a result, the items associated with \$38,000,000 cost have largely been completed. Having said that, there remain items to be addressed by the district but at a much reduced scope than those items identified in the BCS. Table 7.11 that follows identifies the facilities improvements that remain.

<b>Table 7.11 Possible Future Scope for New Construction Projects</b>	
<b>Building</b>	<b>Future Scope</b>
All but Knox	New HVAC control systems
All	Upgrade building security with surveillance and new door levers, parking lots/sidewalks
Many	Exterior brick repair and replacement
Several	Boiler replacement
Jansen & Warren	Electrical system upgrades
Warren	Replace floor tile, new partitions, doors, and casework, add hallway lockers
Junior High	Remove asbestos floor tile, replace ceilings, lighting, doors and door frames
Knox Field	Replace track, replace turf field

The district’s architect has not yet made a detailed estimate of the costs associated with the items identified in table 7.11. However, it is safe to assume that these costs could approximate \$5,000,000 as projected by district staff. Whether or not the district makes decisions about reorganizing its facilities, most, if not all, of these items will have to be planned for and funds identified to complete these projects.

As the district considers options for organizing its schools, understanding the current utility costs for each building is important. Table 7.12 below shows the 2018-19 utility costs for each of the district’s six school buildings.

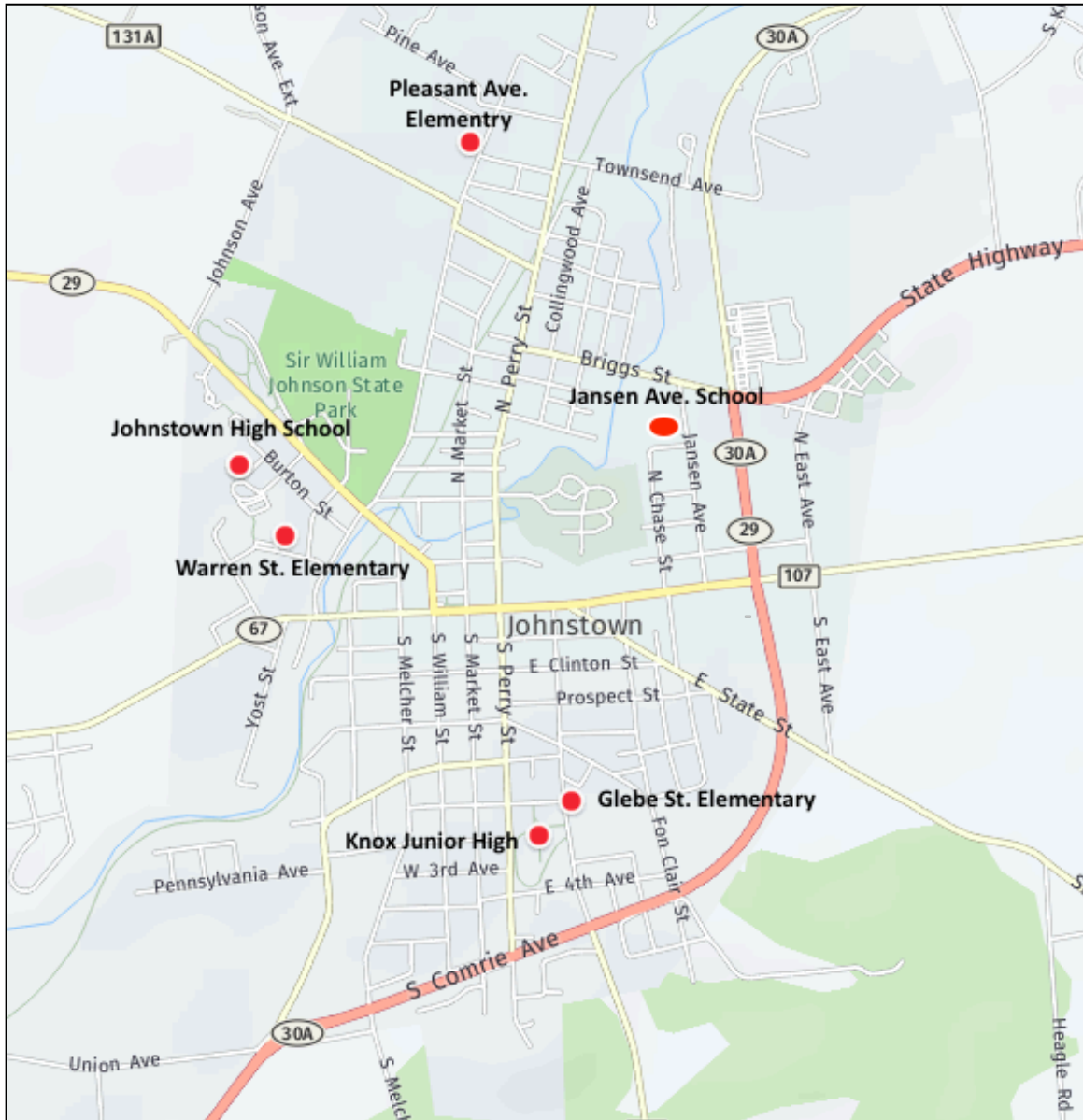
<b>Table 7.12 2018-19 Utility Costs</b>						
	Glebe Street	Jansen Avenue	Pleasant Avenue	Warren Street	Junior High	High School
Natural Gas	11,273	11,625	17,323	16,136	19,887	55,965
Electric	20,051	17,024	23,898	41,334	29,798	50,709
Total	31,324	28,649	41,221	57,470	49,685	106,674



In considering the possible closure of one of the elementary schools, 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 school, will not be renting the facility, and will be responsible for the cost of the utilities for the closed building.



Assuming that the district maintains ownership of the closed building, it will be necessary to continue the utility costs 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 versus a closed building. Given the total financial scope of these facilities decisions, the savings that accrue to the district are fairly insignificant.





**CHAPTER 8  
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 grades and/or facilities, consideration of the staffing needs of the school district is important. This chapter of the report examines staffing patterns in Johnstown as well as the staffing implications should changes in grade levels and/or facilities be considered.

With respect to instructional staff, Johnstown currently has 145 teachers, 45 teaching assistants, and 13 teacher aides. From a building administrative perspective, Johnstown has six building principals. The data associated with all staff members can be seen in table 8.1 that follows.

<b>Table 8.1 Staffing Overview by Position-2018-19</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Number of Staff</b>	<b>Average Salary</b>
Accountant	5	33,622
Clerk	4	24,672
Custodian	12	37,941
Custodial Worker	11	33,082
Food Service/Cook	11	12,589
Operations & Maintenance	4	41,185
Nurse	5	29,669
Principal	6	84,867
Secretary	9	30,483
Teacher	145	60,817
Teacher Aide	13	14,264
Teaching Assistant	45	17,543

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, and social security. The percentage cost of fringe benefits varies greatly for each employee group. In general, employees with lower salaries will have fringe benefit costs that are a large percentage while higher paid employees may have fringe benefit costs that are higher but represent a lower percentage of costs for the district. For purposes of this study, it was estimated that fringe benefit costs for Johnstown represent 50% of all salary costs. Table 8.2 on the next page shows staffing costs with fringe benefits included.



<b>Table 8.2 Staffing Overview by Position: 2018-19</b>			
Title	Number of Staff	Average Salary	Average Salary with 50% Fringe benefit Costs
Accountant	5	33,622	50,433
Clerk	4	24,672	37,008
Custodian	12	37,941	56,912
Custodial Worker	11	33,082	49,623
Food Service/Cook	11	12,589	18,884
Operations & Maintenance	4	41,185	61,778
Nurse	5	29,669	44,504
Principal	6	84,867	127,301
Secretary	9	30,483	45,725
Teacher	145	60,817	91,226
Teacher Aide	13	14,264	21,396
Teaching Assistant	45	17,543	26,315

An option considered in this facilities study is the possible closure of one of the district’s elementary schools. Should the district decide to close one of the elementary schools, significant cost savings in the area of staffing could be realized. In order to calculate this staff savings, table 8.3 is presented to show the current staffing levels in each of the district’s five elementary schools. This table does not reflect what has happened to staffing over the past two years.

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**Should the district decide to close one of the elementary schools, significant cost savings in the area of staffing could be realized.**

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<b>Table 8.3</b>					
<b>Positions by School Building: 2018-19</b>					
Position	Pleasant Avenue	Glebe Street	Warren Street	Junior High	High School
<b>UNCLASSIFIED SERVICE</b>					
Central Administration					5.4
Principal	1	1	1	1	1
Assistant Principal					1
Art	2*	1*	1*	1*	1
Music	1*	2*	2 (1*)	2 (1*)	2
Physical Education/Health	2*	1*	2 (1*)	2*	5 (3*)
Speech	1	1*		1*	1*
Counselor	1*		1*	1	2
Psychologist	1*	1*	2*	1*	1*
Media Specialist				1	2
Pre-K	2				
Kindergarten	6				
Grade 1	6				
Grade 2		6			
Grade 3		5			
Grade 4			5		
Grade 5			5		
Grade 6			5		
AIS	2	1	1		
English				3	6
Math				3 (1*)	6 (1*)
Science				2	7
Social Studies				2	5
Technology				1	1
Family & Consumer Science				2	
Health				1*	1
Spanish				1	3
Special Education	2	3	5	4	9
Teaching Assistant	12	9	9	4	11
<b>CLASSIFIED SERVICE</b>					
Head Custodian	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*
Custodian			2	2	2
Custodial Worker	2*	3 (1*)	1		3
Computer Specialist			1		
Business Manager					1
District Clerk					1
Superintendent's Secretary					1
Director of Curriculum's Secretary					1
Administrative Assistant					1
Secretary	1	1	1	2	3
Account Clerk/Typist					6
Teacher Aide	4	3	3		3
Typist				1	
School Monitor	1				
Cook Manager					1
Cook	1	1	1	1	1
Food Service Helper		2	2	1	3
*Indicates shared staff					



Staff savings raise a number of complicated issues. Generally speaking, there are two different options for reducing staff:

- ✓ Involuntary Reductions-Staff reductions are more predictable, cause more anxiety, and maximize savings.
- ✓ Attrition-Reductions are driven by decisions staff members make, reductions are generally well accepted, and the savings accrue when appropriate vacancies occur.

Usually school districts are reluctant to involuntarily reduce staff. Rather, districts often prefer to realize staff reductions as a result of attrition. Attrition occurs when teachers voluntarily leave their positions and, as a result, vacancies occur. In order to ascertain the probability that attrition would be a feasible way of reducing staff, table 8.4 shows the most recent four-year history of resignations that have occurred in Johnstown.

<b>Table 8.4 Johnstown Teacher Resignations/Retirements for the Past Four years</b>		
Year	Level	Years of Service
2017-18	High School	3, 22, 1
	Junior High	3, 3, 5, 4, 1
	Elementary	4, 2, 1
2016-17	High School	13
	Junior High	2, 6, 12
2015-16	High School	2, 3, 3, 2, 2
	Junior High	2, 1, 14, 3, 1, 11
	Elementary	4, 29, 1, 29, 1, 1, 2, 31, 14, 7, 6
2014-15	High School	33
	Elementary	2, 27

As seen in table 8.4, forty teachers have exited Johnstown in the past four years. These forty teachers have resigned/retired from all grade levels across the district and represent an average of 7.8 years of experience. Compared with many school districts, the average number of years of experience for departing teachers is quite low. Usually the years of experience is higher because retirements make up many if not most of the teachers who leave a district. However, Johnstown has faced significant financial challenges in the recent past and some programs have been reduced. Younger teachers who see a district with financial challenges also tend to seek employment in other districts where they perceive their future to be more secure.

Based on an analysis of table 8.4, it is clear that the attrition approach to reducing staff positions in Johnstown could be a very viable option. As the table shows, an average of ten teachers per year have left Johnstown over the past four years. There is no reason to believe that this general trend will not continue in the future. However, the financial challenges that are



currently faced by Johnstown could necessitate that staff savings be realized sooner than the attrition method would produce. In that case, involuntary reductions might have to be made. As a result, it is recommended that Johnstown use attrition as the method for reducing staff whenever that is possible. Furthermore, it is realized that attrition might not occur quickly enough to meet the financial challenges faced by the district. In these cases, it might be necessary to invoke involuntary staff reductions.

In understanding that staff reductions are the only way to achieve significant savings in a school district, the Johnstown board of education will need more specific information to further identify savings that might be realized should one of the elementary schools be closed. In discussions with the advisory committee throughout the course of this study, it became apparent that Glebe Street Elementary School, the smallest of the elementary schools, was most often identified as the school that might potentially be closed.

Table 8.5 that follows show the approximate staff cost savings that are projected to occur should Glebe Street Elementary School be closed.

<b>Table 8.5</b>	
<b>Staff Savings-Closing Glebe Street Elementary School</b>	
Item	Cost
1 Principal @ \$84,867	84,867
1 Secretary @ \$30,483	30,483
1 Custodian @ \$37,941	37,941
1 Custodial Worker @ \$33,082	33,082
1 Nurse @ \$29,669	29,669
1 Food Service/Cook @ \$12,589	12,589
<i>Total Staff Salary Savings</i>	228,631
Plus fringe benefits @ 50%	114,316
<b><i>Total Staff Salary and Benefit Savings</i></b>	<b><i>\$342,947</i></b>

In computing the approximate staff savings in the preceding table, a very conservative estimate has been made. Average salaries have been used for all of the identified positions. In addition, it is assumed that all of the teachers will be maintained. Given these parameters, it is estimated that there would be staff savings of approximately \$345,000 if Glebe Street were to close.

In addition to the staff savings noted in table 8.4, savings would also accrue from the cost of utilities should the district maintain the facility and not lease it to another entity. As noted in table 7.12 in the facilities chapter, costs for natural gas and electricity for Glebe Street were \$31,324 for the past school year. Approximately 40% of these costs can be realized as savings should the building be closed. This would add another \$12,530 to the staff savings making the total savings for staff and utilities approximately \$355,477.



## CHAPTER 9 TRANSPORTATION

Like most upstate school districts, Greater Johnstown School District transports many children to school on a daily basis. The Johnstown transportation department is operated by the Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM) BOCES Regional Transportation Service. Transportation department staff are employed by HFM BOCES however all buses are owned by the Greater Johnstown School District.

Johnstown's transportation fleet consists of fourteen (14) 66-passenger buses, two (2) 54-passenger wheelchair buses, two (2) 36-passenger wheelchair buses, and one (1) 35-passenger bus. The cost for a new 66-passenger bus is approximately \$125,000. A similarly-sized bus equipped with a wheelchair lift would cost approximately \$145,000. The district does not currently have a bus replacement schedule but district leaders recognize the importance of this schedule for fiscal planning so a bus replacement schedule is currently under development.

The district employs a double trip (or two-tier) daily routing plan to get in-district students to and from school. This means that the junior high and senior high school students ride to and from school on one bus run while the elementary students ride a separate second run. The early bus run picks up the secondary students then a second bus run transports the elementary children. There are 10 in-district runs daily that transport students to and from three elementary schools, Knox Junior High School, and Johnstown High School. The bus runs, from the time of the first student pick up until the final drop off point, are generally between 40 and 50 minutes. This is within the State Education Department's general guideline that no student should be on a bus longer than one hour when feasible.

Knox Junior High School students are dropped off by 7:15 a.m. in the morning and picked up at approximately 2:20 p.m. The High School students are dropped off by 7:30 a.m. and picked up at approximately 2:35 p.m. Pleasant Avenue elementary students are dropped off between 8:40 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and picked up in the afternoon between 3:15 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Students attending Glebe Street Elementary are dropped off in the morning between 8:40 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and picked up at the school between 3:20 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Lastly, students at the Warren Street elementary school are dropped off between 8:30 a.m. and 8:50 a.m. and picked up between 3:25 p.m. and 3:40 p.m. each afternoon.

Johnstown's elementary schools are organized in a grade center configuration. As noted earlier in this report, Pleasant Avenue school houses students in grades PK-1, Glebe Street school has students in grades 2-3, and the Warren Street school houses students in grades 4-6. With the grade center configuration, students may attend school at a building that is outside of their neighborhood, depending on the grade. Johnstown employs a shuttle bus system to ensure that students that do not qualify for door-to-door transportation based on the district's transportation policy parameters are provided with safe transportation to their school of attendance. The policy states that kindergartners that live less than one-half mile from Glebe Street or Warren Street schools are eligible to use the shuttle and students in grades 1-6 that live less than 1.5 miles from any elementary school building are eligible to ride the shuttle buses. The shuttle pick-ups/drop-offs in the morning are between 8:10 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. at all elementary buildings using two buses. In the afternoon, students are picked up/dropped off between 3:10 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. at all elementary buildings using three buses.



There are some students in the Johnstown district that walk to school. The current policy is that students in grades 1-12 living within 1.5 miles of their school building of attendance are expected to walk to school while kindergarten students living within one-half mile of Pleasant Avenue are expected to walk to school.

Johnstown also provides transportation to students whose respective education program is located outside of the district. These locations include Robbins School (St. Johnsville), Wildwood School, Maywood School, Northeast School (all Schenectady), Parsons School, Lasalle School, St. Anne Institute, Langan School, St. Catherine's School (all Albany), St. Mary's School (Amsterdam), and Fulton Montgomery Community College. These program locations are served by six bus routes, several of which are shared with the Gloversville Enlarged School District.

The process of scheduling bus routes to safely deliver students to and from home and school is complex and multi-faceted. The district uses Versatrans bus routing software to assist in the development of routes and tracking of students assigned to each route.

Should Johnstown choose to consider either of the options for reconfiguration of grade levels within the district's school buildings presented in this report, a thorough analysis of the impact on bus routing will be required once an option is selected. It is very helpful that a student shuttle system is already in place and it should require only minor adjustments. One area that could result in more substantial change if building grade levels are modified is which students would now qualify for door-to-door transportation. Lastly, the secondary bus routes may require some adjustment should the district opt to move the sixth grade students to the Knox Junior High School building.

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**The daily transportation system that the district provides is a very complex operation with a number of buses stopping and picking up at multiple school locations.**

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**CHAPTER 10  
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 seven or eight years.

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 2009 to 2019. As can be seen, the budget passed each year from 2009 through 2017. In 2018 the district was faced with a negative property tax cap so any increase in tax levy required a 60% supermajority affirmative vote for passage. The budget did not receive the 60% of yes votes but was overwhelmingly approved at a second vote at a contingent budget level. The 2019 vote resulted in a slight majority on the initial vote but the budget was defeated as the district needed the 60% supermajority for passage since the levy exceeded the property tax cap. At that time the Board decided to conduct a revote in June 2019 at a reduced tax levy and the budget was approved by a vote of 1,393 yes to 803 no.

<b>Table 10.1 District Budget Vote History</b>			
Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes
2019	1,150**	1,147	2,297
2018	461*	439	990
2017	340	194	534
2016	340	101	441
2015	350	95	445
2014	311	100	411
2013	293	107	400
2012	404	109	513
2011	475	160	635
2010	600	284	884
2009	507	203	710
<p>*NOTE: In 2018 the budget did not pass since the district needed a supermajority of 60% for passage; a second vote passed 924 yes to 388 no.                      **NOTE: In 2019 the budget did get majority support however the district needed the supermajority for it to pass. The district did pass a budget under the state cap on the second try in June 2019 by a vote of 1,393 yes to 803 no.</p>			

In addition, the Greater Johnstown school community has supported capital project votes on three recent occasions (2005, 2007 and 2014) as well as 7 of 7 bus propositions since 2006.

A second window into the district’s current fiscal situation is through examining the current general fund balance sheet. At the end of each fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>), all school districts



have to file a year-end financial report. The following table 10.2 shows Johnstown’s general fund balance sheet from this report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018.

<b>Table 10.2</b>	
<b>District Balance Sheets as of June 30, 2018</b>	
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash – Unrestricted/Restricted	\$7,944,725
Accounts/Taxes receivable	\$455,669
Due from other funds	\$2,428,585
Due from other governments	\$1,855,082
State and Federal aid	\$680,336
Other	
Prepaid expenditures	
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$13,364,397</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Accounts payable	\$568,186
Accrued liabilities	\$22,692
Bonds payable	
Due to other funds	\$1,140,627
Due to Employees’ Retirement System	\$135,951
Due to Teachers’ Retirement System	\$1,360,689
Collections in advance	\$51,839
Deferred revenue	\$375,351
<b>Total Liabilities/Deferred Revenues</b>	<b>\$3,655,335</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>	
<b>Restricted Fund Balance</b>	
Workers’ Compensation Reserve	\$502,200
Unemployment Reserve	
Reserve for Retirement Contributions	\$900,000
Repair Reserve	
Reserve for Liability & Property Loss	\$494,209
Insurance Reserve	
Reserve for Debt Service	\$2,000,000
Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$48,633
Reserve for Employee Benefit & Accrued Liability	\$174,573
Reserve for Capital Projects	\$85,000
Reserve for Capital Projects – Transportation	\$666,417
<b>Total Restricted Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$4,871,032</b>
<b>Assigned Fund Balance</b>	
Appropriated for Taxes	
Encumbrances	
Assigned Fund Balance	\$2,250,545
<b>Total Assigned Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$2,250,545</b>
<b>Unassigned Fund Balance</b>	
Unassigned Fund Balance	\$2,587,485
<b>Total Unassigned Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$2,587,485</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$9,709,062</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$13,364,397</b>





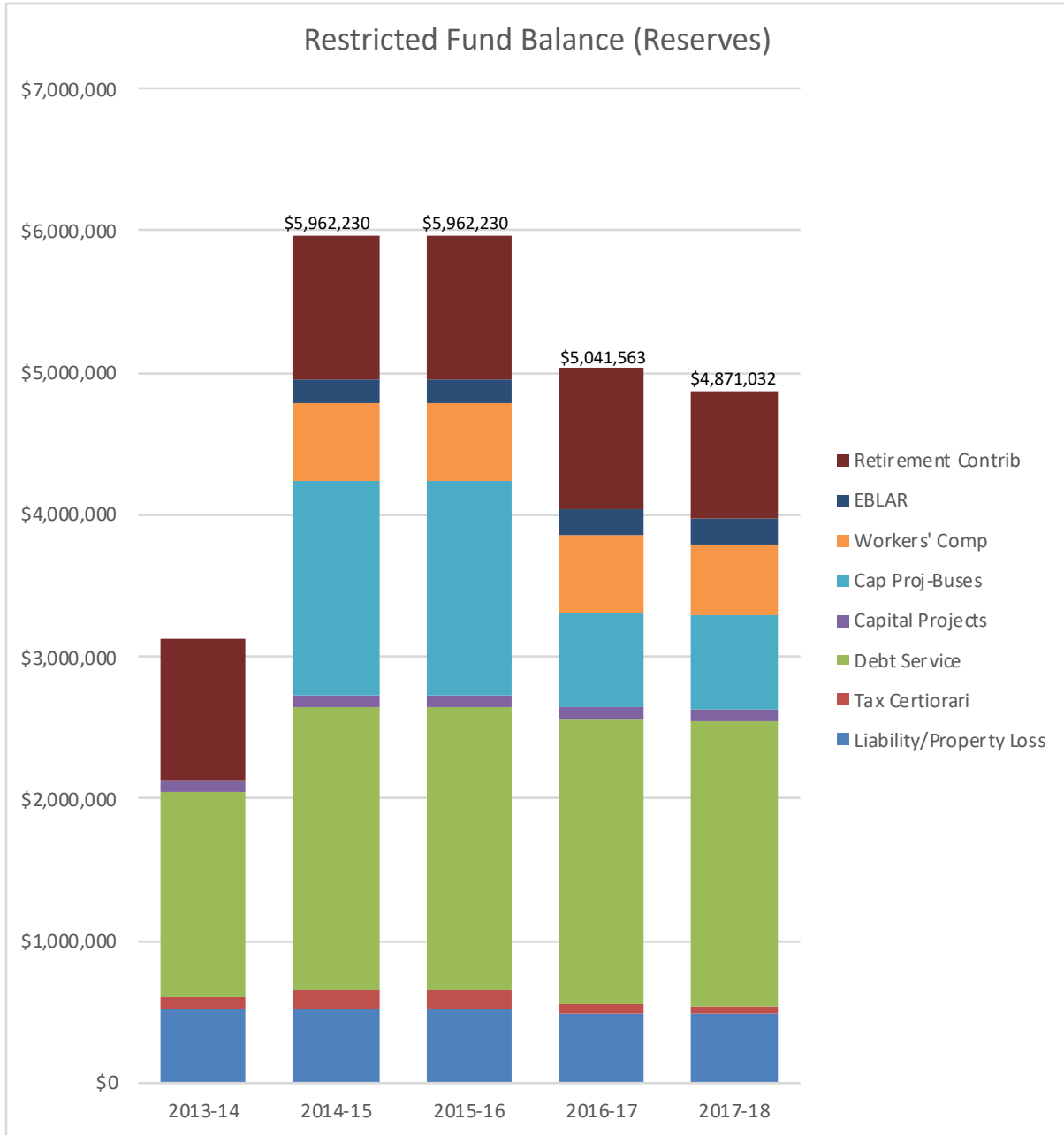
To assess the district’s overall fiscal position, it is important to focus on several items in the above general fund balance sheet. Specifically, the number and amount of reserve accounts in the restricted fund balance is an indicator of long-range fiscal planning. As can be seen, on June 30, 2018, the district had \$502,200 in reserve for workers’ compensation, \$900,000 in a reserve for retirement contribution, \$48,633 in a tax certiorari reserve (property assessment challenges), \$494,209 in reserve for liability and property claims, \$174,573 set aside for employee benefits and accrued liabilities, a \$85,000 capital reserve, \$666,417 in a capital transportation reserve, and \$2,000,000 in a debt service reserve. The following table summarizes the most recent five-year history of the district’s restricted fund balance for each reserve category.

**Table 10.3**  
**Restricted Fund Balance: A Five Year Summary**

Category	6/30/14	6/30/15	6/30/16	6/30/17	6/30/18
Workers’ Comp		\$558,000	\$558,000	\$558,000	\$502,200
Retirement Contribution	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$900,000
Liability & Property Loss	\$525,000	\$525,000	\$525,000	\$494,209	\$494,209
Debt Service	\$1,450,519	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Tax Certiorari	\$75,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$63,364	\$48,633
Employee Benefits & Accrued Liability		\$169,230	\$169,230	\$174,573	\$174,573
Capital	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$85,000	\$85,000
Capital - Transportation		\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$666,417	\$666,417
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,135,519</b>	<b>\$5,962,230</b>	<b>\$5,962,230</b>	<b>\$5,041,563</b>	<b>\$4,871,032</b>

The graph below provides a visual illustration of the restricted fund balance (reserves) of the district. Three of the current reserves (workers’ compensation, employee benefits & accrued liability, and capital – transportation) were not funded in the first year of the five-year summary. The total restricted fund balance has declined in each of the last three years going from \$5,962,230 in 2015-16 to \$4,871,032 in 2017-18; a reduction of \$1,091,198. Should this trend continue, the fiscal stress on the district will significantly increase.





A second indicator of fiscal health is the amount of unassigned fund balance a district maintains. The unassigned fund balance is often thought of as the ‘emergency’ fund for the district in the event of unforeseen expenditures that are critical to the operation of the district or may be required by law. State law restricts a school district from carrying more than 4% of the subsequent year’s budget in its unassigned fund balance. At the end of the 2017-18 fiscal year, Johnstown had \$2,587,485 set aside or 7.3% of 2018-19 general fund budget (\$35,653,431). The 6/30/18 unassigned fund balance exceeded the authorized statutory level but adjustments have been made in the subsequent year to reduce this amount.



Lastly, we examine the amount of money a school district 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 coming year. From the 2017-18 general fund budget, Johnstown applied \$2,250,545 to hold the 2018-19 tax rate down. Given the district’s negative property tax cap for the 2018-19 budget year, it would not have had the ability to increase taxes without a supermajority voter approval so the budgeted expenditures would have had to be reduced by this amount.

It can be concerning for a district to become too dependent on the use of assigned fund balance. If there are no longer funds left over from the previous budget or if funds must be used to replenish reserves or keep money in the unassigned fund balance for use in the event of unforeseen emergencies, the full burden of funding the local share of the budget will fall to the taxpayers. It is important to note that the projected 6/30/19 assigned fund balance used to support the 2019-20 budget has gone up to \$2,655,460 from \$2,250,545 the previous year.

A five-year history as illustrated in Table 10.4 that follows shows the use of assigned fund balance has declined. However, an increase is for projected fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 as noted above. Unassigned fund balance has been relatively stable with balances slightly above the statutory limit.

Fiscal Year Ending 6/30	Assigned Fund Balance*	Unassigned Fund Balance
2018	\$2,250,545	\$2,587,485
2017	\$3,234,004	\$2,310,940
2016	\$3,806,658	\$1,810,729
2015	\$4,749,209	\$2,332,000
2014	\$2,641,761	\$2,214,331
*Assigned Fund Balance is the amount of fund balance the district used to hold down the tax rate the following year by lowering the needed levy.		

Another important financial variable, particularly in light of this study, 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, Johnstown 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 district has recently completed a capital project so the current debt will not be paid off until the completion of the 2033-34 school year. It is important to consult with financial advisors experienced in school district debt service and building aid when planning future obligations to minimize the adverse financial impact on the district.



<i>Year</i>	<i>Principal &amp; Interest</i>	<i>Estimated Aid</i>	<i>Estimated Local Share</i>
2017-18	\$1,539,740	\$2,231,684	(\$691,944)
2018-19	\$1,877,900	\$2,911,873	(\$1,033,973)
2019-20	\$4,274,581	\$2,956,776	\$1,317,805
2020-21	\$4,268,051	\$2,956,776	\$1,311,275
2021-22	\$4,273,705	\$2,956,776	\$1,316,929
2022-23	\$4,107,074	\$2,803,151	\$1,303,923
2023-24	\$3,961,427	\$2,649,526	\$1,311,901
2024-25	\$3,957,476	\$2,649,526	\$1,307,950
2025-26	\$3,955,221	\$2,649,526	\$1,305,695
2026-27	\$3,959,493	\$2,649,526	\$1,309,967
2027-28	\$3,754,923	\$2,442,849	\$1,312,074
2028-29	\$3,419,711	\$2,236,172	\$1,183,539
2029-30	\$3,419,226	\$2,236,172	\$1,183,054
2030-31	\$3,425,530	\$2,236,172	\$1,189,358
2031-32	\$3,423,285	\$2,236,172	\$1,187,113
2032-33	\$2,992,660	\$1,824,558	\$1,168,102
2033-34	\$2,998,020	\$1,824,558	\$1,173,462
<i>Total</i>	\$59,608,023	\$42,451,793	\$17,156,230

The revenue side of the budget also provides important data when examining the fiscal health of a school district. The full value tax rate for the district is the only viable way to accurately compare year-to-year changes in the district's tax rates because it eliminates variances due to differing assessment practices in the towns and cities within the school district.

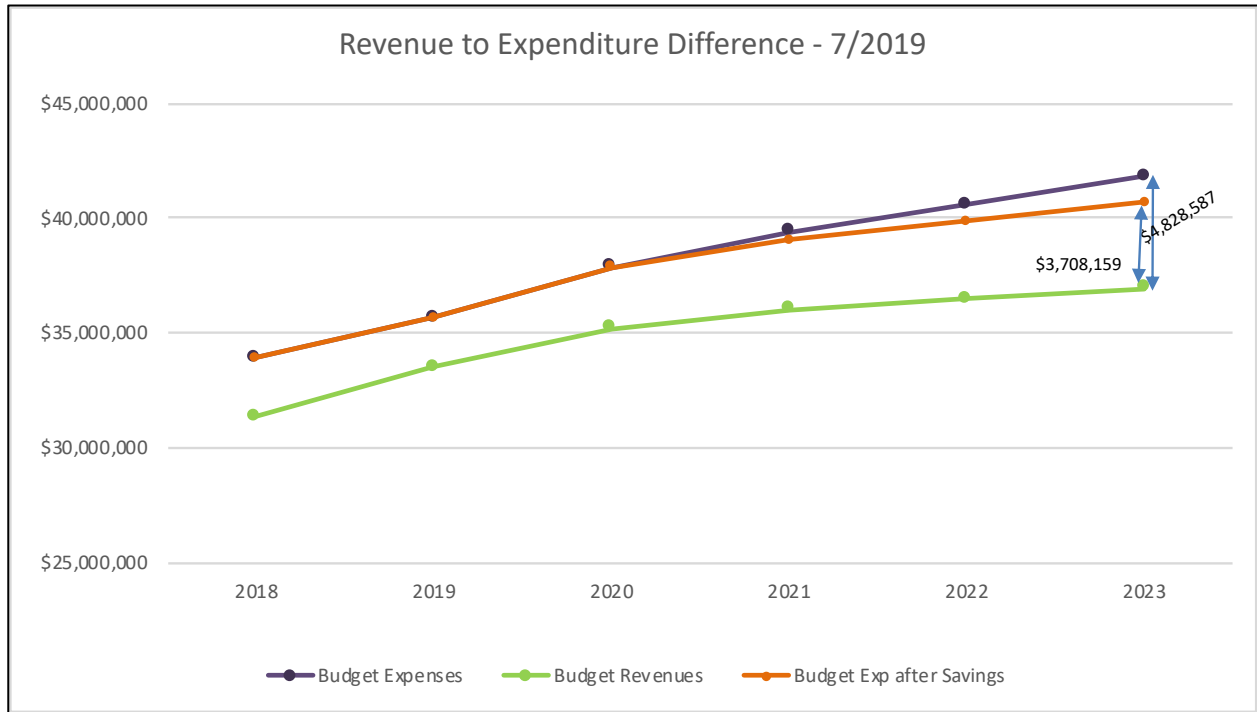
Table 10.6 below illustrates that the full value tax rates of the Johnstown school district have remained relatively constant over the five-year period from 7/1/14 – 6/30/19.

	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>Tax Levy</b>	\$7,752,030	\$7,889,157	\$8,016,582	\$8,297,162	\$8,604,157
<b>Full Value</b>	\$490,866,384	\$553,516,868	\$553,712,761	\$568,153,727	\$596,495,705
<b>FV Tax Rate</b>	\$15.79	\$14.25	\$14.48	\$14.60	\$14.42
<b>% Change</b>		-9.8%	1.6%	0.8%	-1.2%



While the district’s balance sheet does not show significant cause for concern as of 6/30/18, the Greater Johnstown School District has identified an impending financial challenge as expenditures and revenues are project over the next five years.

Although the district has begun addressing this issue, the graph below clearly illustrates the gap between projected expenditures and revenues. Using conservative estimates for annual increases in both areas, the district will have a gap of \$4,828,587 on June 30, 2023. The estimated savings for the two options presented in this report is \$355,477. As previously noted, this estimate maintains class size at or near current levels. The first year that this savings could be realized is 2020-21. Applying this savings plus an inflationary factor of 2% in subsequent years reduces the projected gap to \$3,708,159.



**Applying the savings from either option recommended in this report (\$355,477) helps to reduce the growing gap between projected revenues and expenditures.**



## CHAPTER 11 RESEARCH AND LITERATURE ON GRADE REORGANIZATION

Before the feasible options are presented, a brief overview of the relevant research and literature that were fundamental to the study is presented. Grade configuration study is common for school districts around the country; thus substantial research and literature exist. Key research findings were presented to the advisory committee. (A more detailed summary of the research is available upon request from the consultants).

First, it is important to note that most school districts that embark on grade configuration study do so because of too much or too little capacity in their schools. In other words, space rather than educational considerations drives the decision. This is partially true in Johnstown as well. It approached the study of grade configurations with one primary purpose in mind—how the district can arrange the K-12 schools to achieve more positive educational outcomes for students while balancing the community’s ability to financially support any new grade/facility arrangement. Johnstown’s Board of Education and Superintendent are to be commended for addressing grade configuration for the right reasons.

Examination of school districts around the country finds virtually any possible grade configuration. For example, a K-4, 5-8, 9-12 pattern is common in suburban school districts. Some districts like Johnstown have adopted a grade center plan, with all K-2 students in one building and all 3-5 students in another. The K-8, 9-12 grade arrangement is still found in many small rural districts and is a recent trend in the urban areas. The oldest grade configuration is K-12, and is still seen in many small rural districts, even in New York State. The most common pattern of organizing grades in New York State today is K-5, 6-8, 9-12.

Over the past thirty years there has been a trend by districts to change from the K-6, 7-9, 10-12 configuration to K-5, 6-8, 9-12. The impetus for this large scale and pervasive shift has been due to what is commonly known as “the middle school movement.” The middle school movement is an effort to provide a transition phase of schooling—taking children from the cloistered setting of an elementary school to the less structured environment of a high school. Middle school age children have unique needs during this rapidly changing phase of life that may not be adequately addressed in either the typical elementary school or high school.

Unfortunately, school district planners cannot look to the research for the “one best way” to configure the grades. While there is evidence that one can locate support for any grade configuration, there is no conclusive research that indicates that one alignment is necessarily any better than another. A general conclusion that most researchers have reached is that it is “what” a district does with the grade configuration that ultimately determines success or failure, rather than “which” grade arrangement is endorsed. For example, many districts that changed their grade configuration to either a 5-8 or 6-8 middle school never adopted the philosophy and necessary practices to have a true middle school (for example, team teaching, advisor-advisee programs). Consequently, these districts have been unsuccessful in achieving the positive outcomes advanced by middle school advocates.

Finally, the research indicates that school districts studying grade configuration typically must confront a set of common issues. Indeed, some of these surfaced as this study progressed. Specifically, the cost and length of travel for children to get to and from school; how long will students be on the school bus is always a concern that must be addressed if a reconfiguration is to



occur. The favorable or unfavorable impact of parent involvement in a child's schooling is an element that arises in every instance. The manner in which students will be grouped for instruction (i.e., teaming at the middle school level) is a frequent issue.

Research has found that the number of transitions during a student's K-12 experience should be considered. Each time a student moves from one school to another the educational process is disrupted. Although the student recovers, it is important to minimize the number of transitions in a student's education.

Interaction between various age groups and the influence of older students on younger is usually a significant consideration for districts considering reconfiguration. How will fifth or sixth graders be impacted by proximity to eighth graders?

And finally, the relationship of a building's design for accommodating the instructional program of different grade configurations must be examined. This, too, was a focus of advisory committee consideration.





## CHAPTER 12

### OPTIONS FOR MAINTAINING AND/OR RECONFIGURING THE BUILDING/GRADE ORGANIZATION OF THE DISTRICT

When evaluating the current status of Johnstown’s grade and facility organization, the consultants first attempted to identify “feasible” options—in other words, how *could* the grades/facilities 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’ selection of the “desirable” options.

#### ***Feasible Grade/Facility Options***

The consultants initially identified several feasible options along with advantages (pros) and disadvantages (cons) of each when compared to the other possible choices. These options were then the focus of discussion with members of the advisory committee. The advisory committee was asked to critique the options, either agree or disagree with the options, and critique the pros and cons. The advisory committee was also asked to add additional advantages and disadvantages to each option. Finally, the advisory committee was also instructed to add any additional options that they thought would be appropriate. The following tables show the result of these discussions. In addition, supplemental data to support many of the pros and cons has been included.

#### ***Criteria for School Building Closure***

Discussion about closing any school building will generate significant emotion from many people. In considering the possible closure of a school building, the consultants examined each of the elementary buildings. When formulating recommendations, the following criteria were considered with respect to closing elementary schools:

1. Smallest enrollment—impacts the fewest students, staff, and families;
2. Age of building;
3. Square footage of building to accommodate new students;
4. Geographic proximity to other schools to facilitate transportation and sharing of students and staff;
5. Site considerations for parking and student safety; and,
6. Number of floors, single story is better.

Based on the criteria listed above, Johnstown’s elementary schools are quite similar. However, it is our best judgment that the elementary school most appropriate to consider closing is Glebe Street Elementary School due to its enrollment and its relatively small size (square footage).

Prior to sharing the recommended options for the Board to consider, it is important to address the status quo. Remaining as is, that is, keeping the schools and grades organized as at present, is generally a recommended option in similar circumstances. Therefore, this was the first possible future option shared with the committee. In the case of Johnstown, unlike other school districts, this option was eventually dropped from consideration. The primary rationale for this decision is based on two factors: (1) Johnstown is facing a *very serious* financial



challenge and must seek ways to cut costs, and (2) the district has excess capacity in its schools and does not need the amount of classroom space it currently utilizes.

Additionally, based on input from the advisory committee, other options that were initially explored but dropped from consideration as either not feasible and/or not desirable included:

- Keeping the school and grades organized as at present and simply increasing class sizes to save on staff cost.
- Moving the sixth grade to Knox and creating a 6-8 middle school and closing Glebe Elementary. Warren Street would house grades K-2 while Pleasant Avenue would have grades 3-5. The Pre-K classrooms currently housed in Pleasant Avenue would have to go elsewhere.
- Moving the sixth grade to Knox and creating a 6-8 middle school and closing Glebe Elementary. Pleasant Avenue would house PreK-2 while Warren Street would have grades 3-5.
- Closing Knox and sending the 7<sup>th</sup> grade to Warren Street and 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the High School.
- Closing Knox and making Glebe Street grades 2-4, Warren Street 5-7, and the High School grades 8-12.
- Having Pre-K at Pleasant Avenue, grades 2-4 at Warren Street and move the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades to Knox. Eighth grade would move to the High School.
- Make Pleasant Avenue and Warren Street both K-4 buildings (neighborhood schools), move 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades to Knox, and relocate 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the High School. Also, relocate the District Offices and CSE to Glebe Street.

The following options are offered for the Board's consideration as both feasible and desirable with advantages and disadvantages for each. There is no perfect solution!

***Option 1: Move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close an elementary school (Glebe Street)-would result in a K-2 primary school at Pleasant Avenue with 17 classrooms and a 3-5 intermediate school at Warren Street with 15 classrooms. Space would need to be found for the three to four Pre-K classrooms.***

Some educational advantages noted by the consultants and the committee included allowing for a true middle school philosophy (teamed instruction as a transition from essentially a self-contained elementary program to a complete departmentalized high school, access to middle school facilities such as technology rooms and advanced courses—mathematics and second languages—for sixth graders, and consistency with the NYS Regents Policy Statement on Middle Level Education [<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/mle/mlepolicy.html>] that outlines a rationale for middle level). This option may also allow for the closing of one school. This option eliminates a two-grade school which research shows adversely affects parental involvement with students either transitioning in or out of the school. This option also reduces by one the number





of transitions that a student makes from one building to another. Finally, this option is one that results in Knox Junior High being used more toward its physical capacity.

In making recommendations about closing a school, all three elementary buildings were considered. The recommendation to close Glebe Street is made primarily because that building has the fewest number of full size classrooms of the three elementary schools; Glebe Street-16, Pleasant Avenue-19, and Warren Street-26. Keeping Pleasant Avenue and Warren Street open maximizes the opportunities to accommodate full size classrooms after closing one of the elementary schools.

The other area for which the district would like to see additional space is in the area of Pre-K. Currently Johnstown offers three half-day sections of Pre-K with 14, 16, and 17 students enrolled in these sections. Ideally, the district would like to provide a full day Pre-K program that would require four classrooms. Option 1 does not provide the four classrooms that the district would like in order to provide a full day Pre-K program; it continues the two rooms that are currently used to provide the half-day program. Other pros and cons are noted below.

<b>Table 12.1 Pros and Cons for Option 1</b>	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would require adjustment of the schedule at Knox thus providing course acceleration for students</li> <li>▪ Allows for the development of a middle school program</li> <li>▪ Eliminates having a two-grade school and thus perhaps increasing parental involvement at Knox</li> <li>▪ Makes better use of space at Knox</li> <li>▪ Pleasant may be a better fit for primary students and Warren a better fit for intermediate students</li> <li>▪ Provides more flexible schedule for 6<sup>th</sup> grades</li> <li>▪ Possible fewer bus stops and thus increasing transportation efficiency?</li> <li>▪ Increases the opportunity to accelerate coursework for students (math and science)</li> <li>▪ Could result in staff savings (\$355,477) due to the closing of Glebe (principal, secretary, custodial, aide, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Addresses the community’s love for Knox</li> <li>▪ May reduce conflicts (parent conferences, concerts, etc.) for parents with different age students with one less building</li> <li>▪ With larger class sizes there would be some staff savings at the elementary level</li> <li>▪ Reduces the number of transitions students have to make K-12</li> <li>▪ Makes Pleasant a literacy-based school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There may be some concerns about the developmental appropriateness of having 6<sup>th</sup> graders in a building with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders unless housed on separate floor</li> <li>▪ Uncertainty about where Pre-K would be housed</li> <li>▪ If Pre-K is elsewhere it may adversely affect Pre-K to K transition</li> <li>▪ With a possible reduction in positions due to closing a school, some staff may lose a job</li> <li>▪ With larger class sizes it might adversely impact instruction at the elementary level</li> <li>▪ If the district goes with full-day Pre-K, is it OK to not have Pre-K on campus?</li> </ul>



Should the Board endorse this option 1, it must be clearly understood that the earliest it could be implemented would be for the 2020-21 academic year. In examining these two options, 2019-20 school year enrollment projections are being used to analyze the impact each option would have on class sizes and number of homerooms needed. The 2019-20 elementary enrollment is likely the most accurate projected year and represents the second largest elementary enrollment in the future years of projections. The table that follows summarizes this information of 2019-20 elementary enrollments.

<b>Table 12.2</b> <b>2019-20 Class Sizes-K-2 at Pleasant; 3-5 at Warren 6-8 at Knox (Glebe Closed)</b> <b>Approximately 21 Students/Classroom</b>				
Grade	Number of Sections and Class Size of Each Section			Average Class Size
	Pleasant Avenue	Warren Street	Knox	
K	21, 21, 21, 21, 21			21.0
1	21, 21, 21, 21, 21, 20			20.8
2	20, 20, 20, 20, 20, 19			19.8
3		21, 21, 21, 22, 22, 22		21.5
4		23, 23, 23, 23		23.0
5		22, 22, 22, 22, 23		22.2
6			23, 23, 23, 23, 23	23.0
K-6 Total	17/349 (20.5 avg)	15/332 (22.1 avg)	5/115 (23.0 avg)	

Now that option 1 has been defined and the 2019-20 elementary enrollment has been determined, these two factors must be combined together. Table 12.3 that follows shows the current utilization of rooms in Pleasant Avenue and Warren Street as well as the projected classroom usage for 2020-21 should the board choose to implement option 1.



<b>Table 12.3</b> <b><u>OPTION 1</u></b> <b>Pleasant Avenue Elementary School Classroom Usage 2018-19 &amp; 2020-21</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
Options	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (14)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (5)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
(2018-19)	19	Pre-K-2 Kdgn-6 <u>1<sup>st</sup>-6</u> 14	Special Education-1 OT/PT-1 Computer Lab-1 Music-1 Art-1	Speech-2 Resource-1 AIS-3 Teachers Lounge
Option 1 (2020-21)	19	K-5 1-6 <u>2-6</u> 17	<i>Need 3 rooms-Give up computer lab, find small room for OT/PT, art or music on a cart</i>	<i>Same except give up 1 room for OT/PT</i>
<b>Warren Street Elementary School Classroom Usage 2018-19 &amp; 2020-21</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (15)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (11)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
(2018-19)	26	4 <sup>th</sup> -5 5 <sup>th</sup> -5 <u>6<sup>th</sup>-5</u> 15	AIS-2 Flex-2 STEM-2 Life Skills-1 Vocal Music-1 Instrumental Music-1 Art/Music-1 Storage-1	Remedial-1 Resource -1 Speech-1 Staff Lounge-1 Storage-1
Option 1 (2020-21)	26	3-6 4-4 <u>5-5</u> 15	<i>Same</i>	<i>Same</i>

As can be seen in table 12.3 above, there would be no room for the Pre-K program at Pleasant Avenue. If the Pre-K program were to be moved to Warren Street, a half-day program would need two more rooms and a full-day program would need four rooms to be taken from the current rooms at Warren Street. The Pre-K program might also have to be relocated to a location outside the district such as the YMCA. Additionally, in order to accomplish this arrangement, one of the current “small rooms” in the building would have to be made available to OT/PT. In addition, the computer lab would have to be turned into a regular classroom and music or art would have to be put on a cart and the program pushed into homerooms; doable but not an ideal arrangement in our judgment.



The second option that received considerable discussion during the study process is as follows:

***Option 2: Move the sixth grade to Knox and create a 6-8 middle school and close Glebe Street. Pleasant Avenue would then house grade Pre-K-1 while Warren Street contains grades 2-5.***

This second option is similar to the first one in many respects. Some educational advantages noted through committee discussion are contained in the table below. Similar to Option 1, development of a true middle school at Knox is a major reason this is a desirable option. Additionally, it offers the district considerable savings by closing Glebe Street and allows the district to keep the Pre-K program in house and allows for a full day program. Other advantages and disadvantages are included in the table 12.4 below.

<b>Table 12.4 Pros and Cons for Option 2</b>	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would require adjustment of the schedule at Knox thus providing course acceleration for students</li> <li>▪ Allows for the development of a middle school program</li> <li>▪ Eliminates having a two-grade school and thus perhaps increasing parental involvement at Knox</li> <li>▪ Makes better use of space at Knox</li> <li>▪ Pleasant may be a better fit for primary students and Warren a better fit for intermediate students</li> <li>▪ Provides more flexible schedule for 6<sup>th</sup> grades</li> <li>▪ Possible fewer bus stops and thus increasing transportation efficiency?</li> <li>▪ Increases the opportunity to accelerate coursework for students (math and science)</li> <li>▪ Could result in staff savings (\$355,477) due to the closing of a school (principal, secretary, custodial, aide, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Addresses the community’s love for Knox</li> <li>▪ May reduce conflicts (parent conferences, concerts, etc.) for parents with different age students with one less building</li> <li>▪ Could possibly expand PK at Pleasant Ave. with fewer students and still ensure a smooth transition</li> <li>▪ At the elementary level if larger class sizes are adopted it could result in staff savings</li> <li>▪ Reduces the number of transitions students have to make K-12</li> <li>▪ Makes Pleasant a literacy-based school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There may be some concerns about the developmental appropriateness of having 6<sup>th</sup> graders in a building with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders unless housed on separate floor</li> <li>▪ With a possible reduction in positions due to closing a school, some staff may lose a job</li> <li>▪ Some full size classrooms at Warren now being used for other purposes (Flex, 2; Storage, 1; Speech, 1; AIS, 1; STEM, 1) would become homerooms thus finding a way to house these programs</li> <li>▪ At the elementary level, with larger class sizes it may adversely impact instruction.</li> <li>▪ A four grade school (Warren) may require hiring an assistant principal?</li> <li>▪ May potentially cause PE, band and chorus scheduling issues</li> </ul>



Similar to the table provided for option 1, the following table 12.5 shows the current utilization of rooms in Pleasant Avenue and Warren Street as well as the projected classroom usage for 2020-21 should the board choose to implement option 2.

<b>Table 12.5</b> <b><u>OPTION 2</u></b> <b>Pleasant Avenue Elementary School Classroom Usage 2018-19 &amp; 2020-21</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
Options	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (14)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (5)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
(2018-19)	19	Pre-K-2 Kdgn-6 <u>1<sup>st</sup>-6</u> 14	Special Education-1 OT/PT-1 Computer Lab-1 Music-1 Art-1	Speech-2 Resource-1 AIS-3 Teachers' Lounge
Option 2 (2020-21)	19	Pre-K-4 K-5 <u>1-6</u> 15	Need 1 room-Give up computer lab	Same
<b>Warren Street Elementary School Classroom Usage 2018-19 &amp; 2020-21</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, &amp; Media Center)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (15)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (11)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
(2018-19)	26	4 <sup>th</sup> -5 5 <sup>th</sup> -5 <u>6<sup>th</sup>-5</u> 15	AIS-2 Flex-2 STEM-2 Life Skills-1 Vocal Music-1 Instrumental Music-1 Art/Music-1 Storage-1	Remedial-1 Resource -1 Speech-1 Staff Lounge-1 Storage-1
Option 2 (2020-21)	26	2-6 3-6 4-4 <u>5-5</u> 21	Need 6 rooms—1 AIS to small room, 2 Flex, 1 STEM, 1 music, 1 storage	Same

As can be seen in table 12.5 above, this option accomplishes the district's wish of having four classrooms available to house a full day Pre-K program...and the Pre-K program would be



housed with kindergarten and first grade in Pleasant Avenue School. However, the space for full-day Pre-K at Pleasant Avenue is created by moving the second grade to Warren Street. This means that Warren Street will be more crowded than with the arrangement in option 1. Giving up (or moving to a small room) one AIS room, two flexible rooms, one of two STEM rooms, one of two music rooms, and a full size storage room may create some challenges. However, the ability to offer a full day Pre-K program and not to have to put any special subjects on carts might make the challenges worth the effort.

The table 12.6 that follows summarizes the potential cost savings noted in the list of pros and cons above (Note-these savings are estimated to be the same for option 1 and option 2).

<b>Table 12.6 Cost Savings for Options 1 and 2</b>	
Item	Cost
1 Principal @ \$84,867	\$84,867
1 Secretary @ \$30,483	30,483
1 Custodian @ \$37,941	37,941
1 Custodial Worker @ \$33,082	33,082
1 Nurse @ \$29,669	29,669
1 Food Service/Cook @ \$12,589	12,589
<i>Total Staff Salary Savings</i>	<i>228,631</i>
Plus fringe benefits @ 50%	114,316
<i>Total Staff Salary and Benefit Savings</i>	<i>342,947</i>
<i>Utility Costs-40% of \$31,324</i>	<i>12,530</i>
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>\$355,477</b>

The cost savings for the district if either option 1 or option 2 is adopted and as noted in the pros/cons table would be approximately \$355,477.

In consideration of both options noted above, the following recommendations are offered should either option be approved by the Board:

- 1-Assuming Glebe Street Elementary School is closed, the district should first consider attempting to either secure a buyer for the building OR a lessee to ensure the school is put to productive use.
- 2-After a reasonable period of time (perhaps two years) if the school is not sold or rented the district should consider moving the District Offices and the currently rented Maintenance Facility to Glebe Street School.



## CHAPTER 13

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a study such as this, consideration must be given to several school related factors. These include student enrollment history and projections, instructional programs, staffing, student transportation, facilities, finances, and the emotions associated with the possibility of realigning school buildings. While hard data, such as numbers, facilities, and grade configurations contribute significant facts to study findings, it is important to recognize that emotions contribute as well. The fabric of schools and communities is directly related to the emotional connection people have with them. These emotions are as much “fact” as are hard data. Accordingly, our recommendations are made with mindful consideration of all the facts associated with the study process.

#### ***Key Findings***

The following are key study findings.

*Finding 1:* Live births in the City of Johnstown were used to predict kindergarten enrollment five years later. The live birth rate has been dropping slightly since 2011.

*Finding 2:* The K-12 district enrollment has declined from 1,714 in 2013-14 to 1,575 this past year, or an 8.1% drop most of which was experienced at the secondary level. In 1994-95 the district enrolled 2,264 K-12 students.

*Finding 3:* Looking out to 2025-26, enrollment projections estimate the district will have approximately 1,498 K-12 students or roughly another 4.9% drop. This drop will primarily be felt at the elementary level.

*Finding 4:* Examining enrollments at the elementary schools we find that in the past five years enrollment has increased slightly (+4.5%) at Pleasant Avenue, remained quite constant at Warren Street, and declined at Glebe Street (-12.2%).

*Finding 5:* The number of district residents that elect to home-school their children has remained quite constant over the past five years at between roughly 30-40 students per year.

*Finding 6:* The number of Johnstown resident students that attend school elsewhere has been increasing over the past four years and in 2018-19 twenty-five students did so.

*Finding 7:* Fulton County population has declined over the period of 2007 (55,489) to 2017 (53,827) and the U. S. Census projects it will continue to decline through 2040 (52,675).

*Finding 8:* Like most upstate counties, the median age in Fulton County has been rising from 41.5 years in 2009 to 43.8 years in 2017. Additionally, the Fulton County childbearing age group (25-44 years) has been declining since 2007 (13,972) to 2017 (12,674).

*Finding 9:* In 2018-19 the elementary schools have reasonable class size averages (Pleasant Avenue, 19.7; Glebe Street, 20.0; Warren Street, 22.3) and because the district has adopted a grade center model, there is a good balance of class sizes at each grade level.

*Finding 10:* In addition to the typical core elementary subjects, the three elementary schools also offer special area subjects at all grade levels including art, music, physical education, computer, and library skills. These special area subjects operate on a 6-day cycle.



*Finding 11:* On the New York State grades 3-8 tests, Johnstown students typically score about as well as Fulton County students in English/Language Arts and Mathematics but lower than the state as a whole.

*Finding 12:* The district educates most of its special needs students in district schools (193 in 2018-19) while sending a smaller number (31 this past year) to out-of-district programs. This rate has been quite constant over the past five years.

*Finding 13:* The Junior High School program is typical for a school district of this size. The High School Program provides many alternatives for students.

*Finding 14:* Class sizes in the junior high and high school are strong.

*Finding 15:* An extensive number of interscholastic athletic opportunities are available to the students in Johnstown.

*Finding 16:* There is an abundance of space in the Johnstown school buildings.

*Finding 17:* Room utilization at the high school is slightly below average.

*Finding 18:* The leasing of Jansen Avenue to BOCES is approximately a break-even proposition.

*Finding 19:* School building utility costs are a relatively small expense. If a building is closed, utility cost savings would approximate 40% of the original cost.

*Finding 20:* Prior to the most recent capital project, the 2015 Building Condition Survey identified approximately \$38,000,000 worth of work to be considered; however, much of this work has been accomplished.

*Finding 21:* Fringe benefit costs add approximately 50% to the cost of salaries.

*Finding 22:* Staff reductions are the only way to achieve significant savings in school districts. A combination of involuntary reductions and attrition might be considered for Johnstown given its current fiscal challenges.

*Finding 23:* The district employs a two-tier (double trip) routing plan for daily routes to and from its school buildings.

*Finding 24:* A bus shuttle system is utilized to transport elementary students from neighborhood schools to the school building of attendance.

*Finding 25:* The Johnstown community has supported the district's spending plans until recent circumstances have resulted in above average increases in the proposed tax levy.

*Finding 26:* Restricted fund balance accounts (reserves) have been established and funded by the district but will have to be utilized to fund the general operating budgets in future years if no changes to current expenditure and revenue trends are made.

*Finding 27:* Use of assigned fund balance to support the district spending plan has decreased in recent years.

*Finding 28:* During the five audited years from 7/1/13 – 6/30/18, unassigned fund balance has been maintained at a level at or slightly above statutory limits. It is projected that the unassigned fund balance will decrease in subsequent years.

*Finding 29:* While fluctuating slightly, full value tax rates have been maintained at approximately the same level over the past four years.

*Finding 30:* Johnstown has approximately \$17.1 million in local share of debt service (after estimated building aid) on its current borrowing through 2033-34.

*Finding 31:* External auditors rendered an unqualified (most favorable) opinion in the most recent audit report.





*Finding 32:* Although the district has begun addressing this issue, it is likely that, as projected, district expenditures will continue to increase at a greater rate than revenues over the next five years as evidenced by the chart on page 56 of the report.

### **Conclusions**

With these findings in mind, the following conclusions—or answers to the key questions that focused this study—have been reached.

***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

As consultants we have concluded that there are two options for arranging the grades and schools to achieve the stated purposes outlined above. While several “feasible” options were explored in depth, only two provide a “desirable” direction in our opinion for the district to pursue in light of the desire to maintain or improve the education of Johnstown students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayer.

### **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 will include the closure of Glebe Street School, the scope of work to be performed from the 2015 and next Building Condition Survey, the long term the 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 consider the following options as both “feasible” and “desirable” as it looks to the future.
  - Option 1: Move the sixth grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close Glebe Street Elementary School. Pleasant Avenue would then house grades K-2 while Warren Street Elementary would educate students in grades 3-5.
  - Option 2: Move the sixth grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close Glebe Elementary School. Pleasant Avenue would then house all PreK-1 grade students while Warren Street Elementary School would educate students in grades 2-5.

Given the district’s current difficult financial situation, these options were deemed most desirable from a financial standpoint. Maintaining the status quo (keeping all buildings open and continuing with the same grade arrangement) is not fiscally responsible. Quite simply, the district does not need all of the space available in the current buildings. In addition, unless



elementary class sizes are increased (which the Advisory Committee made clear is undesirable) the current arrangement offers no financial savings at a time when the district is facing severe financial challenges in the near future.

The following table summarizes the financial impact to the taxpayer if either of these options had been adopted and implemented in the 2018-19 school year. The actual tax levy for 2018-19 was \$8,604,157 and the full-value tax rate was \$14.42. Table 13.1 illustrates how each option’s cost savings could have reduced the tax levy and therefore reduced the full-value tax rate thus benefiting the taxpayer. However, it should be kept in mind that the district could have chosen to apply some of the savings to maintain and perhaps improve program.

<b>Table 13.1</b>				
<b>Impact to the Taxpayer by Option if Implemented in 2018-19</b>				
<i>Option</i>	<i>Option Savings</i>	<i>Revised Levy</i>	<i>Revised FV Tax Rate</i>	<i>Savings to \$100 K Homeowner</i>
1	\$355,477	\$8,248,680	\$13.83	\$59
2	\$355,477	\$8,248,680	\$13.83	\$59
<u>Assumptions</u>				
1-All the projected staff savings were realized in the first year of implementation of each option.				
2-All savings were used to reduce the tax levy.				
3-Any closed building was not sold or leased which could yield additional revenue for the district.				

3. It is recommended that Johnstown use attrition as the method for reducing staff whenever possible. Furthermore, it is realized that attrition might not occur quickly enough to meet the financial challenges faced by the district. In these cases, it might be necessary to invoke involuntary staff reductions.

4. It is recommended that the Board of Education conduct at least one public hearing/comment period on these options for the general public to express opinions.

5. It is recommended that the district implement these options in the 2020-21 school year. This will allow for adequate time to conduct one or more hearings to permit the public to make concerns and comments known about each of the options under consideration and for sufficient planning time to finalize implementation details so that the transition is as smooth as possible. Implementation details may involve some minor renovations to the elementary schools and/or to Knox Junior High. However, it is likely that the majority of these renovations could be handled internally by district staff.

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**It is recommended that the district hold a public meeting on these options, reduce staff through attrition if possible, form a long-range facility planning committee, and implement the chosen option for the 2020-21 school year.**

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## APPENDIX



Appendix A: Minutes from Advisory Committee Meetings



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Johnstown Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
FROM: Deb Ayers, Alan Pole, and Bill Silky  
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of January 14, 2019  
DATE: January 21, 2019

**Attendance:**

Committee Members: Melissa Cornell, Robert Kraemer, Nicole Panton, Michael Satterlee, Jennifer Spinnoble, Jessica Stock, Dino Vahaviolos, Dave Wood, and Kathy Zajicek

Consultants: Deb Ayers, Alan Pole and Bill Silky

Observers: Patricia Kilburn, Ruthie Cook, and Ann Stefka

Location: Johnstown High School

1. Superintendent Trish Kilburn started the meeting by thanking the committee members for their service. She then introduced the three consultants.

2. The consultants and the committee members introduced themselves. Alan Pole than talked about some of the pressures on schools that are causing districts to look at doing business differently...this study in Johnstown is quite common among districts in New York State. Alan Pole then reviewed the purpose of the study which is to answer the following question:

***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

3. Alan then reviewed the upcoming meetings schedule as follows:

Date	Topic	Location
January 14	General overview of the study process including the committee’s role; student enrollment projections	JHS Library
February 25	Overview of the instructional program	Pleasant Ave. Library
April 8	Overview of facilities	Glebe St. Library
May 13	The district transportation operation	Warren St. Library
June 10	Staffing patterns in the district	Knox Jr High Library
July 8	The financial status of the district and exploration of future facility options	JHS Library
August 5	Review of the draft final report	JHS Library



Meetings will begin at 6:30 and will last approximately two hours. Tours at each building will precede the business meetings and will begin at 5:45. These tours are for committee members and for anyone who will be observing the business meeting that will follow. The August 5 meeting will not have a tour because a tour of the high will take place on July 8.

4. A contact list of the members of the advisory committee was shared with email addresses. Members of the group were asked to verify the accuracy of the information since email will serve as the primary means of communication between the consultants and the committee members. Meeting materials will be emailed to all committee members prior to the meeting. Paper copies of the materials will also be made available at each meeting.

5. Meeting notes will be provided after each meeting. The notes will be emailed to all committee members and copied to the superintendent. It will be the responsibility of the superintendent to distribute the notes within the district, as she deems appropriate. It is anticipated that, at a minimum, notes will be provided to board members and posted on the district's website. The PowerPoint that is used at each meeting will also be posted on the district's website after the meeting occurs.

6. All meetings of the advisory committee will be open. Members of the public are welcome to attend these meetings. At the conclusion of each meeting, the observers will have the opportunity to offer comments or ask questions.

7. Alan Pole presented a PowerPoint overview of the study process and the role of the advisory committee. He indicated that the function of the committee is to advise the Board of Education and the consultants and to communicate with the public about the process. In addition, the committee will add a cultural context for Johnstown as the various aspects of the study emerge. The superintendent is not a member of the committee but serves as a resource to the committee. Committee members are expected to attend all committee meetings, freely express their points of view, be key communicators with stakeholder groups, and be a respectful, contributing member of the committee.

Alan emphasized that the consultants bring an outside, unbiased perspective and will ensure that the process is open. They will produce meeting notes after each committee meeting and will be responsible for the final report. The recommendations in the report will benefit student learning and will be educationally sound and fiscally responsible. They will also be independent of special interest groups

8. Bill Silky reviewed the enrollment history for the school district. Comparing enrollment changes from 2013-14 until 2018-19, Bill noted that the district's enrollment has decreased from 1,714 to 1,575, a decrease of 139 students or 8.1%.

To predict future enrollment, the consultants employ the Cohort Survival Projection method that uses information on the number of births in each school district over a period of years and calculates patterns of enrollment. A cohort survival ratio is developed that tracks how each cohort of students changes as it moves through the grade levels. This ratio, used with the live birth information, predicts what the enrollment will be for a period of years given consistent and



predictable conditions. It does not take into account significant economic development changes such as a major employer leaving or entering the area and other similar changes.

Using this method, the enrollment in Johnstown is predicted to decrease from 1,575 in 2018-19 to 1,498 students in the 2025-2026 school year, an additional decrease of 77 students or 4.9%.

The number of home schooled students, non-resident students, and resident students enrolled in non-public schools are all factors that are considered in projecting enrollment. It does not appear that any of these factors will significantly influence the enrollment projections that were made for Johnstown. Bill also reviewed demographic information for Fulton County. This review clearly demonstrated that the county is aging and a slight decrease in the population of the county and the school district are anticipated for the future.

9. The presentation concluded with four big ideas or take-aways that Bill Silky reviewed:

- ❖ The purpose of the study is to answer the question, “Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?”
- ❖ The study process will be open to ensure transparency for everyone.
- ❖ The Advisory Committee was formed to assist the consultants throughout the process, but the final recommendations will be the consultants.
- ❖ The district has seen declining student enrollments and will likely continue to see enrollments drop.

10. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Monday, February 25 in the Pleasant Avenue Elementary School Library. An optional tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The meeting of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on January 14. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact me. We will also review these notes as an agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on February 25 at Pleasant Avenue.

C: Trish Kilburn



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Johnstown Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
FROM: Alan Pole, and Bill Silky  
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of February 25, 2019  
DATE: February 27, 2019

**Attendance:**

Committee Members: Melissa Cornell, Meredith Fagan, Robert Kraemer, Nicole Panton, Michael Satterlee, Jennifer Sponnoble, Jessica Stock, Dino Vahaviolos, Dave Wood, and Kathy Zajicek

Consultants: Alan Pole and Bill Silky

Observers: Ruthie Cook and Nancy Lisicki

Location: Pleasant Avenue Elementary School

1. Bill Silky started the meeting by thanking Dave Wood for conducting the tour of the school for interested committee members.. The agenda for the meeting was presented and reviewed as well.

2. Bill then reviewed the purpose of the study which is to answer the following question:  
***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

He indicated that this purpose will be shared at each meeting to keep the committee focused on what the Board has asked the consultants to accomplish.

3. Bill then reviewed the upcoming meetings schedule as follows:

Date	Topic	Location
January 14	General overview of the study process including the committee’s role; student enrollment projections	JHS Library
February 25	Overview of the instructional program	Pleasant Ave. Library
April 8	Overview of facilities	Glebe St. Library
May 13	The district transportation operation	Warren St. Library
June 10	Staffing patterns in the district	Knox Jr High Library
July 8	The financial status of the district and exploration of future facility options	JHS Library





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August 5	Review of the draft final report	JHS Library
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4. The committee approved the January 14 meeting notes with one minor change, the date of the meeting at the top of the notes.

5. Bill provided updates from the January 14 meeting. The tuition charge for Wheelerville, Lake Pleasant, and Piseco students is \$2,200 per student which yields approximately \$154,000 for the district.. Out of district parents who send their children to Johnstown pay \$3,514 per child per year while teachers’ children attend at no cost.

6. The grade organization of the district (Pre-K-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12) was shared with the committee. Bill provided a brief overview of the educational research on grade level patterns. He reported that the bottom line is that there is no one best way to organize school grades and that “what” a district does with its grade arrangement is more critical to student success than “which” grade organization it has adopted.

7. Bill then provided an overview of the 2017-18 elementary class sizes in each of the three elementary schools. Bill noted that the class sizes are reasonable and are quite similar to county averages and less than state averages.

8. A summary of recent elementary (grades 3-5) student scores on the New York State ELA and math tests was shared with the committee. It was pointed out that it is difficult to make comparisons on these assessments because of the number of students who opted-out of the tests beginning in the 2015-16 school year. Comparisons are also difficult to make because of the changes in the assessments. He shared comparisons to Fulton County as a whole and New York State.

9. The elementary school special area subject offerings were presented to the committee as an indicator of the curricular breadth in grades K-6. Bill noted that these opportunities are part of providing a rich program of study for students. There are some differences in the amount of these special area subjects at certain grade levels.

10. An overview of the district’s special education program was discussed. Over the past five years, the number of special education students has ranged between 224 and 236. Between 31 and 38 of those students are educated outside the district, primarily at BOCES. The rest of the special education population is educated in the district. Bill suggested that perhaps with a different grade configuration it may be possible to program for some of these out of district students in Johnstown.

11. Alan Pole then reviewed the middle school and the high school curricular offerings. This included a review of the number of students in each course section for all subject areas this year including English, Social Studies, Math, Science, Spanish, Business, Technology, Music, Art, PE, and Health as well as some other electives. He pointed out that the district offers a very comprehensive secondary program with very strong class sizes.



12. A summary of the number of high school junior and seniors that attend the BOCES for various career and technical education classes was presented. In total this year there are 36 juniors (32% of the class) and 51 seniors (36%) of the class. Overall, 34% of the juniors and seniors spend a half day at BOCES taking a career and technical education class.

13. Alan then presented the number of students participating in inter-scholastic athletics for the 2018-19 school year. Johnstown offers a large number of sports for its students and shares swimming and wrestling with Fonda-Fultonville. Most sports provide opportunities at the modified, junior varsity, and varsity levels.

14. The presentation concluded with the big ideas or take-aways that the consultants reviewed:

- a. The Princeton Plan grade configuration (K-6, 7-8, 9-12) is a somewhat common arrangement.
- b. The most common grade configuration of schools in New York and the U.S. is K-5, 6-8, 9-12 although there is no research that indicates that one grade pattern is necessarily better for student learning than another.
- c. The elementary instructional program is comparable across all three schools.
- d. The Junior High School program is typical for a school district of this size. The High School Program provides many alternatives for students.
- e. Class sizes in the junior high and high school are strong.
- f. There are an extensive number of interscholastic athletic opportunities available to the students in Johnstown.

15. Alan asked the committee and the audience for comments and/or questions.

16. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Monday, April 8 in the Glebe Street Elementary School Library. An optional tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The meeting of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on February 25. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact us. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on April 8 at Glebe Street.

C: Trish Kilburn



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Johnstown Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
FROM: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky  
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of April 8, 2019  
DATE: April 10, 2019

Attendance:

Committee Members: Melissa Cornell, Meredith Fagan, Susanne Fitzgerald, Robert Kraemer, Nicole Panton, Michael Satterlee, Jennifer Spinnoble, Jessica Stock, Dino Vahaviolos, Dave Wood, and Kathy Zajicek

Consultants: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky

Observers: Ruthie Cook, Abbey North, Nikki Lent, Kimberly Preston, Nancy Lisicki, Rachel Heroth, Tom Roehl, Frank Patrick Rizio, Joseph LoDestro, Cory Cotter, and Trish Kilburn

Location: Glebe Street Elementary School

1. Alan Pole started the meeting by thanking Abbey North for conducting the tour of the school for interested committee members. The agenda for the meeting and meeting protocols were presented and reviewed as well. There was one issue with the email listing which resulted in one committee member not getting all of the emails. The consultants will check into this and get it corrected prior to the next meeting.

2. Alan then reviewed the purpose of the study which is to answer the following question:  
***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

He indicated that this purpose will be shared at each meeting to keep the committee focused on what the Board has asked the consultants to accomplish.

3. Alan then reviewed the upcoming meetings schedule as follows:

Date	Topic	Location
January 14	General overview of the study process including the committee’s role; student enrollment projections	JHS Library
February 25	Overview of the instructional program	Pleasant Ave. Library
April 8	Overview of facilities	Glebe St. Library
May 13	The district transportation operation	Warren St. Library



June 10	Staffing patterns in the district	Knox Jr High Library
July 8	The financial status of the district and exploration of future facility options	JHS Library
August 5	Review of the draft final report	JHS Library

4. The committee found no issue with the February 25 meeting notes.

5. Bill Silky then provided updates from the February 25 committee meeting. This update included the number of out-of-district special needs students that attend school in Johnstown, the number of English as a New Language (ENL) students (which has gone up considerably in the past two years), and an update on the elementary schools’ special area classes including library and computer offerings.

6. Alan Pole provided a listing of “take-aways” from the last two meetings:

- ✓ *The Advisory Committee was formed to assist the consultants throughout the process, but the final recommendations will be the consultant’s.*
- ✓ *The district has seen declining student enrollments and will likely continue to see enrollments drop.*
- ✓ *The elementary instructional program is comparable across all three schools.*
- ✓ *The Junior High School program is typical for a school district of this size. The High School Program provides many alternatives for students.*
- ✓ *Class sizes in the junior high and high school are strong.*
- ✓ *There are an extensive number of interscholastic athletic opportunities available to the students in Johnstown.*

7. Alan Pole provided an overview of the district’s facilities. He began with a table providing information on the age, square footage, grades housed, and students served in each of the six school buildings. He noted that all of the buildings are of similar age except Knox which is approximately 30 years older than the other buildings. All of the elementary buildings are located on one level. The junior high has four floors and the high school has two floors.

8. Alan then reviewed the school classroom usage in each of the six buildings. The three elementary schools are somewhat similar; Glebe Street and Jansen Avenue are replicas of each other. Glebe Street Elementary School has 17 full-size rooms with 11 used for grade level classrooms and six used for special education, AIS, art, and other related purposes. There are 19 full-size classrooms in Pleasant Avenue Elementary with 14 being used for grade level classes and five other rooms for special education, art, music, and other related purposes. Warren Street Elementary has 28 full size classrooms with 13 being used for grade level classes and 15 other classrooms being used for music, art, speech, and other related purposes. Jansen Avenue has 16 classrooms but does not serve as a Johnstown elementary school; rather, this building is leased to BOCES for an annual lease cost of \$123,374. Given the expenses for running this building, the district essentially breaks even financially.



At the Junior High School, there are 36 full-size classrooms with 16 being used for core courses and 20 being used for AIS, music, art, and other similar classes. There is a significant amount of unused space at the Junior High School. The High School has 48 full size classrooms with 27 being used for core academic classes and 21 used for special education, computer centers, and other similar courses. Alan talked about the concept of classroom usage and looked at how many periods of the day classrooms were used. This analysis showed that the classroom utilization at the high school is at approximately 70%. While this is slightly below the optimum of 80% utilization, the high school is being used quite efficiently.

9. Alan explained that all school districts and BOCES have a building condition survey (BCS) done every five years that provides an analysis of building needs by an architect. NYS law requires this periodic survey. A summary of the projected costs of repairs/renovations listed in Johnstown's 2015 BCS indicated that a cost of approximately \$38 million dollars would be required to address all of the issues. He also said that no district ever addresses all of the issues cited. Alan explained that this was a typical type of listing for a district the size of Johnstown. He also explained that state aid is available at approximately 84% of approved costs to assist the district with financing any capital improvements. He also reviewed the considerable amount of work that had been done in the two most recent capital projects and some areas of consideration for future projects.

10. Alan then reviewed the utility costs for each of the six school buildings. This is a relatively small cost when compared with the cost of capital projects. If a district decides to close a facility but maintain ownership and keep the building in good condition, approximately 40% of the utility costs can be saved.

11. The facilities presentation concluded with three big ideas or take-aways that Alan reviewed:

- ✓ *There is an abundance of space in the Johnstown school buildings*
- ✓ *Room utilization at the high school is slightly below optimum*
- ✓ *The leasing of Jansen Avenue to BOCES is approximately a break even proposition*
- ✓ *The 2015 Building Condition Survey has identified approximately \$38,000,000 worth of work to be considered*

12. Bill Silky then led the committee in a discussion about possible options that should be considered by the district for the future. He began by informing the committee that the process will first start by brainstorming "feasible" (it could be done) options and then narrowing the list to "desirable" (it is a good idea) options. Pros and cons for each option will be listed as there is rarely a perfect option. Bill indicated that the consultants have begun this process with two options they believe are feasible give the information reviewed to date: (a) keeping the school buildings and grades organized as they are currently and (b) moving the sixth grade to Knox and creating a middle school, closing Glebe Street, making Warren Street a K-2 primary school, and placing grades 3-5 at Pleasant Avenue. He informed the committee that two additional options were looked at and rejected as not feasible including (a) closing Knox and sending the seventh grade to Warren Street and the eighth grade to the High School and (b) closing Knox and have Glebe Street house grades 2-4, making Warren Street a 5-7 building, and move 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the High School.



Bill then distributed worksheets with the two feasible options the consultants had identified, broke the committee into groups at tables, asked them to discuss these options and critique the consultants analysis, and add any other options they felt the consultant team should explore. At the end of this activity each group reported out and Bill said he would summarize their work and share it at the next meeting for continued discussion of the options.

13. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Monday, May 13 in the Warren Street Elementary School Library. An optional tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The meeting of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on April 8. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact us. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on May 13 at Warren Street.

C: Trish Kilburn



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Johnstown Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
 FROM: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky  
 RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of May 13, 2019  
 DATE: May 15, 2019

Attendance:

Committee Members: Melissa Cornell, Meredith Fagan, Robert Kraemer, Nicole Panton, Michael Satterlee, Jennifer Spinnoble, Jessica Stock, Dave Wood, and Kathy Zajicek

Consultants: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky

Observers: Joseph Sheperd, Rosemarie Sheperd, Nikki Lent, Ruthie Cook, Nancy Lisicki, Cory Cotter, Trish Kilburn, Chris Tallon, and Deb Ammann

Location: Warren Street Elementary School

1. Alan Pole started the meeting by thanking Nikki Lent for conducting the tour of the school for interested committee members. The agenda for the meeting and meeting protocols were presented and reviewed as well.

2. Alan then reviewed the purpose of the study which is to answer the following question:  
***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

He indicated that this purpose will be shared at each meeting to keep the committee focused on what the Board has asked the consultants to accomplish.

3. Alan then reviewed the upcoming meetings schedule as follows:

Date	Topic	Location
January 14	General overview of the study process including the committee’s role; student enrollment projections	JHS Library
February 25	Overview of the instructional program	Pleasant Ave. Library
April 8	Overview of facilities; Begin discussion of options	Glebe St. Library
May 13	The district’s transportation operation; discussion of options	Warren St. Library
June 10	Staffing patterns in the district; discussion of options	Knox Jr. High Library
July 8	The financial status of the district and exploration of future facility options	JHS Library
August 5	Review of the draft final report	JHS Library

4. The committee found no issue with the April 8 meeting notes.

5. Alan Pole provided a listing of “take-aways” from the last two meetings:



- ✓ *The Advisory Committee was formed to assist the consultants throughout the process, but the final recommendations will be the consultant's.*
- ✓ *The district has seen declining student enrollments and will likely continue to see enrollments drop.*
- ✓ *The elementary instructional program is comparable across all three schools.*
- ✓ *The Junior High School program is typical for a school district of this size. The High School Program provides many alternatives for students.*
- ✓ *Class sizes in the junior high and high school are strong.*
- ✓ *There are an extensive number of interscholastic athletic opportunities available to the students in Johnstown.*
- ✓ *There is an abundance of space in the Johnstown school buildings*
- ✓ *Room utilization at the high school is slightly below average*
- ✓ *The leasing of Jansen Avenue to BOCES is approximately a break even proposition*
- ✓ *Prior to the most recent capital project, the 2015 Building Condition Survey has identified approximately \$38,000,000 worth of work to be considered*

6. Deb Ayers provided an overview of the district's transportation program. The district has 10 in-district and 4 out-of-district bus runs. The district's transportation program is operated by HFM BOCES and while Johnstown owns its buses, the transportation department staff members are BOCES employees. There is currently no bus replacement schedule in the district but one is being developed. The last bus was purchased in 2016-17 with the next purchase planned for 2020-21.

Johnstown operates a two-tier (double trip) system where the junior and senior high school students are picked up and taken home on the first run and the elementary students are picked up and taken home on the second run. The district uses a grade center plan for its elementary schools and there is a shuttle bus system in place to take students from their neighborhood school to their appropriate grade-level building. Should the district change its current building configuration, it would have little impact on the elementary bus runs. The addition of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the secondary bus runs will require further assessment.

7. The transportation presentation concluded with four big ideas or take-aways that Deb reviewed:

- ✓ *Addition of 6<sup>th</sup> grade to secondary bus runs would require further assessment*
- ✓ *Most secondary runs not currently at full capacity*
- ✓ *57 current 4<sup>th</sup> graders (2020-21 6<sup>th</sup> graders) assigned to a bus route*
- ✓ *May require route adjustments depending on location of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students*

8. Bill Silky then led the committee in a discussion about possible options that should be considered by the district for the future. He began by informing the committee that the process will first start by reviewing "feasible" (it could be done) options and then narrowing the list to "desirable" (it is a good idea) options. Bill shared some options that are possibly off the table that involve moving the 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the High School. However, he indicated that the consultant team has not yet definitely concluded that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade could not fit in the High School and this will need further study. Options still on the table were presented by Dr. Silky and included the following:





- ✓ *Option 1A: Remain As Is: PK-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12 and renovate current buildings*
- ✓ *Option 1B: Remain As Is: PK-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12, reduce the number of elementary sections by increasing class size, and renovate current buildings*
- ✓ *Option 2A: Move the 6th grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close an elementary school (Glebe Street)-would result in a K- 2 primary school at Warren Street with 17 classrooms (or 14 with increased class sizes) and a 3-5 intermediate school with 15 classrooms (or 13 with increased class sizes) at Pleasant Avenue. Space would need to be found for the three PK classrooms.*
- ✓ *Option 2B: Move the 6th grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close an elementary school (Glebe Street)-would result in a K- 2 primary school at Pleasant Avenue with 15 classrooms (14 if larger class sizes are adopted) and a 3-5 intermediate school at Warren Street with 17 classrooms (or 13 with larger class sizes). Space would need to be found for the three PK classrooms.*
- ✓ *Option 2C: Move the 6th grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close an elementary school (Glebe Street)-would result in a PK-1 primary school at Pleasant Avenue with 13 classrooms (12 if class sizes are increased) and a 2-5 intermediate school at Warren Street with 21 classrooms (18 if larger class sizes are adopted).*
- ✓ *Option 2D: Move the 6th grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close an elementary school (Glebe Street)-would result in a K- 2 primary school at Pleasant Avenue with 15 classrooms (14 if class sizes are increased) and a 3-5 intermediate school at Warren Street with 17 classrooms (13 if larger class sizes are adopted).*
- ✓ *For All Option 2s Above: Move the District Offices and the currently rented Maintenance Facility to Glebe Street.*

Bill then asked the committee members to discuss these options and add to the **pros** and **cons** of each option. He also asked each group to add any other options they felt the consultant team should explore. At the end of this activity each group reported out. Bill said he would summarize their work and share it at the next meeting for continued discussion of the options.

9. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Monday, June 10 in the Knox Junior School Library. An optional tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The meeting of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on May 13. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact us. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on June 10 at the junior high.

C: Trish Kilburn



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Johnstown Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
 FROM: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky  
 RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of June 10, 2019  
 DATE: June 12, 2019

Attendance:

Committee Members: Melissa Cornell, Meredith Fagan, Susanne Fitzgerald, Robert Kraemer, Nicole Panton, Jennifer Spinnoble, Jessica Stock, Dino Vahaviolos, Dave Wood, and Kathy Zajicek

Consultants: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky

Observers: Joseph LoDestro, Chris Tallon, Ruthie Cook, Nancy Lisicki, Pat Oare, and Trish Kilburn,

Location: Knox Junior High School

1. Deb Ayers started the meeting by thanking Bob Kraemer for conducting the tour of the school for interested committee members. The agenda for the meeting and meeting protocols were presented and reviewed as well.

2. Following this Deb reviewed the purpose of the study which is to answer the following question:

***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

3. Deb reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule as follows:

Date	Topic	Location
January 14	General overview of the study process including the committee’s role; student enrollment projections	JHS Library
February 25	Overview of the instructional program	Pleasant Ave. Library
April 8	Overview of facilities; Begin discussion of options	Glebe St. Library
May 13	The district’s transportation operation; discussion of options	Warren St. Library
June 10	Staffing patterns in the district; discussion of options	Knox Jr. High Library
July 8	The financial status of the district and exploration of future facility options	JHS Library
August 5	Review of the draft final report	JHS Library

4. The committee found no issue with the May 13, 2019 meeting notes.



5. Deb Ayers provided a listing of “take-aways” from previous meetings.

. Deb Ayers shared some transportation updates from the May 13 meeting. The updates included the following:

- *Cost for a 66-passenger bus is approximately \$125,000. Cost for a bus equipped with a wheelchair lift is approximately \$145,000.*
- *St. Mary’s School in Amsterdam is the only non-public school to which Johnstown is transporting. Other out-of-district transportation routes are for students with special needs.*
- *Should Glebe Street Elementary be closed, the number of students qualifying for door-to-door transportation to Pleasant Avenue would increase. Most current Glebe students that would attend Warren Street School would not qualify for door-to-door transportation.*
- *Implications on existing bus routes for additional students qualifying for door-to-door transportation would need more in-depth review.*
- *It may be possible to reduce the number of shuttle runs if Glebe Street is closed.*
- *Depending on the number of students in the Glebe Street area that would qualify for door-to-door transportation, the Glebe building may remain as a shuttle pick-up point.*
- *Reminder – Qualifying transportation expense is significantly subsidized by state transportation aid (90%).*

6. Alan Pole discussed staffing in the school district. Since 70-75% of school budgets are costs for staffing, it is important to look at staffing patterns. An overview of building level staffing was discussed indicating teachers and teaching assistants comprise the majority of staff. He discussed the average salary of each grouping of staff (teachers, principals, aides, custodians, etc.) as well as the average cost of fringe benefits for health insurance, pension, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, and social security, etc. Based on the information provided by the district, the average cost of fringe benefits is approximately 50% of salary. (This figure does not include what the district pays for health insurance for retirees).

7. Alan indicated that there are two options typically used for implementing position cuts: involuntary reductions and attrition. While involuntary reductions are more predictable and maximize savings, they also cause more anxiety. Attrition is driven by decisions individual staff members make and is generally well accepted. Savings accrue when appropriate vacancies occur. Alan indicated that a combination of these two approaches might be necessary when a district is facing significant fiscal challenges. He provided a table of resignations/retirements from Johnstown teachers over the past four years that showed the number of staff resigning/retiring and their length of service in the district.



8. Bill Silky then led the committee further discussion about possible options that should be considered by the district for the future. He began by informing the committee that the process will first start by reviewing “feasible” (it could be done) options and then narrowing the list to “desirable” (it is a good idea) options. Bill started by sharing some options that the consultants are considering as being off the table and included the following:

- Option 1A: Remain as is-PK-1, 2-3, 4-6, 9-12 and renovate current buildings.
- Option 2A: Move 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox and create a middle school model and close an elementary school (Glebe St)-would result in a K-2 primary school at Warren St and an intermediate 3-5 school at Pleasant Ave.
- Option 2D: Move 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox, close an elementary school (Glebe)-would result in a PK-2 at Pleasant Ave and a 3-5 intermediate at Warren St.

There are still other options that might possibly be eliminated if a final decision is made that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade cannot fit in the high school. These options included the following:

- Close Knox and send 7<sup>th</sup> grade to Warren Street and 8<sup>th</sup> to the High School
- Close Knox and make Glebe Street grades 2-4 with 16 classrooms, make Warren Street grades 5-7 with 16 classrooms, and make the High School 8-12 which would add 8 sections.
- Have PK-1 at Pleasant Ave., grades 2-4 at Warren St. move grades 5 & 6 to Knox (grades 5-7), and 8<sup>th</sup> to the High School. Relocate the District Offices and CSE to Glebe St.
- Make Pleasant Ave. and Warren St. both K-4 schools, move grades 5 & 6 to Knox (grades 5-7), and 8<sup>th</sup> to the High School. Relocate the District Offices and CSE to Glebe Street.

Options still on the table were presented by Dr. Silky and included the following:

- Option 1B: Remain as is-PK-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12, reduce the number of elementary sections by increasing class size, and renovate the current buildings.
- Option 2B: Move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox and create a middle school, close an elementary (Glebe)-would result in a K-2 primary at Pleasant Ave and a 3-5 intermediate at Warren St. Space would need to be found for PK.
- Option 2C: Move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox and create a middle school, close an elementary (Glebe)-would result in a PK-1 primary school at Pleasant Ave and a 2-5 intermediate at Warren St.
- (With all of the option 2’s listed above, Bill reviewed a recommendation that if an elementary school is closed the district should first consider attempting to either secure a buyer for the building OR a lessee to ensure the school is put to productive use. After a



reasonable period of time if the school is not closed or rented the district should consider moving the District Offices and the currently rented Maintenance Facility.)

Bill then asked the committee members to discuss these options at their table and add to the **pros** and **cons** of each. He also asked each group to add any other options they felt the consultant team should explore. At the end of this activity each group reported out. The feedback from the small groups was as follows

*Option 1B-Not a good idea; the class sizes are too large and don't allow for special groupings that might have to occur which would cause some class sizes to exceed 30; Not a good option because it is important to close a building and this option does not do that.*

*Options 2B & 2C-Both are good options because they close a building; care would have to be undertaken to deal with the details of assigning rooms under either option; If grades 2-5 are going to be located at Warren Street, staffing might have to be looked at differently; Partial departmentalization might have to be examined.*

9. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Monday, July 8 in the High School Library. An optional tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The meeting of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on June 10. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact us. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on July 8 at the high school.

C: Trish Kilburn



**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Johnstown Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
 FROM: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky  
 RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of July 8, 2019  
 DATE: July 13, 2019

Attendance:

Committee Members: Melissa Cornell, Meredith Fagan, Susanne Fitzgerald, Joe LoDestro, Michael Satterlee, Jennifer Spinnoble, Jessica Stock, Dave Wood, and Kathy Zajicek

Consultants: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky

Observers: Chris Tallon, Ruthie Cook, Nancy Lisicki, and Trish Kilburn

Location: Johnstown High School

1. Bill Silky started the meeting by thanking Christina Lais for conducting the tour of the high school for interested committee members. The agenda for the meeting and meeting protocols were presented and reviewed as well. Joe LoDestro, recently elected board member, was introduced as a new committee member.

2. Following this Bill reviewed the purpose of the study which is to answer the following question:

***Are there more efficient and effective options for organizing the district’s grades and schools to ensure a quality education for students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers? If so, what are these options?***

3. Bill reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule as follows:

Date	Topic	Location
January 14	General overview of the study process including the committee’s role; student enrollment projections	JHS Library
February 25	Overview of the instructional program	Pleasant Ave. Library
April 8	Overview of facilities; Begin discussion of options	Glebe St. Library
May 13	The district’s transportation operation; discussion of options	Warren St. Library
June 10	Staffing patterns in the district; discussion of options	Knox Jr. High Library
July 8	The financial status of the district and exploration of future facility options	JHS Library
August 5	Review of the draft final report	JHS Library

4. The committee found no issue with the June 10, 2019 meeting notes.

5. Bill Silky provided a listing of “take-aways” from previous meetings.



6. Deb Ayers discussed financial trends and the current financial status of the school district. She noted that the Johnstown community has passed its school budgets for each of the past 10 years although 2018 and 2019 took two votes. Deb also reviewed the recent histories of the restricted fund balance, the unassigned fund balance, and the assigned fund balance. She also reviewed the past 5-year history of the full value tax rates which have decreased by 8.7%. She also reviewed the current debt schedule for capital projects and told the group that the auditor's report for the district was generally positive. She closed her presentation by showing the projected gap between revenues and expenditures for the period 2018 through 2023.

7. Alan Pole then led a discussion about the feasible and desirable options that remain on the table for the district. He listed the options that had been rejected as follows:

- Option 1A: Remain as is-PK-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12 and renovate current buildings.
- Option 1B: Remain as is-PK-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-12, reduce the number of elementary sections by increasing class size, and renovate the current buildings.
- Option 2A: Move 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox and create a middle school model and close an elementary school (Glebe St)-would result in a K-2 primary school at Warren St and an intermediate 3-5 school at Pleasant Ave.
- Option 2D: Move 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox , close an elementary school (Glebe)-would result in a PK-2 at Pleasant Ave and a 3-5 intermediate at Warren St.
- Close Knox and send 7<sup>th</sup> grade to Warren Street and 8<sup>th</sup> to the High School
- Close Knox and make Glebe Street grades 2-4 with 16 classrooms, make Warren Street grades 5-7 with 16 classrooms, and make the High School 8-12 that would add 8 sections.
- Have PK-1 at Pleasant Ave., grades 2-4 at Warren St. move grades 5 & 6 to Knox (grades 5-7), and 8<sup>th</sup> to the High School. Relocate the District Offices and CSE to Glebe St.
- Make Pleasant Ave. and Warren St. both K-4 schools, move grades 5 & 6 to Knox (grades 5-7), and 8<sup>th</sup> to the High School. Relocate the District Offices and CSE to Glebe Street.

8. Alan then led the committee in further discussion about the two possible options that should be considered by the district for the future:

- Option 2B: Move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox and create a middle school, close an elementary (Glebe)-would result in a K-2 primary at Pleasant Ave and a 3-5 intermediate at Warren St. Space would need to be found for PK.



- Option 2C: Move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Knox and create a middle school, close and elementary (Glebe)-would result in a *PK-1* primary school at Pleasant Ave and a 2-5 intermediate at Warren St.

Should the Glebe Street Elementary School be closed, the district should attempt to use the building productively by either selling the building or leasing the building to another entity. If no other tenant can be found after a reasonable period of time, the district should consider moving the district offices and the currently rented maintenance facility into the Glebe building.

9. The entire committee then engaged in a conversation about the two remaining feasible options. Comments included:

- making sure that classrooms are appropriately allocated for special education classes;
- putting art and/or music on a cart are not desirable options;
- if possible, pull Pre-K back into the district-need 4 rooms for full day Pre-K;
- Pre-K with intermediate students at Warren could have benefits (reading buddies, etc.);
- show a chart with the cost of closing a building on it;
- consider Pre-K -5 in Glebe/Knox combination and grades 6-9 at Pleasant/Warren

10. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Monday, August 5 in the High School Library. There will be no tour. The meeting of the advisory committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on July 8. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact us. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on August 5 at the high school.

C: Trish Kilburn





**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Johnstown Facilities Study Advisory Committee  
 FROM: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky  
 RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of August 5, 2019  
 DATE: August 7, 2019

Attendance:

Committee Members: Melissa Cornell, Meredith Fagan, Susanne Fitzgerald, Robert Kraemeer, Joe LoDestro, Nicole Pantan, Jennifer Spornoble, Jessica Stock, Dave Wood, and Kathy Zajicek

Consultants: Alan Pole, Deb Ayers, and Bill Silky

Observers: Chris Tallon, Nancy Lisicki, Deborah Ruggeri, Mike Anich, Tom Roehl, and Trish Kilburn

Location: Johnstown High School

1. Deb Ayers started the meeting by welcoming everyone and reviewing the agenda for the evening. She also reviewed the meeting schedule as follows. This is the final meeting of the facilities advisory committee.

Date	Topic	Location
January 14	General overview of the study process including the committee’s role; student enrollment projections	JHS Library
February 25	Overview of the instructional program	Pleasant Ave. Library
April 8	Overview of facilities; Begin discussion of options	Glebe St. Library
May 13	The district’s transportation operation; discussion of options	Warren St. Library
June 10	Staffing patterns in the district; discussion of options	Knox Jr. High Library
July 8	The financial status of the district and exploration of Future facilities options	JHS Library
August 5	Review of the draft final report	JHS Library

2. Deb reminded the committee that the presentation of the report to the Johnstown Board of Education is scheduled for September 17, 2019. All committee members are encouraged to attend the presentation.

3. The committee found no issue with the July 8, 2019 meeting notes.



4. Bill Silky reviewed the 32 major findings from the report. These findings allowed the consultants to reach the following conclusions related to addressing the purpose of the study:

Enrollment projections-Student enrollment in Johnstown has declined and is expected to continue to decline.

Program-Johnstown offers a very comprehensive academic and extra-curricular program for its students.

Facilities-The district has recently completed a major capital project and will continue to plan for and maintain its buildings. There is an abundance of space in the current school buildings.

Transportation-The district employs a double trip routing system with the use of a shuttle system to get all of the children to school and back home. Options being proposed would have little if any significant impact on transportation but it will need more study.

Staffing-Salaries and fringe benefits comprise the vast majority of the school budget and reducing people will be the only way to make significant reductions in costs.

Finance-The district has experienced significant tax increases in the past two years and will face continuing financial challenges in the near future.

5. Alan Pole then reviewed the recommendations that the consultants will be making to the board of education as follows:

*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 will include the closure of Glebe Street School, the scope of work to be performed from the 2015 and next Building Condition Survey, the long term the 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 consider the following options as both "feasible" and "desirable" as it looks to the future.*

*Option 1: Move the sixth grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close Glebe Street Elementary School. Pleasant Avenue would then house grades K-2 while Warren Street Elementary would educate students in grades 3-5.*

*Option 2: Move the sixth grade to Knox and create a 6-8 Middle School Model and close Glebe Elementary School. Pleasant Avenue would then house all PreK- 1 grade students while Warren Street Elementary*

*3. It is recommended that the district use the attrition method, if possible, for reducing staff should any staff reductions be realized from this initiative.*

*4. It is recommended that the Board of Education conduct at least one public hearing/comment period on these options for the general public to express opinions.*

*5. It is recommended that the district implement these options in the 2020-21 school year. This will allow for adequate time to conduct one or more hearings to permit the public to make*



*concerns and comments known about each of the options under consideration and for sufficient planning time to finalize implementation details so that the transition is as smooth as possible.*

*6. Should either of our recommended options be endorsed by the Board of Education, we also recommend the district should first consider attempting to either secure a buyer for the Glebe Street building OR a lessee to ensure the school is put to productive use. After a reasonable period of time if the school is not closed or rented the district should consider moving the District Offices and the currently-rented Maintenance Facility to the vacant school.*

6. The members of the advisory committee and the other attendees were then provided the opportunity to make comments and ask questions about the report. Based on the feedback received, the draft report will now be finalized and prepared for presentation to the Johnstown Board of Education on September 17.

7. Bill Silky thanked everyone for attending the meeting with special gratitude for the members of the advisory committee who gave so much of their time for this service to the schools and the community.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on August 5. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact us.

A reminder that the advisory committee members are encouraged to attend the presentation to the board of education on September 17 at 6:30.

C: Trish Kilburn



Appendix B: Floor Plans of Buildings Including Square Footage of Rooms





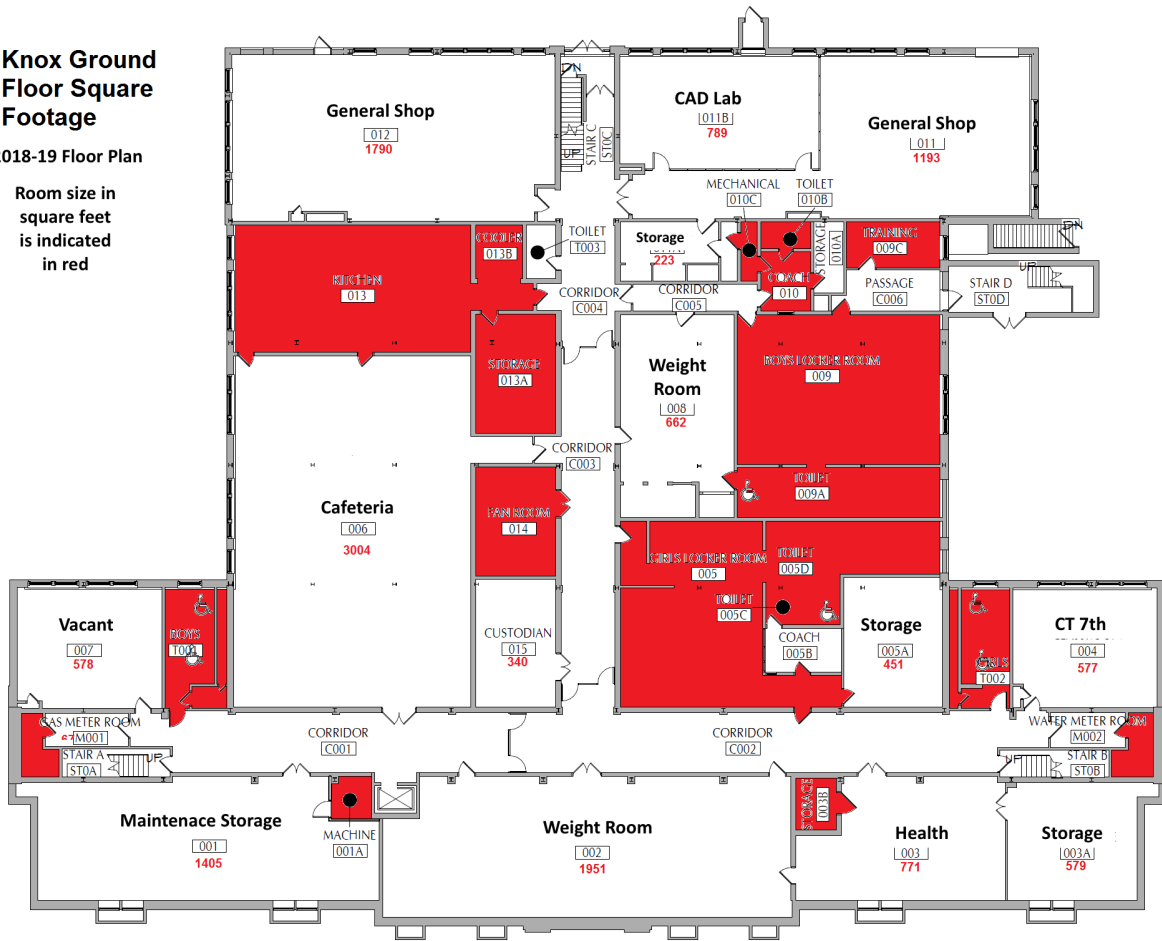




**Knox Ground Floor Square Footage**

2018-19 Floor Plan

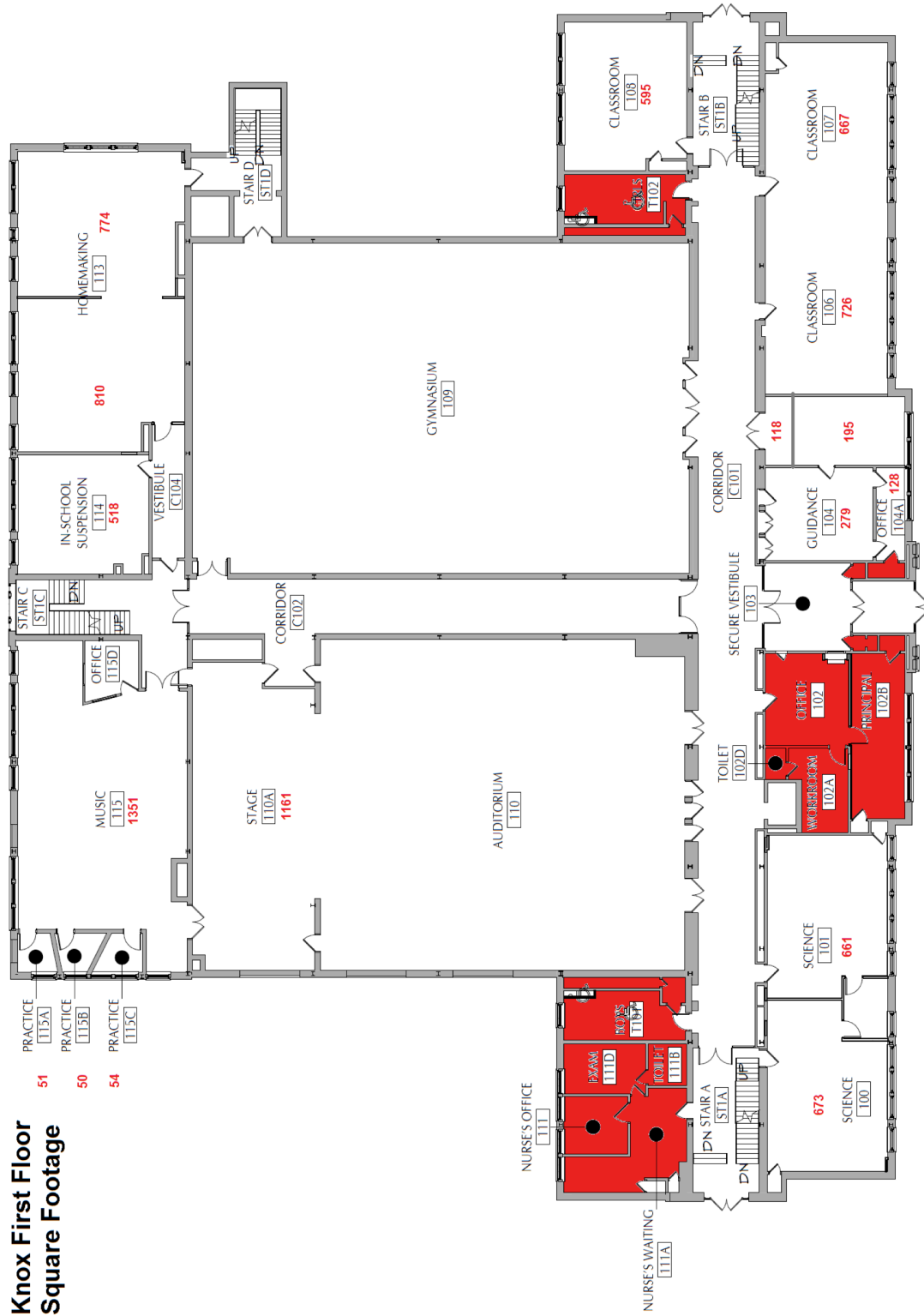
Room size in square feet is indicated in red

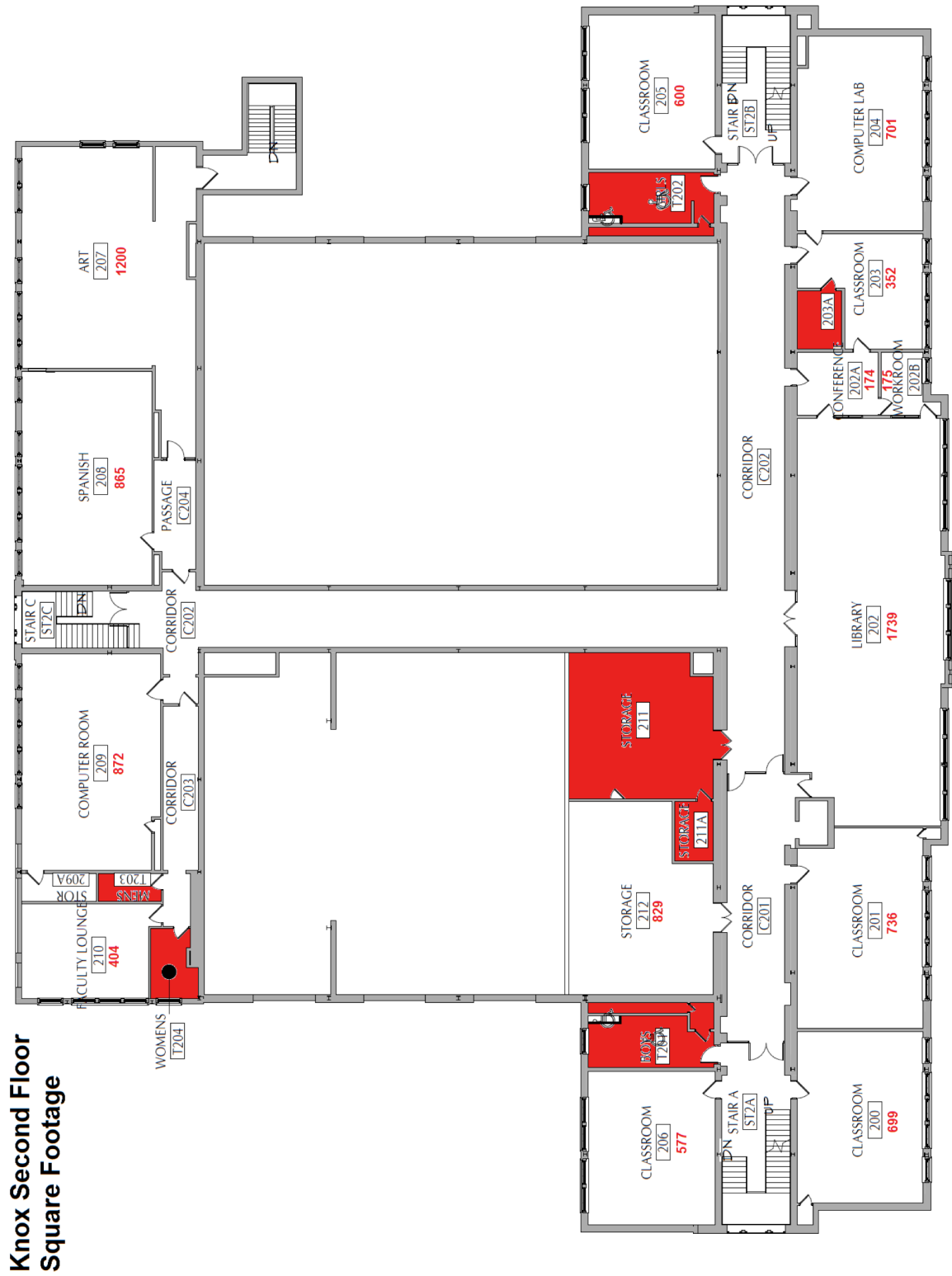






**Knox First Floor  
Square Footage**







**Knox Third Floor  
Square Footage**





