

# *West Genesee Central School District*

*School District Facilities Study  
November 30, 2020*



**WEST GENESEE**  
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## CHAPTER 1

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West Genesee Central School District, unlike many upstate school districts, has recently experienced declining K-12 student enrollment but increasing elementary school enrollment. Projections indicate that the overall K-12 enrollment will increase over the next decade. Additionally, there is a wide disparity in the current middle school enrollments. Realizing that its buildings may not currently be aligned to best accommodate the educational program needs for its current students and, considering the projected growth, 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 question:

***How can the district maintain and enhance the educational opportunities for West Genesee students in its tradition of excellence while continuing to ensure efficient and effective utilization of staff and facilities as well as fiscal responsibility for the district's taxpayers?***

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

*Finding 1:* Live births in the West Genesee district were used to predict kindergarten enrollment five years later. The live birth rate has generally increasing since 2004 with 2017 being the last year of actual data.

*Finding 2:* The K-12 district enrollment has declined from 4,733 in 2014-15 to 4,458 in 2019-20, or a 5.8%. During this same period of time, elementary enrollment increased while secondary enrollment decreased. In 1995-96, the district enrolled 5,042 K-12 students with a peak enrollment of 5,172 in 2002-03, 2006-07, and 2007-08.



*Finding 3:* Looking out to 2026-27, enrollment projections estimate the district will have approximately 4,600 K-12 students, an *increase* of 3.2% from 2019-20 enrollment. This increase will at the elementary and middle school levels.

*Finding 4:* Examining enrollments at the elementary schools we find that in the past five years enrollment has increased at East Hill (+4.5%), Onondaga Road (+5.7%), and Stonehedge (+4.9%) while remaining flat at Split Rock (-0.1%)

*Finding 5:* The number of district residents that elect to home-school their children has increased over the past five years while district resident students enrolled in non-public schools has decreased with resident student enrollment in charter and other public schools has remained constant.

*Finding 6:* Onondaga County population has increased slightly from 2009 (465,633) to 2013 (468,146) and then declined until 2019 (460,528) and the U. S. Census projects it will continue to decline through 2040 (457,256).

*Finding 7:* Like most upstate counties, the median age in Onondaga County has been rising, albeit gradually, from 38.3 years in 2009 to 39.2 years in 2017. Additionally, the Onondaga County childbearing age group (25-44 years) has been declining since 1990.

*Finding 8:* In 2019-20 the elementary schools have reasonable class size averages (East Hill, 21.7; Onondaga Road, 22.1; Split Rock, 19.1; Stonehedge, 21.1.

*Finding 9:* In addition to the typical core elementary subjects, the four elementary schools also offer special area subjects at all grade levels including art, music, physical education, band and orchestra, chorus, and library skills.

*Finding 10:* On the New York State grades 3-8 tests, West Genesee students score above Onondaga County students in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

*Finding 11:* The Middle School program is typical for a school district of this size. The High School Program provides an extensive number and variety of course options for students.

*Finding 12:* Class sizes in the middle and high schools are strong.

*Finding 13:* An extensive number of interscholastic athletic and co-curricular opportunities are available to the students in West Genesee.



*Finding 14:* The district educates many of its special needs students in district schools (250 in 2019-20) while sending a smaller number (55 in 2019-20) to out-of-district programs evidencing a wide variety of options utilized to meet the students' educational needs.

*Finding 15:* The West Genesee Strategic Planning Committee generated a number of ideas for enhancing the educational opportunities for district students (Appendix A).

*Finding 16:* All available space is currently utilized in elementary and middle school buildings.

*Finding 17:* West Genesee Middle School enrollment (607) is greater than Camillus Middle School enrollment (398).

*Finding 18:* Middle School enrollment is projected to increase through 2026-27.

*Finding 19:* In 2019-20, there were 15 fifth grade classrooms.

*Finding 20:* School building utility costs are a relatively small expense.

*Finding 21:* The district has developed long range facilities plans for its elementary and secondary school buildings with capital project work totaling approximately \$69 million.

*Finding 22:* Of the 841 district employees, 539 of them are teachers, teaching assistants, or teacher aides.

*Finding 23:* The cost of employee fringe benefits equals, on average, approximately 50% of the salary.

*Finding 24:* Retirements occur in the district on a regular basis so should facilities changes result in staff reductions, these reductions in staff could be accomplished through attrition and no one would involuntarily be released from a position.

*Finding 25:* The district employs a two-tier (double trip) routing plan for daily routes to and from its school buildings.

*Finding 26:* Nearly all students are bussed to school due to the volume of traffic on district streets and the lack of sidewalks in most neighborhoods.

*Finding 27:* The district transportation fleet has nearly 100 buses and other vehicles used to transport students to in-district and out-of-district educational locations.

*Finding 28:* The West Genesee community has overwhelmingly supported the district's spending plans.

*Finding 29:* Restricted fund balance accounts (reserves) have been established and funded by the district.



*Finding 30:* Use of assigned fund balance to support the district spending plan has been unchanged the past five years.

*Finding 31:* From 7/1/15 – 6/30/20, unassigned fund balance has been maintained at statutory limits.

*Finding 32:* Full value tax rate is less in 2019-20 (\$22.73/\$1000) than it was in 2015-16 (\$23.14/\$1000) largely due to increasing property value of the district.

*Finding 33:* West Genesee has approximately \$11.2 million in local share of debt service (after estimated building aid at approximately 83%) on its current borrowing through 2035-36.

*Finding 34:* 2022-23, 2032-33, 2036-37 are key transition years when there are significant reductions to the annual local existing debt service payment.

### ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

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

***How can the district maintain and enhance the educational opportunities for West Genesee students in its tradition of excellence while continuing to ensure efficient and effective utilization of staff and facilities as well as fiscal responsibility for the district’s taxpayers?***

As consultants we have concluded, with the help of the Strategic Planning Committee, that the district will likely experience a growth in enrollment over the next decade and there is little, if any, unused or underutilized spaces in the elementary and middle school buildings. Once the desired grade configurations are determined, it would behoove the district to convene a facilities planning team and commence discussions with the district architects to determine what modifications to the buildings are necessary to ensure that buildings are equipped to provide West Genesee students with the best possible educational experiences in a way that effectively and efficiently utilizes staff and facilities and is fiscally responsible to the district’s taxpayers



### ***Recommendations***

1. It is recommended that the district update enrollment projections annually to obtain the best data upon which to make decisions regarding educational programs, staffing, and facilities usage. Current enrollment projection data indicate that enrollment will increase beginning in the 2021-22 school year.

2. It is recommended that the district consider the following two options:

Option 1: Status quo...make no changes in the current use of facilities.

Option 2: Create a grades 5-6 intermediate school at the current West Genesee Middle School; create a grades 7-8 junior high school at the current Camillus Middle School; reconfigure the vacant space created by moving fifteen 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms out of the four elementary schools to allow for future enrollment increases, alleviate current crowded conditions, and/or begin the development of a district Pre-K program.

3. 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 plan will include:

- ✓ possible renovations and/or additions related to student enrollment and instructional program changes,
- ✓ scope of work to be performed from the current and future Building Condition Surveys,
- ✓ long term the design of appropriate school facilities as program needs change,
- ✓ financing of these initiatives.

This committee should be comprised of both school staff and members of the community.

4. It is recommended that the district engage its community and its architect in the planning and discussion of facilities needs and options as early in the process as possible.

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## 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 Strategic Planning Team appointed by the West Genesee Central School District. The members of the team included:

Samantha Arliss	Susan Gifford	Courtney Reina
Sereen Awawda	Mark Grier	Barb Ritch
David Bills	Sharon Guglielmi	Michelle Shackleton
Gene Bobey	Brian Kesel	Iva Vasilev
Darlene Chapin	Matthew Kimpland	Thomas Vaughn
Olivia Colabufo	John Lizzi	Jennifer Vinci
Kimberly Coyne	John Mannion	
Elizabeth Donaldson	Susan Murray	Lisa Craig, Facilitator
Gregory Fey	Molly O'Keefe	Steve Dunham, Facilitator
Stephanie Finn	Jennifer Olson	Caroline Flaherty,
Nicole Figueiredo	Dawn Personte	Technical Support
Vincent Firenze	Barbara Randall	

These team 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 West Genesee Central School District.

We also wish to thank the members of the West Genesee 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. This was no easy task, but they accepted the challenge and allowed the study process to run its course!



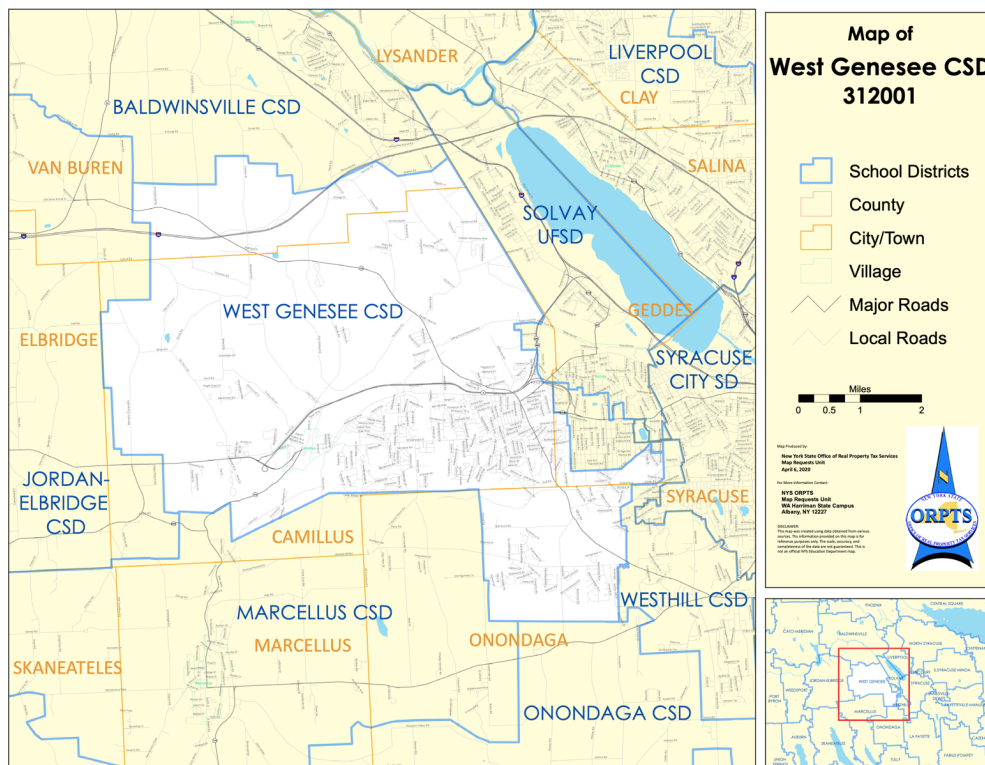
## CHAPTER 3

### BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This first chapter defines the critical question for which this study will provide context and information to help guide school district leaders as they position the district to continue its academic excellence in tandem with fiscal responsibility in the foreseeable future.

#### Background

The West Genesee Central School District is located in Onondaga County and covers approximately 40 square miles serving the townships of Camillus (approximately 76% of the tax base), Onondaga (approximately 16% of the tax base), Geddes (approximately 5% of the tax base), Van Buren (approximately 3% of the tax base), and Elbridge (<1% of the tax base). The district's instructional facilities include four elementary schools housing grades K-5 (East Hill Elementary, Onondaga Road Elementary, Split Rock Elementary, and Stonehedge Elementary), two middle schools for grades 6-8 (Camillus Middle and West Genesee Middle) and a 9-12 High School. A map of the district follows.





The West Genesee Central School District community has consistently and overwhelmingly shown its support for the education of resident students as noted in the historical budget voting pattern in the following table. Residents have resoundingly passed school budgets in each of the past ten years as shown in Table 3.1. In addition, district residents have also passed two capital projects since 2010 (2013, 2018) as well as annual bus propositions in each year since 2010.

<b>Table 3.1 District Budget Vote History</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Yes Votes</b>	<b>No Votes</b>	<b>Total Votes</b>	<b>Approval Percentage</b>
2019	1573	282	1855	84.8%
2018	1085	154	1239	87.6%
2017	1073	186	1259	85.2%
2016	1394	257	1651	84.4%
2015	1183	208	1391	85.0%
2014	1454	323	1777	81.8%
2013	1335	265	1600	83.4%
2012	1604	392	1996	80.4%
2011	2061	695	2756	74.8%
2010	2037	728	2765	73.7%

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 administrative team. Given the current economic condition of our country and our state and the continuing pressures to educate all children to higher levels, this challenge has become even more daunting 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 West Genesee 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 question" the Board of Education and district leaders asked that the consultants address:



***How can the district maintain and enhance the educational opportunities for West Genesee students in its tradition of excellence while continuing to ensure efficient and effective utilization of staff and facilities as well as fiscal responsibility for the district's taxpayers?***

The timeline called for initiation of this study in February 2020 with the final report completed by November 30, 2020.

The Board of Education selected Castallo & Silky LLC, an educational consulting firm from Syracuse, New York to conduct this study. Alan Pole and Deborah Ayers led this study for the firm. Castallo & Silky LLC has extensive experience in working with school districts in New York State that have considered a variety of efficiency and organizational issues related to public education.

To answer the 'critical study question', 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. be independent of special interest groups,
  - d. be educationally sound, and
  - e. be fiscally responsible and realistic.



The study concludes with this final report to the Board of Education. While the strategic planning team 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 future direction for the district to maximize opportunities for students with efficiency and fiscal responsibility.



## 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 and district leaders posed the following question that drove this study:

***How can the district maintain and enhance the educational opportunities for West Genesee students in its tradition of excellence while continuing to ensure efficient and effective utilization of staff and facilities as well as fiscal responsibility for the district’s taxpayers?***

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 question that drove the study. The strategic planning team met with the consultants 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 strategic planning team to seek final thoughts from the group.

The final report was presented to the Board of Education in a public session on December 16, 2020.





## **CHAPTER 5**

### **STUDENT ENROLLMENTS AND POPULATION TRENDS IN THE AREA**

This section of the report provides a picture of the current status of the West Genesee Central 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 migration patterns in and out of the school district, the number of students who are home schooled, promotion/retention policies, transfers to and from nonpublic and charter schools, deaths, and dropouts.

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

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

<b>Table 5.1 Number of Live Births, 2004 -2017</b>	
<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Number</b>
2004	266
2005	263
2006	267
2007	294
2008	275
2009	303
2010	271
2011	306
2012	274
2013	331
2014	304
2015	315
2016	314
2017	323



Live births are then compared with the kindergarten enrollment five years into the future...babies born in 2015 will be in kindergarten in 2020-21, babies born in 2016 will be in kindergarten in 2021-22, and babies born in 2017 will be in kindergarten in 2022-23. 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.

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## **Live Births Are Used to Project Kindergarten Enrollment Five Years in the Future**

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**Table 5.2**  
**West Genesee K-12 Enrollment History and Projections: 2014-15 to 2026-27**

Grade	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Year/ Births	2009/ 303	2010/ 271	2011/ 306	2012/ 274	2013/ 331	2014/ 304	2015/ 315	2016/ 314	2017/ 323	2018/ 317	2019/ 317	2020/ 317	2021/ 317
K	332	301	299	320	342	333	339	338	348	342	342	342	342
1	312	319	299	303	318	352	332	339	338	347	341	341	341
2	323	324	327	301	312	323	360	340	346	345	355	349	349
3	313	328	313	335	309	324	328	365	345	351	350	360	354
4	303	327	338	317	328	314	329	333	371	351	357	356	366
5	341	306	322	344	335	347	322	338	342	381	360	366	365
6	376	336	311	337	335	333	348	323	339	343	382	361	368
7	421	378	340	325	330	342	337	352	327	343	347	387	365
8	401	410	377	345	328	330	342	337	352	327	343	347	386
9	398	401	404	377	361	328	332	344	339	354	329	345	349
10	415	398	394	410	378	349	326	330	342	337	352	327	343
11	382	419	383	404	406	362	345	322	326	338	333	348	323
12	416	373	423	385	394	421	362	345	322	326	338	333	348
K-12 Total	4733	4620	4530	4503	4476	4458	4403	4407	4437	4485	4529	4562	4600
K-5 Total	1924	1905	1898	1920	1944	1993	2011	2053	2090	2117	2106	2115	2118
6-8 Total	1198	1124	1028	1007	993	1005	1027	1012	1018	1012	1072	1094	1119
9-12 Total	1611	1591	1604	1576	1539	1460	1365	1341	1329	1355	1352	1353	1363

Notes: (1) Ungraded special needs students are not included in these totals; (2) 2023-24 to 2026-27 live births are the average of the five previous years. Consequently, from 2023-24 to 2026-27 the early grade estimates are quite speculative

As is apparent from Table 5.2, K-12 enrollment has declined over the past six years (4,733 in 2014-15 to 4,458 in 2019-20; -275 students/-5.8%). This decline is projected to continue throughout the 2020-21 school year but then begin to increase steadily through 2026-27 (4,458 in 2019-20 to 4,600 in 2026-27; +125 students/+2.8%). This increase will be driven primarily by increases in the elementary and middle school enrollments. It appears that the high school enrollment will continue to decline through 2022-23 before beginning an upward trend.



The longer-term enrollment history for the district found in Table 5.3 below indicates a peak enrollment in the early to mid-2000's with a steady decline over the past ten years.

<b>Table 5.3</b> <b>West Genesee CSD K-12 Total Enrollment 1995-96 to 2019-20</b>													
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
K-12 Total	5042	5086	5171	5140	5103	5105	5136	5172	5153	5064	5144	5172	5172
Year	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
K-12 Total	5152	5017	4980	4874	4782	4837	4759	4651	4556	4524	4488	4483	
NOTE: These totals include ungraded special education students that are not included in Table 5.2.													

When considering the four elementary schools, enrollment has increased in all of the schools except Split Rock. The enrollment at Split Rock has been essentially flat with a decline of just three students over the past five years. These trends are summarized in the following table:

<b>Table 5.4</b> <b>Five-Year History of Elementary School Enrollments: 2015-16 to 2019-20</b>						
School	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	5-Year % Change
East Hill	374	367	357	378	392	+4.8%
Onondaga Road	368	353	353	380	389	+5.7%
Split Rock	332	318	339	329	329	-0.1%
Stonehedge	842	860	871	857	883	+4.9%
Total	1916	1898	1920	1944	1993	+4.0%
NOTE: These totals may vary slightly from those in Table 5.2 due to students in ungraded programs.						

Conversely, both of the middle schools as well as the high school have experienced enrollment declines in the past five years as illustrated in Tables 5.5 and 5.6 that follow.



<b>Table 5.5</b> <b>Five-Year History of Middle School Enrollments: 2015-16 to 2019-20</b>						
<u>School</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>5-Year % Change</u>
Camillus	434	392	398	399	398	-8.3%
West Genesee	690	636	609	594	607	-12.0%
Total	1124	1028	1007	993	1005	-10.6%
NOTE: These totals may vary slightly from those in Table 5.2 due to students in ungraded programs.						

<b>Table 5.6</b> <b>Five-Year History of High School Enrollments: 2015-16 to 2019-20</b>						
<u>School</u>	<u>2015-16</u>	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>5-Year % Change</u>
West Genesee High School	1591	1604	1576	1539	1460	-8.2%
NOTE: These totals may vary slightly from those in Table 5.2 due to students in ungraded programs.						

The data presented above substantiate the likelihood of an increasing enrollment over the next five to seven years as the current elementary classes progress through the grade levels to the middle schools and high school.

The number of resident students that are educated outside of the district's school buildings has relatively little bearing on enrollment trends in the district. While the number of home-schooled students has increased, the number of students attending non-public schools has decreased over the past five years. Resident students attending charter schools and resident students attending school elsewhere has remained fairly constant. Year-by-year data can be found in Table 5.7.

<b>Table 5.7</b> <b>Five-Year History of Resident Students Educated Outside of District Buildings</b>					
<i>School Year</i>	<i>Home-Schooled Students</i>	<i>Resident Students Attending Non-Public Schools</i>	<i>Resident Students Attending Charter Schools</i>	<i>Resident Students Attending Elsewhere</i>	<i>Total Resident Students Educated Outside of District Buildings</i>
2015-16	40	260	9	11	320
2016-17	53	239	4	10	306
2017-18	59	234	7	14	314
2018-19	73	207	10	16	306
2019-20	86	195	10	13	304

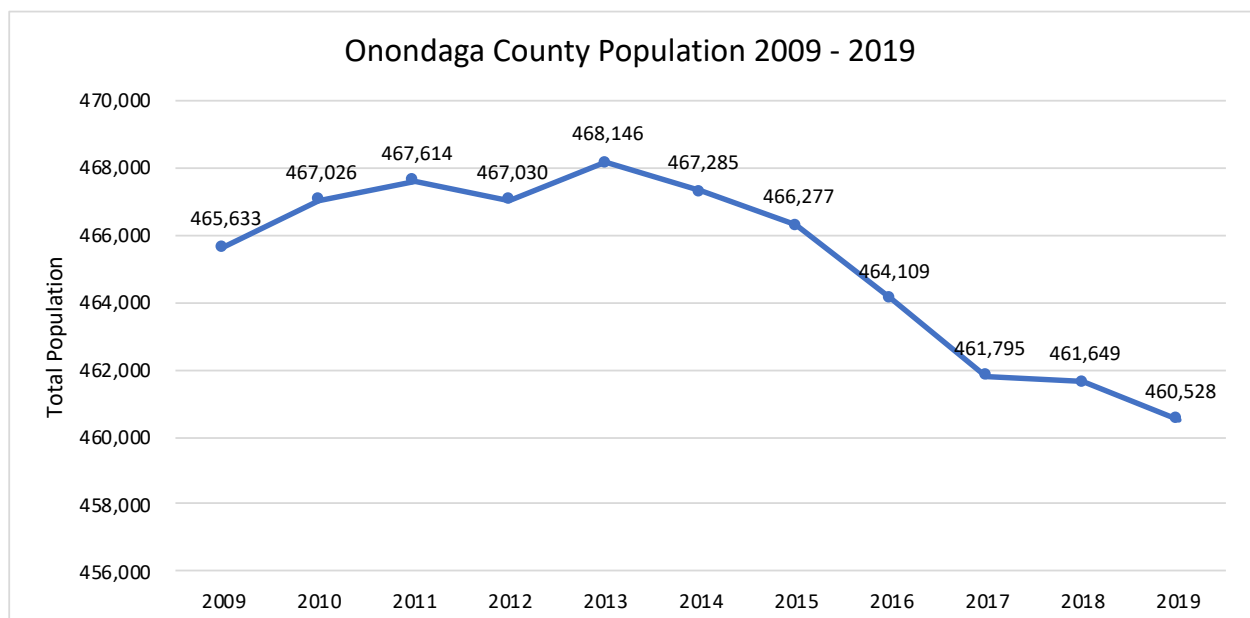


Lastly, it is important to consider the number of non-resident students attending school in the West Genesee district. Board policy #5151 states that “non-resident students shall not be permitted to attend the public schools of the District” except under very specific conditions as detailed in the policy. The number of non-resident students is, therefore, a very small number as detailed in Table 5.8 which has little to no bearing on overall district enrollment trends.

<b>Table 5.8</b> <b>Five-Year History of Resident Students Educated Outside of District Buildings</b>	
<i>School Year</i>	<i>Non-Resident Students Attending West Genesee CSD</i>
2015-16	10
2016-17	7
2017-18	3
2018-19	4
2019-20	5

The recent decline in total school district enrollment is not surprising given the overall Onondaga County population trends. As the graph that follows shows, the total county population gradually increased from 2009 to 2013 but has been decreasing from 2013-2019.

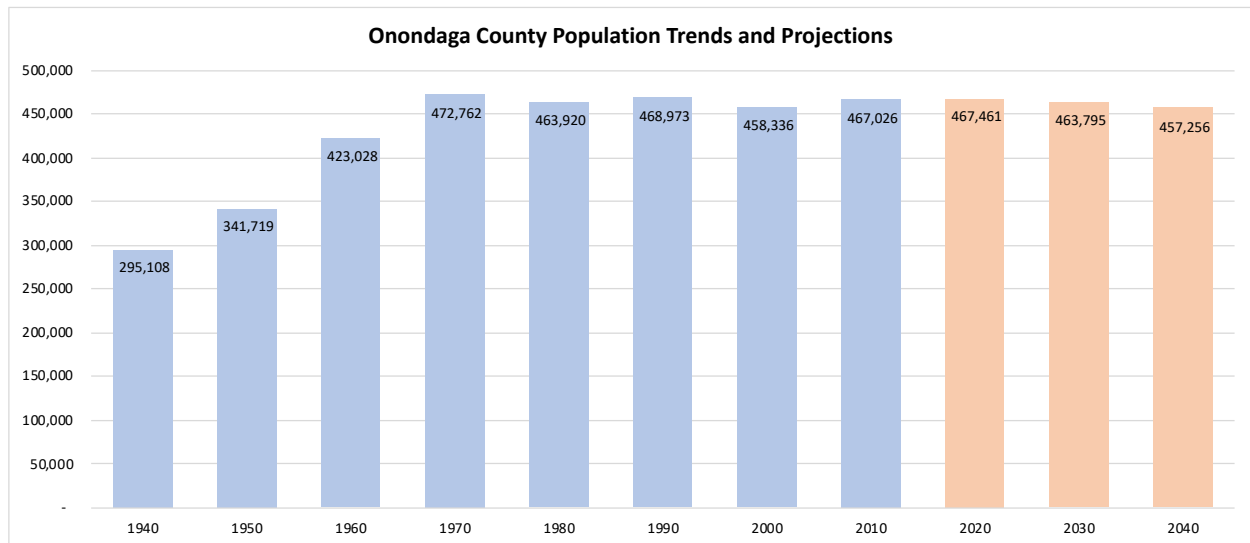
**Graph 1: Onondaga County Population 2009 - 2019**





Looking to the future, Graph 2 illustrates that the Onondaga County total population is projected to continue to decline slightly through 2040.

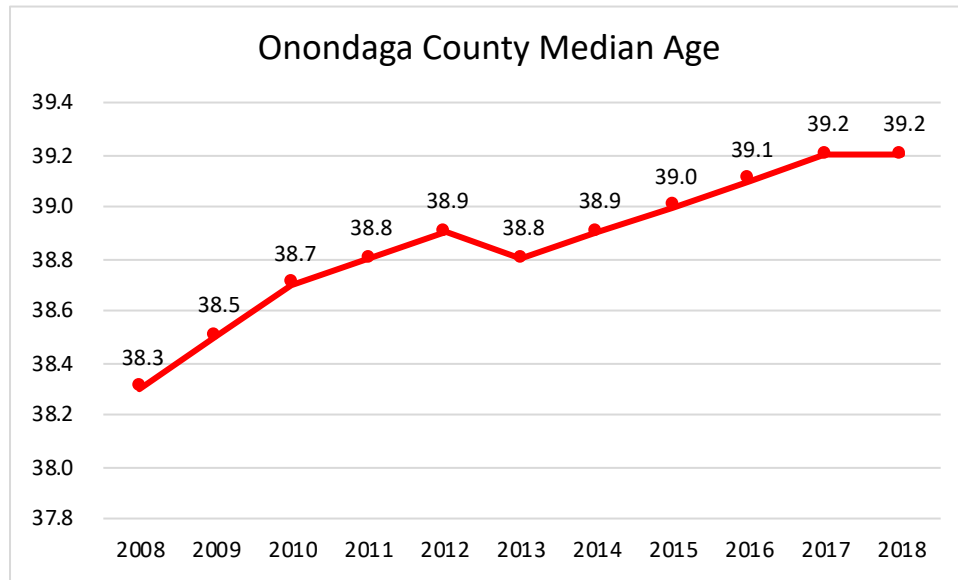
**Graph 2: Onondaga County Total Population Trend and Projection to 2040**



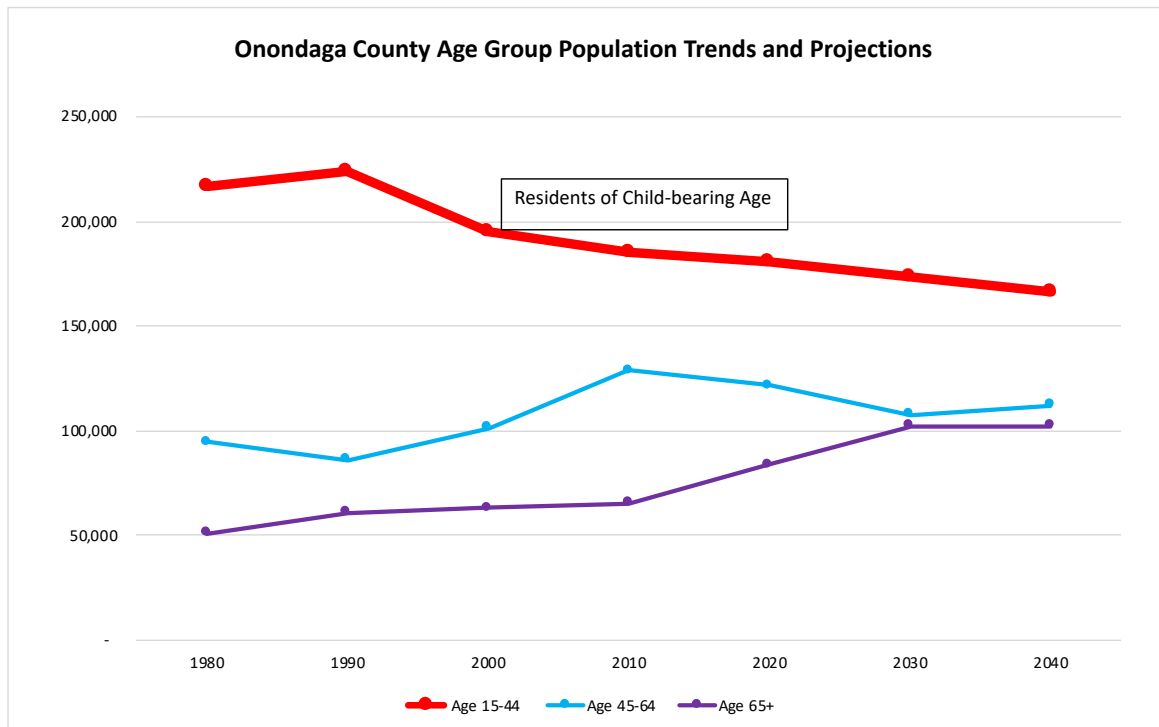
It is important to also examine the median age of Onondaga County residents since this may provide some insight into future school enrollments. Populations that are aging generally mean that there is likely an out-migration of younger residents, hence fewer families that may have children entering the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

Graph 3 that follows presents the trend in Onondaga County's resident median age. Spanning 2008 to 2018, we can see that the median age of county residents rose from 38.3 to 39.2. The county population is slowly aging like most Upstate New York communities.



**Graph 3: Median Age of Onondaga County Residents 2008-2018**

Lastly, it is also important to examine the cohort of adults in the typical child-bearing age group. For discussion purposes, this is generally defined as the age group 15-44 years of age. This is the population who are most likely to have children; a factor that influences the number of children being educated in the school district. As the graph below illustrates, the number of Onondaga County residents in this critical age range has declined steadily since 1990 and is projected to continue to decline over the next several decades. Using that data, it is reasonable to predict that the total number of school children in Onondaga County will also continue to decline.

**Graph 4: Onondaga County Age Group Trends 1980 – 2040**

In summary, it appears that the district enrollment will continue to decline for the next two years but will then begin to increase as the students in the elementary schools enter middle and high school. The total enrollment then is projected to remain generally steady but, as noted above, estimated live birth rates are used for the out years so those enrollment projections are less reliable. It is important for the district to engage in annual enrollment projecting with an eye toward current demographic trends in the county and school district.

**The number of Onondaga County residents in the 15-44 age range has been declining since 1990 and is projected to continue to decline for the next two decades.**



## 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). West Genesee provides a comprehensive program for its students in pursuit of this goal.

West Genesee has four elementary schools, all educating students in grades kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Camillus Junior High and West Genesee Middle School both serve students in grades 6-8 while West Genesee High School is a grades 9-12 building. West Genesee does not have a universal Pre-K program although there have been discussions in the past about the feasibility of creating such a program. This is a very common 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</b> <b>2019-20 Class Sizes for Each Elementary School-94 Sections K-5</b>					
Grade	East Hill	Onondaga Road	Split Rock	Stonehedge	Average
K	22, 23, 24	25, 25, 25	17, 16, 17	21, 20, 20, 21, 21, 21, 21	21.2
1	25, 25, 25	25, 22, 25	18, 18	20, 22, 22, 22, 23, 22, 19	22.2
2	21, 21, 22	22, 23, 24	20, 22, 21, 17	22, 21, 21, 18, 21, 19	20.9
3	19, 19, 19, 20	18, 18, 16	18, 17, 19	19, 23, 21, 21, 21, 18, 16	18.9
4	25, 24	20, 20, 19	18, 20, 20	21, 22, 19, 20, 21, 21, 18	20.5
5	18, 20, 19	24, 21, 25	23, 23	25, 24, 23, 24, 24, 24, 24	22.7
TOTAL	18/391 (21.7 avg)	18/397 (22.1 avg)	17/324 (19.1 avg)	41/866 (21.1 avg)	94/1,978 (21.0 avg)
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. In addition, it is also clear that the elementary school class sizes are very similar from one school to another. This is not always the case in school districts. It is not unusual to see school districts with multiple elementary schools have very different class sizes in the different buildings based on population changes within attendance boundaries. This is the phenomenon that causes districts to redistrict their elementary schools so as to maintain reasonably similar class sizes across the district. This will not be necessary in West Genesee. It also answers one of the questions in the study about comparability across the elementary buildings.

The other topic of interest is to examine whether or not the existing class sizes are consistent with any language that might exist in the collective bargaining agreement with the teachers association. Article VI. B. in the WGTA contract states that,

*...insofar as possible, elementary classrooms should have 30 pupils or less. Should the classroom enrollment exceed 32, the teacher shall be provided with one hour per day of teacher aide assistance for each student in excess of 32.*

Obviously, the current class sizes at West Genesee are well within the contractual guidelines for class size.



The district also provides a very typical program for its elementary school students as evidenced by the special area subjects that are offered to students. Table 6.2 that follows shows the special subject offerings in the elementary schools in West Genesee.

<b>Table 6.2</b>	
<b>Schedule of Elementary Specials-40 minute periods</b>	
Art	Once per week
Library	Once per week
Music	Once per week
Physical Education	Twice per week
Band & Orchestra	Meet before school
Chorus (Grades 3, 4, & 5))	Once per week

The consistency that exists across the four elementary schools in West Genesee is admirable in assuring that, regardless of where an elementary school child lives, each one is receiving comparable experiences in their elementary program.

The next point of analysis examines the performance of West Genesee'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 three 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 West Genesee students are achieving across the district's four elementary schools.

<b>Table 6.3</b> <b>% of Students Scoring at Levels 3 &amp; 4</b> <b>3-8 NYS Assessments in ELA</b>			
Schools	2017	2018	2019
East Hill	44	54	43
Onondaga Road	27	37	46
Split Rock	54	55	56
Stonehedge	39	50	52
Camillus Middle	41	44	50
West Genesee Middle	34	41	47
<i>Onondaga County</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>36</i>

<b>Table 6.4</b> <b>% of Students Scoring at Levels 3 &amp; 4</b> <b>3-8 NYS Assessments in Math</b>			
Schools	2017	2018	2019
East Hill	59	68	59
Onondaga Road	48	60	58
Split Rock	70	68	74
Stonehedge	49	63	70
Camillus Middle	49	61	66
West Genesee Middle	35	42	47
<i>Onondaga County</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>39</i>

Were an examination of student performance be made of any two school buildings in New York State, the data would be different; no two schools perform in exactly the same way. In examining the student performance data in tables 6.3 and 6.4, it is clear that the performance of the students in the four West Genesee elementary schools is more similar than different. While there clearly are differences, in looking at the big picture over the three-year period studied, the data are quite similar. It is also clear that the West Genesee elementary performance is consistently higher than the rest of the schools in Onondaga County.

The next area for analysis involves the program that is available to the middle and high school students in West Genesee. Middle school students have a very busy schedule because one of the purposes of education at this level is to give students the opportunity to explore a variety



of courses. In addition, school districts in New York State are required to allow acceleration into high school level courses in math and at least one other academic area for their eighth grade students. West Genesee offers this acceleration in math and Spanish. Table 6.5 that follows shows the courses that are available to students in the district's two middle schools.

<b>Table 6.5 Middle School Course Offerings-2019-20</b>		
Course	Camillus Middle	West Genesee Middle
<b>ENGLISH</b>		
English 6	25, 25, 23, 22, 21, 15, 3	24, 27, 23, 23, 27, 26, 22, 23
English 7	30, 27, 27, 31, 25, 7, 4	27, 18, 27, 27, 28, 17, 26, 17
English 8	25, 24, 22, 26, 23, 4	26, 30, 21, 23, 24, 24, 30, 29
English-Instructional Support	6, 5	
English Language Learning		6, 6, 4
Reading 6	3	
Reading 7	1, 6	
Reading 9	4, 8, 3, 2	11
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>		
Social Studies 6	20, 16, 27, 27, 25, 18, 3	23, 20, 16, 20, 18, 24, 19, 17, 23, 17
Social Studies 7	30, 26, 30, 28, 29, 7	29, 16, 22, 27, 28, 26, 27, 21
Social Studies 8	28, 23, 25, 26, 23, 3	25, 30, 24, 27, 13, 30, 30, 30
<b>MATH</b>		
Math 6	24, 24, 24, 15, 21, 20, 4	27, 21, 23, 23, 26, 27, 23, 22
Math 7	28, 24, 30, 7	27, 26, 18, 12, 28
Math 8	21, 27, 21, 4, 5	29, 30, 30, 24, 23
Algebra 1	25, 24	14, 23, 26
Math 7 XL	28, 27	25, 22, 28
Math-Instructional Support	3, 5, 6, 3, 3	
<b>SCIENCE</b>		
Science 6	16, 16, 20, 19, 22, 20, 23, 3	23, 21, 14, 23, 16, 21, 21, 15, 21, 22
Science 7	29, 30, 30, 30, 29, 7	26, 26, 24, 29, 17, 24, 24, 26
Science 8	26, 24, 23, 26, 23, 5	23, 18, 25, 29, 30, 30, 28, 26



<b><i>LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH</i></b>		
French 1A	28	29
French 1	21	18, 13
Spanish 1A	24, 26, 22, 20, 20	21, 15, 25, 22, 23, 13, 25, 10
Spanish 1	23, 17, 22, 18, 15	18, 26, 23, 30, 20, 24, 20
<b><i>ART</i></b>		
Art 6-1/2 year	28, 26, 23, 23, 22, 20	23, 24, 19, 24, 25, 26, 25, 26
Art 7-1/2 year	18, 24, 23, 25	27, 27, 29, 20, 18, 19
Studio Art	19, 17	27, 26, 17
<b><i>MUSIC</i></b>		
Music 6-1/2 year		11, 22
Chorus 6-1/2 year	15, 26, 23, 21	17, 11, 27, 24
Orchestra 6	29	34
Orchestra-1/2 year	48	43
Concert Band	46	62
Concert Choir-1/2 year	20, 10, 16, 19	16, 6, 46, 46
Symphonic Band-1/2 year	67	82
<b><i>TECHNOLOGY</i></b>		
Technology 7-1/2 year	21, 20, 12, 21, 23, 24, 14, 15	28, 28, 19, 8, 29, 30, 20, 23
Technology 8-1/2 year	23, 18, 14, 19, 21	26, 25, 23, 16, 14, 18, 20, 16
Design/Drawing for Production	10, 17	25, 18
<b><i>PHYSICAL EDUCATION &amp; HEALTH</i></b>		
Health 7-1/2 year	28, 28, 17, 26, 27, 26	28, 29, 26, 24, 15, 12, 12, 15, 16, 16
Physical Education-1/2 year	17, 28, 13, 11, 23, 12, 11, 24, 25, 29, 35, 19, 28, 21, 32, 31, 21, 19, 17	30, 19, 15, 13, 16, 17, 27, 25, 16, 11, 26, 12, 12, 29, 30, 12, 12, 30, 30, 22, 15, 15, 32, 30, 18, 17, 32, 30, 18
Adaptive Phys. Ed-1/2 year	4	5, 1



<b><i>SPECIAL SUBJECTS</i></b>		
Career/Financial Management-1/2 year	24, 14, 23, 25, 17, 20	28, 28, 16, 10, 28, 28, 21, 25, 19,
Family/Consumer Science-1/4 year	25, 27, 23, 23, 20, 22	23, 22, 23, 11, 11, 22, 15, 17, 25, 23
Digital Literacy-1/4 year	25, 27, 23, 23, 20, 22	24, 22, 25, 10, 11, 22, 15, 17, 25, 22
IS-Rewards 6		9, 7
IS-Rewards 6		2, 6
<b><i>SPECIAL EDUCATION</i></b>		
English 6	5, 2	2
English 7	4	9
English 8	3	2
Math 6	6	5
Math 7	4	10
Math 8	1	
Resource 6	4, 4, 5, 5, 5	4, 5, 5, 4, 4
Resource 7	6, 5, 5, 5, 1	5, 3, 5, 2
Resource 8	6, 6, 5	5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4
Resource		5, 5, 2
Study Skills	10	
Life Skills	9	
<b><i>LEARNING CENTER/STUDY HALL</i></b>		
Learning Center	3, 1, 1, 2, 4	3, 3, 3, 2, 5, 5, 6, 8, 5, 6, 5, 5, 2, 2
Study Hall-1/4 year; A/B days	11, 11, 11, 11, 10, 10, 10, 10, 32, 28, 30, 28, 33, 29, 33, 29, 31, 31, 28, 31, 32, 32, 32, 32, 11, 10, 11, 11, 27, 26, 27, 26, 23, 22, 23, 22, 24, 27, 24, 27, 24, 27, 24, 27, 21, 27, 22, 25, 27, 27, 27, 27, 21, 18, 17, 15, 15, 19, 15, 19, 23, 27, 30, 24, 26, 29, 33, 29, 33, 24, 26, 24, 25, 26, 29, 26, 29, 5, 7, 6, 7, 7, 7, 6, 7, 6, 6, 10, 6, 10, 6, 10, 6, 10, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 17, 15, 12, 15, 12, 15, 12, 15, 12, 14, 15, 3, 5, 4, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 12, 11, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1	13, 13, 13, 13, 19, 13, 19, 13, 19, 13, 19, 13, 12, 14, 12, 14, 12, 15, 12, 15, 29, 23, 29, 22, 31, 24, 31, 24, 28, 21, 28, 20, 31, 24, 31, 24, 29, 25, 28, 24, 32, 27, 32, 27, 27, 17, 27, 17, 29, 21, 29, 21, 24, 22, 25, 23, 28, 26, 28, 26, 25, 27, 25, 26, 27, 28, 27, 28, 23, 20, 23, 20, 28, 28, 28, 28, 17, 17, 17, 17, 8, 8, 8, 8, 12, 12, 12, 12, 12, 12, 12, 12, 16, 16, 16, 16, 18, 18, 18, 18, 12, 17, 12, 17, 15, 19, 15, 19, 9, 17, 10, 17, 16, 23, 16, 23, 13, 15, 13, 15, 21, 23, 21, 23, 23, 18, 23, 18, 22, 18, 23, 19, 23, 18, 23, 18, 27, 22, 27, 22, 28, 27, 26, 25, 30, 29, 31, 30, 10, 10, 10, 10, 3, 3, 3, 3, 16



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 West Genesee is provided in table 6.6 that follows. Core classes are listed in the title blocks while elective courses beyond those core classes are listed in the body of the table.

<b>Table 6.6</b>	
<b>Grades 9-12 Elective Course Offerings-2019-20</b>	
<b>Course</b>	<b># of Sections &amp; Section Sizes</b>
<b>ENGLISH</b>	
<b>Regular Offerings-English 9, English 10, English 11, English 12</b>	
AP Language & Composition	16, 16, 16
AP Literature & Composition	24, 14
Explorations in Literature & Writing	23, 15, 5
Introduction to Film & Film Theory	23, 23
Shakespeare	13
Technical & Report Writing	14
Creative Writing	22
Journalism	18
Contemporary Issues	25, 22, 24, 24, 25, 18, 23
OCC Composition	21, 20
OCC Literature	21, 20
Public Speaking	26
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>	
<b>Regular Offerings-Global History 9 &amp; 10, US History, Economics, Participation in Government</b>	
Basic Economics	17, 17
SUPA Economics	20, 27, 24, 22
Criminal Justice System	30, 30, 26, 30, 28
Sociology	25, 15, 30, 24,
The Sixties	29, 24
Psychology	30, 30, 29, 25, 25
Teaching Tolerance	30, 25, 30
Social Media/Navigating Current Events	25, 26, 27
OCC US History	27, 21, 29
SUPA Sociology	13, 26
SUPA Psychology	18, 13, 21
SUPA Public Affairs	16, 18, 16
AP World History	21, 27, 22



<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	
<b>Regular Offerings-Algebra, Geometry, Algebra 2,</b>	
OCC Statistics	22, 23, 9
Math Topics	18, 14
Math of Industry & Government	25, 16
AP Statistics	13
OCC Calculus	19, 18, 29
OCC Pre-Calculus	24, 26, 23, 23
Math Analysis	30, 16, 18, 17
Intro to Computer Programming	20, 18, 14
Advanced Computer Programming	16, 16
<b>SCIENCE</b>	
<b>Regular Offerings-Earth Science, Living Environment, Chemistry, Physics</b>	
Advanced Chemistry	24, 26, 22, 16, 18
Anatomy & Physiology	24, 17, 17
The Global Environment	20
Meteorology	6
Engineering Science	4
Forensic Science	23, 20, 23
AP Biology	14, 14, 26, 22
<b>LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH</b>	
<b>Regular Offerings-French &amp; Spanish I, II, III, IV</b>	
Advanced Spanish IV-SUNY Oswego	17, 21, 12, 22, 20
Advanced Spanish V-SUNY Oswego	16, 24, 14
Advanced French IV-SUNY Oswego	20
Advanced French V-SUNY Oswego	19
<b>BUSINESS</b>	
Career/Financial Management	18, 28, 16
Career & College Readiness	27, 30, 30, 22, 21
Word Processing	30, 24, 26, 29
Computer Applications	8
Let's Get Down to Business	22
OCC Computer & Information Literacy	15
OCC Introduction to Business	22
OCC Financial Accounting	19
Personal Finance	20, 20, 30, 30, 30
Business Law	18
CAZ Principles of Marketing	18
CAZ Principles of Business Management	13
Business of Gaming & Apps	13, 22
Access & Excel	12
Wall Street	16, 26





TECHNOLOGY	
Design & Drawing for Production	19, 9, 18
OCC CAD/Architectural	14, 16
OCC CAD/Mechanical	14, 16
OCC Architectural CAD II	9
PC Hardware & Software	16, 24
Home & Small Business Networking	4
Fundamentals of Electronics	16, 21, 18, 23
Pre-Engineering	18, 17, 22, 19, 20
OCC Design & Manufacturing	23, 8
Robotics & Fluid Dynamics	14, 19, 23, 22
Project Management & Design	14, 24
Web Design	15
MUSIC	
Music Theory I	14
AP Music Theory	11
Introduction to Dance	12
Intermediate Dance	8, 12
Dance Ensemble I	19
Dance Ensemble II	18
Concert Choir	42, 39
Chorale	37
Concert Band	30, 25
Symphonic Band	55
Wind Ensemble	48
Orchestra	30
Symphony	55
ART	
Studio in Digital Photo I	17, 17, 15, 13
Studio in Digital Photo II	6, 14
Studio in Digital Photo III	8
AP Studio Art	1
Studio in Art	24, 20, 23, 24
Studio in Drawing & Painting	23, 19, 19
Studio in Drawing & Painting II	9
Advanced Principles of Drawing	9
Graphic Design	20, 24, 16, 24, 24
Graphic Design II	16, 24, 1
Studio in Mixed Media I	22, 22, 16
Studio in Mixed Media II	21
Alternative Process for Photography	2
Studio in Ceramics I	22, 19, 21, 21, 22, 22
Studio in Ceramics II	7, 15, 21, 22
Studio in Ceramics III	10, 19
Studio in Advanced Ceramics	17, 1



PHYSICAL EDUCATION	
Adaptive Physical Education	5, 12
Lifeguarding	11, 14
Lifetime Wellness	15
Does not include Study Halls, Study Skills, Health, English as a New Language (Onondaga Road, Stonehedge, & West Genesee Middle School), or BOCES Courses	

Table 6.6 above shows a very comprehensive program that is available to the high school students in West Genesee. The district offers numerous courses in the core academic areas that are taken by the vast majority of regular education students. In examining the table of high school courses above, we notice that the district has been able to maintain a very comprehensive list of elective offerings for its students. Not only are there numerous elective courses for the students but the enrollments in these courses are also very solid. This bodes well for future academic opportunities for the students in West Genesee. For the 2020-21 school year, the district plans to add the following electives:

Technology -- OCC Computer Forensics and Security  
 Science -- Chemistry and Physics of Cooking, Sports Physics & Physics of Flight  
 Fine Arts -- Studio in Mixed Media III & Advanced Graphic Design

In addition to the program offered at the high school, West Genesee students have the opportunity to take career and technical education classes at the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES. In 2019-20, 14.6% of the district's juniors and 7.6% of the seniors took advantage of the career and technical education courses as evidenced by the following Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 BOCES Participation- Career & Technical Education Classes 2019-20		
	Juniors	Seniors
# of students in class	362	421
# of students attending BOCES CTE	53	32
% of student attending BOCES	14.6%	7.6%
Overall BOCES CTE participation	10.9%	

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. West



Genesee is no exception. Table 6.8 that follows describes the very comprehensive athletic opportunities that are available to the students in West Genesee.

<b>Table 6.8 Athletic Participation</b>				
Sport	Varsity	Junior Varsity	Freshman	7/8
<b>Winter 2018-19</b>				
Basketball, Boys	13	13	15	15, 16
Basketball, Girls	13	15	15	15, 15
Wrestling	20	15		25
Ice Hockey	30			
Indoor Track-Boys	30			
Indoor Track-Girls	45			
Cheerleading-Boys & Girls	18	12		
Bowling-Boys	13			
Bowling-Girls	8			
Unified Bowling-Boys & Girls	15			25
Swimming, Boys*	43			
Volleyball-Girls			15	18, 16
<b>Spring 2019</b>				
Baseball	17	15	13	16, 14
Softball	15	15		12, 16
Lacrosse-Boys	32	26	27	29, 24
Lacrosse-Girls	25	25	21	18, 21
Golf-Girls	12			
Tennis-Boys	15			
Track, Boys	72			58
Track, Girls	58			50
Unified Basketball-Boys & Girls	14			
<b>Fall 2019</b>				
Football	41	29	22	46
Soccer-Boys	27	23	19	22, 27
Soccer-Girls	24	22	16	22, 22
Cross Country-Boys	18			25
Cross Country-Girls	16			21
Golf-Boys	10	11		
Tennis-Girls	13	8		
Swimming-Girls	39			21
Cheerleading-Boys & Girls	18	13		
Volleyball-Girls	13	13		



As Table 6.8 indicates, students at West Genesee have numerous interscholastic athletic activities in which to participate. In addition to having numerous sports, West Genesee also has many sports with teams at the varsity, junior varsity, freshman, and junior high level. This is a very important structure for athletic activities in that it allows students to compete on teams with others of their same age. This is a good arrangement for the development of the student as well as being good for competition.

In addition to athletic opportunities, West Genesee students also have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of other co-curricular activities. Table 6.9 that follows identifies those activities as well as participation levels for the 2019-20 school year.

<b>Table 6.9 Co-Curricular Activities-2019-20</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b># of Participants</b>
Freshman Senate	30
Sophomore Senate	48
Junior Senate	55
Senior Senate	52
Math League	75
Student Council	30
Academic Decathlon	9
Mock Trial	14
Model UN	28
ECOS	46
Honor Society	173
Spanish Club	25
French Club	29
In the Mind's Eye	27
Ski Club	17
Positivity Project	58
Robotics	30
Technology Club	30
Business Club	20
Future Business Leaders	14
Odyssey	16
Senior Musical	156
Camillus Musical	89
WG Musical	120
Marching Band	106
Jazz Ensemble	46
Jazz Band	21



String Quartet	4
Brass Ensemble	5
Brass Quintet	5
Percussion Ensemble	14
Woodwind Quintet	5
Woodwind Flute Ensemble	4
Woodwind Flute Quartet	4
Saxophone Quartet	4
Men's Acapella	20
Girl's Acapella	24
CMS Select Choir	24
Winterguard	22

In addition to the educational program that was provided for regular education students, in 2019-20, the district had numerous placements for its special education students. Tables 6.10, 6.11, and 6.12 that follow show these special education placements that are located in the West Genesee district.

<b>Table 6.10</b>			
<b>West Genesee Elementary School Special Education Classes</b>			
Type of Class	School	Grades	# of Students
12:1:1	Split Rock	2 & 3	7
12:1:1	Split Rock	4 & 5	7
8:1:1	Stonehedge	1, 2, & 3	7

<b>Table 6.11</b>			
<b>West Genesee Middle School Special Education Classes</b>			
Type of Class	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<b>Camillus Middle School</b>			
ELA	2	4	3
Reading 5-6	5	1	3
Math	5 (12:1)	4	4
<b>West Genesee Middle School</b>			
ELA	2	9	2
Reading	3	2	5
Math	6	10	8



<b>Table 6.12</b> <b>West Genesee High School 15:1 Special Education Classes</b> <b>(Student Enrollments May Not be Limited to the Grade Levels Shown)</b>				
Type of Class	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
English	14	5	12	
Global 9	11			
Global 10		12		
US History			7	
Living Environment		15		
Algebra	9, 9			
Algebra 1	8			
Study Skills	7, 8, 8, 10			
Reading	12			
General Math	4			

In addition to the special education classes shown in the previous three tables, the district also offers a 12:1:1 class with 10 students at Camillus Middle School, a 12:1:1 class with 8 students at the high school, and two adaptive physical education sections at the high school.

In addition to the special education classes that are offered to students within the district, West Genesee also contracts with the OCM BOCES for the placement of a number of special education students. Table 6.13 that follows shows those BOCES placements.

<b>Table 6.13</b> <b>BOCES Placements for Special Education</b>			
Program	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
TEAM*	Lafayette-5	Solvay-2	Baldwinsville-2
SKATE*	Westhill-1	Camillus-4	ESM-2
SED*	Baldwinsville-4 Liverpool-1	Camillus-5	
SED-CTC	6	6	5
SED-McEvoy			2
Stellata*	1		1
TEP-Thompson Road			2
AHSEP*-Thompson Road			3
Day Treatment-Thompson Road			2
Day Treatment-McEvoy			1
<i>The <b>TEAM</b> (Towards Educational Achievement for the Multiply Disabled) program is designed for students who have severe multiple disabilities that impact their physical and cognitive development. The <b>SKATE</b> (Scaffolding Kids Abilities Through Education) program for students with Autism Spectrum</i>			



*Disorder provides comprehensive education and psycho-therapeutic assistance.*

***SED** programs serve students whose management and emotional needs are determined to be highly intensive.*

*The **Stellata** program is designed for students with cognitive and learning deficits whose behavior significantly impacts their learning and success.*

***AHSEP (formerly known as the GED program)**, is open to students with a variety of educational needs who are at least 16 years old, have at least 8th-grade reading and math levels and who have earned less than 12.5 credits for graduation.*

West Genesee, like all school districts is committed to placing students in the “least restrictive environment.” Placement decisions are made by the Committee on Special Education which determines the most appropriate educational setting for each student with disabilities. Of note in Table 6.13 is that the BOCES SKATE and SED programs have classrooms that are located in Camillus Middle School. The placement patterns that are shown in the previous four tables exhibit a significant number of placement options for special education students that is quite typical for a larger suburban school district.



## 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 in the 2019-20 academic year, and to gauge how enrollments may impact them in the future. Tables 7.1 and 7.2 that follow provide an overview of the district's schools.

Table 7.1 Overview of West Genesee Elementary School Buildings				
Schools	East Hill	Onondaga Road	Split Rock	Stonehedge
Address	401 Blackmore Road Camillus, NY	703 Onondaga Road Syracuse, NY	4151 Split Rock Road Camillus, NY	400 Sanderson Dr. Camillus, NY
Year of Original Building	1956	1956	1963	1961
Sq. Ft. in Current Building	46,772	46,772	67,378	114,785
Number of Floors	1	1	2	2
Grades Housed	K-5	K-5	K-5	K-5
Students Served	392	389	329	883
Overall Building Rating	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Architect	Robertson, Strong, Apgar			
NOTE: All information was taken from the NYS Building Conditions Survey completed in 2015 except the enrollments that were drawn from the 2019-20 academic year.				







Table 7.2 Overview of West Genesee Secondary School Buildings			
Schools	Camillus Middle	West Genesee Middle	High School
Address	5525 Ike Dixon Road Camillus, NY	500 Sanderson Drive Camillus, NY	5201 West Genesee St. Camillus, NY
Year of Original Building	1972	1958	1953
Sq. Ft. in Current Building	156,560	125,700	323,663
Number of Floors	3	2	2
Grades Housed	6-8	6-8	9-12
Students Served	398	607	1,460
Overall Building Rating	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
Architect	Robertson, Strong, Apgar		
NOTE: All information was taken from the NYS Building Conditions Survey completed in 2015 except the enrollments that were drawn from the 2019-20 academic year.			



As can be seen in tables 7.1 and 7.2, all of the district's buildings were constructed between the mid-50's to the early-70's. East Hill and Onondaga Road are the smallest elementary schools and are exactly the same size; Stonehedge is by far the largest elementary school. Table 7.1 also illustrates the neighborhood concept that is utilized by West Genesee for its elementary program in that the four elementary schools serve students from their neighborhoods and all buildings house grades K-5. All buildings were rated as "Satisfactory."

Table 7.2 examines the secondary buildings in the district. Camillus is the larger of the two 6-8 middle schools yet has approximately 200 fewer students than West Genesee Middle School. West Genesee High School with 323,663 is a very large 9-12 high school. The middle schools were rated as "Satisfactory" and the high school was rated as "Excellent."

In addition to looking at the overall structure of the buildings in the district, 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 2019-20 school year utilization of the district's four elementary schools.

<b>Table 7.3</b> <b>East Hill Elementary School Classroom Usage 2019-20-46,772 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafetorium, &amp; Library)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (18)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (7)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
East Hill	25	K-3 1-3 2-3 3-4 4-2 5-3	Special Education-2 AIS-2 OT-1 Art-1 Music-1	Special Education-1 Speech-1

<b>Table 7.4</b> <b>Onondaga Road Elementary School Classroom Usage 2019-20-46,772 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafetorium, &amp; Library)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (18)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (5)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Onondaga Road	23	K-3 1-3 2-3 3-3 4-3 5-3	Special Education-2 OT/PT-1 Art-1 Music-1	Intervention Office-1 Speech-2



<b>Table 7.5</b> <b>Split Rock Elementary School Classroom Usage 2019-20-67,378 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafetorium, &amp; Library)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (17)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (11)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Split Rock	28	K-3 1-2 2-4 3-3 4-3 5-2	Special Education-6 OT/PT-1 Art-1 Music-1 Orchestra/Band-1 Staff Lounge-1	Sensory Room-2 Speech-2 IS-1 ADAPEP-1 Instructional Spec.-1 Psychologist-1

<b>Table 7.6</b> <b>Stonehedge Elementary School Classroom Usage 2019-20-114,785 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, 2 Cafetoria, &amp; Library)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (41)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (9)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Stonehedge	50	K-7 1-7 2-6 3-7 4-7 5-7	Special Education-4 IS-1 Art-1 Music-1 Art/Music-1 Orchestra-1	Conference Room-1 Staff Room-1 OT/PT-2 IS-3 ADAPEP-1 Copy Room-1 Psychologist-1

In looking at tables 7.3 through 7.6, the following table 7.7 shows a comparative summary of the four elementary schools.

<b>Table 7.7</b> <b>Summary of Elementary Class Sections by Building</b>				
School	Square Footage	# of Students	# of K-6 Common Branch Sections	# of Full Size Classrooms Not Common Branch
East Hill	46,772	392	18	7
Onondaga Road	46,772	389	18	5
Split Rock	67,378	329	17	11
Stonehedge	114,785	883	41	9



In analyzing the data about the size and utilization of the district's four elementary schools, one obvious point emerges...the four elementary schools are crowded! In looking at many elementary buildings, rooms are often designated as Empty, Book Room, Extra, Community Room, Conference Room, Staff Development Room, Testing Room, or other such descriptors that make it clear that these rooms are not essential for carrying on the instructional program for that building. In West Genesee, however, that is not the case. All of the full size classrooms are designated for direct instructional services for students. In addition, related services are provided in rooms that are quite small. In addition to this current crowded condition, it must be remembered that the district has been exploring the creation of a Universal Pre-K program that would have a number of challenges to create....one of those challenges is that there is no room in the elementary buildings to house such a program.

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**In analyzing the data about the size and  
utilization of the district's four elementary  
schools, one obvious point emerges...the  
four elementary schools are crowded!**

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Tables 7.7 and 7.8 show how the space in the two middle schools are currently being used.

<b>Table 7.7</b> <b>Camillus Middle School Classroom Usage 2019-20-156,560 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes 2 Gyms Cafetorium, Large Group Instruction Room, &amp; Library)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Core Academic Classrooms (18)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (30)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Camillus Middle School	48	English-4 Social Studies-3 Math-4 Science-4 Spanish-2 French-1	Intervention ELA-2 Intervention Math-1 Technology-2 Family/Con Science-3 OT/PT-1 Art-2 Chorus-1 Band-1 Orchestra-1 Computer Lab-2 BOCES 8:1-3 BOCES SKATE-1 Special Ed 6, 7, 8-1 Special Ed 6-1 Special Ed 7-1 Special Ed-1 Special Ed 15:1-1 Special Ed Offices-2 Health-1 Weight Room-1 Costume Room-1	Language Center-1 Speech-1 Special Ed-12:1-4 Staff Lounge-1 Conference Room-3 Storage-2





<b>Table 7.8</b> <b>West Genesee Middle School Classroom Usage 2019-20-125,700 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafetorium, &amp; Library)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Core Academic Classrooms (28)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (23)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
West Genesee Middle School	51	English-6 Social Studies-5 Math-7 Science-6 Spanish-3 French-1	Technology-2 Family/Con Science-2 Art-2 Chorus-1 Band-1 Orchestra-1 Music-1 Computer Lab-2 Health-1 Weight Room-1 Learning Center-1 Resource Room-4 ELL-1 Library Classroom-1 Conference Room-1 Alternative Setting-1	Resource Room-2 Conference Room-1 Lesson Room-2 Copy Room-1 Staff Room-1 Speech-1

As can be seen from tables 7.7 and 7.8 above, there are 48 full size classrooms and Camillus Middle and 51 full size classes at West Genesee Middle. However, while the number of full size classrooms are quite similar, these numbers are a bit deceiving because Camillus Middle is more than 30,000 square feet larger than West Genesee Middle. A second gymnasium and a large group instruction area certainly contribute to this difference. A number of other rooms are simply larger. Camillus Middle School has much more room than does West Genesee Middle School. Comparing these data with the enrollments for the buildings yields the following table:

<b>Table 7.9</b> <b>Comparison of Grades 6-8 Middle Schools</b>			
Middle School	2019-20 Enrollment	Square Footage	# of Full Size Classrooms
Camillus	398	156,560	48
West Genesee	607	125,700	51



In addition to the two middle schools, table 7.10 that follows shows the current utilization of rooms in the high school.

<b>Table 7.10</b> <b>West Genesee High School Classroom Usage 2019-20-323,663 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Auditorium, 2 Gyms, Pool, Wrestling Room, 3 Cafeterias, Large Group Instruction Room, Distance Learning Room, &amp; Library)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Core Academic Classrooms (62)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (27)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
West Genesee High School	89	English-14 Social Studies-12 Math-11 Science-16 LOTE & ELL - 9	Technology-4 Business-4 Art-6 Chorus-1 Band-1 Orchestra-1 Music-1 Dance-1 Health-1 Fitness Center-1 Learning Center-1 12:1-2 15:1-1 Library Classroom-1 Alternative Setting-1	Resource Room-4 Conference Room-2 Lesson Room-4 Copy Room-1 Staff Room-2 Department Offices-8 Psychologist-2 Speech-1 Credit Recovery-1

West Genesee High School is a very large facility with over 320,000 square feet. In any facility of this size, there is undoubtedly some space that is available to use differently. However, for purposes of this study, there does not appear to be any reason to consider any type of grade realignment that would involve the high school.

### ***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. Based on the Building Condition Survey and an ongoing assessment of the district's facilities' needs, table



7.11 that follows summarizes the most significant suggested improvements and related estimated costs for each of West Genesee's schools.

<b>Table 7.11</b> <b>Summary of 2018 Long Range School Building Plans</b>		
Building	Estimated Capital Construction Costs	Examples of Cost Items
East Hill	\$9,297,000	Asphalt replacement, drainage, renovate locker rooms, renovate kitchen, reconfigure music suite, emergency generator, create storage room for gym, construct room for storage/copying, upgrade steam boiler
Onondaga Road	\$7,226,000	Concrete curb replacement, reconfigure music suite, replace casework & counters, renovate main office, emergency generator, replace air handling units, additional heat source for library, renovate locker rooms, construct room for storage/copying, new curb cut onto West Genesee Street, upgrade steam boilers
Split Rock	\$5,446,000	Reconstruct back parking lot, replace windows in B wing, renovate locker rooms, replace window sills and casework in B wing, renovate nurse's office, update PA & fire system, emergency generator, replace door hardware, upgrade air conditioning, boiler replacements, update energy management systems, replace exhaust fans
Stonehedge	\$9,112,000	Replace entry drive, replace two parking lots, renovate gold cafeteria, replace stair treads, renovate blue kitchen, replace gym windows, provide additional gym storage, replace cabinets & countertops in blue wing, replace blue wing lockers, provide new air handlers for nurse & psychologist, new hot water tank, upgrade PA, replace gold wing roof & skylights, emergency generator, replace door hardware, renovate music suite, replace boilers





Camillus Middle School	\$10,810,000	Improve drainage, rebuild south parking lot, repave entrance drive, add sidewalk, new softball field, masonry restoration, replace ceilings, replace door hardware, door replacement, renovate locker rooms, new hot water heater, new unit ventilators, replace roof exhaust fans, replace sinks in science labs, update PA, new boiler and boiler room, update HVAC controls, replace air handling units in B wing
West Genesee Middle School	\$4,601,000	Sidewalk replacement, replace rear parking lot, add storage to gym overhang, replace damaged ceiling tiles, new boilers, upgrade HVAC controls, replace roof exhaust fans, update electrical panels
West Genesee High School	\$22,511,000	Replace steps & bleachers at football field, asphalt repair, curb replacement, sidewalk replacement, new turf field at grass field, new carpet on existing turf field, repaint tennis courts, replace track, replace scoreboards, upgrade baseball field, outdoor storage buildings, replace press box & grandstand, upgrade locker room building, new concession/ticket building, repair toilet room building, replace gym & cafeteria curtain walls, window replacements, door replacement, music storage addition, add boys team room to locker room area, stairway tread replacement, replace wall tile in pool, retile pool, replace pool ceiling, update fire alarm system, replace door contacts, replace glass blocks with windows, renovate visiting team room, replace upper gym doors & hardware, AC for locker rooms & PE office, replace freezer and cooler, update HVAC controls, update classroom electric, replace stage lighting, replace sound system in auditorium, replace rigging system, new roof top units on locker room building, replace exhaust fans in A wing
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$69,003,000</b>	

Like a home, school buildings require ongoing upkeep, maintenance, and improvement. This is an expensive undertaking for any school district. Not all of the items in the Building



Condition Survey listed previously are urgent. On the other hand, there are items associated with each of the buildings that require attention in the near future and other items that are nearing the end of their useful life. It is just a matter of time before some of these matters become more urgent and major sources of significant expense. In this planning, it is also important to remember that New York State will reimburse Massena at the rate of 83.1% of all approved building expenses.

In any study of a district's facilities, it is important to identify the issues noted in the Building Condition Survey. Having said that, however, the items identified in the BCS are not an integral matter for this study. Whether or not this study was undertaken, the district would have had to plan for addressing the needs identified in the BCS. The capital work associated with items in the BCS as well as the financing that is necessary to accomplish this work are items that the district must consider and plan for, whether or not it decides to make any changes to its grade structure and building organization. In short, whatever facilities initiatives are considered by the district, the items and the costs for those items that are detailed in the Building Condition Survey must be considered in those planning efforts.

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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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Finally, as the district considers options for reorganizing 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.



**Table 7.12**  
**Building Utility Costs for 2019**

	East Hill	Onondaga Road	Split Rock	Stonehedge	West Genesee Middle	Camillus Middle	High School
Natural Gas	5,411	4,844	30,669	8,171	7,512	8,003	13,936
Electric	24,611	25,993		78,807*		45,988	107,723
Total	30,022	30,837	60,669	47,575	46,916	53,911	121,659
* Includes District Office (6,540 sq ft)...But Distributes Total Cost Evenly Between Stonehedge (114,785 sq ft) and West Genesee Middle (125,700 sq ft)							



Within its six school facilities, West Genesee has nearly 900,000 square feet of buildings. Facilities are expensive to build, to maintain, and to renovate as instructional priorities evolve. Given these realities of facilities costs, the cost for the utilities in these buildings is quite insignificant.

### ***Consideration of Options***

West Genesee undertook this study with the following question guiding the work of the consultants and the strategic planning team:

***How can the district maintain and enhance the educational opportunities for West Genesee students in its tradition of excellence while continuing to ensure efficient and effective utilization of staff and facilities as well as fiscal responsibility for the district's taxpayers?***

Included in the study question are two important concepts:

- ✓ Maintaining and enhancing the educational opportunities for its students;
- ✓ Ensuring efficient and effective utilization of staff and facilities.

West Genesee is an excellent school district. It has numerous programs for its students, very fine facilities, and a team of people that is rightly providing leadership for the future. Through all of the research that was completed by the consultants and all of the discussions that were held with the members of the strategic planning team, only two viable options emerged to



address the question posed in this study. The first option is to keep the status quo. Doing nothing is usually an option and such is the case in West Genesee. While the facilities are not perfect, they are adequate for providing the current comprehensive program that the students enjoy. Doing nothing would not require the expenditure of significant funds for a major capital project. The status quo is clearly an option.

On the other hand, maintaining the status quo does little to address the priorities addressed in the study question. Maintaining the status quo does little if anything to enhance the educational opportunities for students or ensure efficiencies in the operation of the district. For these reasons, a second option was considered. The major factors influencing the emergence of the second option were the following:

- ✓ An expected increase in student enrollment in the next 5-6 years;
- ✓ Crowded conditions in the district's four elementary schools;
- ✓ No Pre-K program available in the district;
- ✓ An imbalance in the space available/number of students in the two middle schools

Redistricting students from one middle school to another may be a temporary solution to the middle school concerns. However, this does little for the other factors listed above.

Another option that is considered as part of this study is to make one of the current middle schools a grades 5-6 building and the other middle school a grades 7-8 building. This might have the effect of more equally distributing the student enrollment across the two buildings. The Strategic Planning Committee that worked very closely with the consultants was asked to provide input as to the advantages and disadvantages of the two options. Their input can be found in the appendix to this report. Table 7.13 that follows shows the projected enrollment for grades 5-8. As can be seen in the following table, all grade levels are expected to increase in enrollment over the next six years.



<b>Table 7.13</b> <b>Projected Enrollments for Grades 5, 6, 7, &amp; 8</b>							
Grade	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
5	322	338	342	381	360	366	365
6	348	323	339	343	382	361	368
<b>5-6 TOTAL</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>733</b>
7	337	352	327	343	347	387	365
8	342	337	352	327	343	347	386
<b>7-8 TOTAL</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>751</b>
<b>5-8 TOTAL</b>	<b>1349</b>	<b>1350</b>	<b>1333</b>	<b>1394</b>	<b>1432</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>1484</b>

As a result of the COVID pandemic, West Genesee has, for the 2020-21 school year, reorganized its buildings by moving the fifth grade students out of the elementary schools and creating a 5-6 school at West Genesee Middle School and a 7-8 school at Camillus Middle School. During the course of the meetings, the consultants became aware of this change while discussing their own option for reorganizing in the same manner. The question is now whether or not this arrangement can be accommodated by the two buildings.

Camillus Middle School was rated for 1,100 students when it was built. When it served as a 6-8 middle school in 2019-20, it housed 398 students, a fraction of its capacity. In 2020-21 while housing grades 7 and 8, the school is housing approximately 680 students...and doing so quite comfortably. Should Camillus become a 7-8 school, it could anticipate enrollments ranging from 689 students to 751 students as seen in table 7.11. It is quite clear that Camillus would easily have the capacity to house grades 7 and 8 for the foreseeable future without having to have major additions to the facility.

The next question is whether or not West Genesee Middle School could house all of the students in grades 5 and 6 under this option? In 2019-20 when the building served as a 6-8 middle school, it housed approximately 607 students and was admittedly crowded. If West Genesee Middle was to become a building that housed grades 5 and 6 for the entire district, it



would be home to approximately 689 students in 2020-21 as seen in table 7.11. This is more students than the building housed in 2019-20.

When considering the capacity of West Genesee Middle to house grades 5 and 6 for the entire district, one first has to begin by realizing that the program for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students is different than the program for students in grades 7 and 8. As a grades 5-6 school, West Genesee would have no Spanish program, thereby freeing up the current 3 Spanish classrooms; likewise, a 5-6 building would have no French program thereby vacating the French classroom that now exists in the building. In addition, the 2 technology classrooms could be converted into regular classrooms for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students as could the health room. Finally, one of the Family and Consumer Science classrooms could be freed up and one of the two computer labs now being used to teach DDP could also become available. In summary, nine classrooms that are currently used to deliver special area courses to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders could be converted into regular common branch classrooms for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. This means that the current West Genesee Middle School is capable of housing all of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in the district, both now and in the future.

The final consideration for this option is the effect on the four elementary schools. Table 7.14 that follows shows the number of 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in each elementary school that would become available if the 5<sup>th</sup> graders were moved to the current West Genesee Middle School.

<b>Table 7.14 Number of Available Classrooms if 5<sup>th</sup> Grades Were Moved to Another Building</b>	
<b>Elementary School</b>	<b># of 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Classrooms</b>
East Hill	3
Onondaga Road	3
Split Rock	2
Stonehedge	7
Total	15

As can be seen in table 7.14, 15 classrooms in the four elementary buildings would be freed up under this option. This would allow flexibility in the future so the elementary schools could accommodate the anticipated increase in student enrollment, address some of the crowded conditions that currently exist in these buildings, and perhaps, even create limited space for beginning the development of a Pre-K program.



## 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 West Genesee.

With respect to instructional staff, West Genesee currently has 369 teachers, 133 teaching assistants, and 37 teacher aides. These staff categories that are devoted to providing instructional services to students are, not surprisingly, the largest group of employees in the district. The data associated with all staff members can be seen in table 8.1 that follows.

<b>Table 8.1 Staffing Overview by Position-2019-20</b>		
Title	Number of Staff	Average Salary
Account Clerk	6	39,991
Bus Attendant	26	18.91/hr.
Bus Driver	75	30.04/hr.
Counselor	16	79,518
Custodian/Custodial Worker	45	40,431
Director	7	129,182
Driver-Messenger	4	9,633
Food Service Worker	41	10,521
LPN/Nurse	13	40,629
Maintenance Worker	7	53,921
Mechanic	6	70,638
Network Administrator	3	58,317
Principal	10	113,487
Psychologist	9	82,746
Social Worker	4	73,089
Speech Pathologist	8	69,052
Teacher	369	76,181
Teacher Aide	37	15,548
Teaching Assistant	133	26,404
Typist	23	35,244



Clearly, the staff category of teacher is the largest in the district. To further understand this large group of employees, table 8.2 that follows shows the areas where these teachers teach.

<b>Table 8.2</b>	
<b>Numbers of Teaching Positions By Area-2019-20</b>	
Teacher Area	Number of Teachers
Academic Intervention Services	26
Art	11
Business	4
Dance	1
Elementary	96
English	23
English As A Second Language	5
French	3
Grade 6	3
Health	3
Home & Career Skills	2
Library	7
Math	22
Music	20
Physical Education	18
Reading	3
Science	23
Social Studies	23
Spanish	11
Special Education	57
Technology	8
TOTAL	369

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 dental insurance, vision insurance, employee retirement plans, workers' compensation, and social security, among others. 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 West Genesee represent 40% of all salary costs. Table 8.3 that follows shows staffing costs with fringe benefits included.





**Table 8.3**  
**Cost of Staffing Positions With Fringe Benefits-2019-20**

Title	Number of Staff	Average Salary	Average Salary with 40% Fringe Benefit Costs
Account Clerk	6	\$39,991	\$55,987
Bus Attendant	26	\$18.91/hr.	\$26.74/hr.
Bus Driver	75	\$30.04/hr.	\$42.06/hr.
Counselor	16	\$79,518	\$111,325
Custodian/Custodial Worker	45	\$40,431	\$56,603
Director	7	\$129,182	\$180,855
Driver-Messenger	4	\$9,633	\$13,112
Food Service Worker	41	\$10,521	\$14,729
LPN/Nurse	13	\$40,629	\$56,881
Maintenance Worker	7	\$53,921	\$75,489
Mechanic	6	\$70,638	\$98,893
Network Administrator	3	\$58,317	\$81,644
Principal	10	\$113,487	\$158,882
Psychologist	9	\$82,746	\$115,844
Social Worker	4	\$73,089	\$102,325
Speech Pathologist	8	\$69,052	\$96,673
Teacher	369	\$76,181	\$106,653
Teacher Aide	37	\$15,548	\$21,767
Teaching Assistant	133	\$26,404	\$36,966
Typist	23	\$35,244	\$49,342

From the three previous tables, it is quite apparent that the vast majority of school district expenditures are for staff salaries and related fringe benefits. In addition to ensuring appropriate spaces for student learning, another reason for examining district facilities options is the possibility of saving money. This is often done through the reduction of staff. Where staff reductions are considered, there is often a reluctance of involuntarily reducing the number of staff positions. Rather, districts are often much more open to reducing staff and as a result saving money through a process called attrition. Attrition means that staff positions are not filled when they become vacant and, as a result, the number of positions in the district are reduced. In considering the attrition process, it is important to determine whether or not positions



realistically become vacant on a somewhat regular basis in West Genesee. Table 8.4 that follows shows the number of retirements that have occurred in the district in the past four years.

<b>Table 8.4 History of Retirements</b>				
Position	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Elementary Teacher	4	3	3	4
Middle School Teacher	6	2	2	4
High School Teacher	5	1	2	2
Teaching Assistant/Teacher Aide	4	6	6	10
Principal	1	-	1	-
Clerical	3	1	3	1
Transportation	5	2	4	2
District Office	1	1	-	-
Buildings & Grounds	1	-	1	3
Nurse	-	1	-	1
Food Services	-	-	2	3
SYSOP	-	-	-	3
TOTAL	30	17	24	33

As can be seen in Table 8.4 above, retirements in West Genesee occur on a regular basis. As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that, should facilities changes result in staff reductions, these reductions in staff could be accomplished through attrition and no one would involuntarily be released from a position.

Throughout this study, options for reconfiguring the district's facilities have been discussed. Two realistic options have emerged; the first is for the district to continue with the current building arrangement, the second is to move the fifth grades out of the four elementary schools and create an 5-6 intermediate school in one of the current middle schools and create a 7-8 junior high school in the district's other current middle school. Neither of these options would appear to have any staffing implications. Keeping the current configuration would obviously mean no staffing changes. Creating a 5-6 intermediate school and a 7-8 junior high school would result in the same number of buildings that currently exist in the district. As a result, no savings in building administrative or support positions would be realized. In addition, moving grades 5-8 from one building to another would, assuming the same educational program is delivered to the students, results in the same number of teaching, teaching assistant, and teacher aide positions



that currently exist. As a result, it is fair to conclude that no measurable staff savings could be realized from either of the two facilities options that are being considered.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Like most upstate school districts, West Genesee Central School District operates its own transportation system and transports many children to school on a daily basis. All buses are owned by the district. The district encompasses 40 square miles and buses travel approximately one million miles annually.

West Genesee's transportation fleet consists of eighteen (18) 66-passenger buses, sixty-one (61) 70/72-passenger buses, fifteen (15) small buses that can carry between 27 and 56 passengers, one (1) 24-passenger bus, and one (1) Dodge Grand Caravan that is certified to transport students. Mileage on One of the 70/72-passenger buses is equipped with wheelchair stations and a lift. Of the fifteen small buses, five are wheelchair accessible. The cost for a new 70/72-passenger bus is approximately \$120,000. A similarly-sized bus equipped with a wheelchair lift would cost approximately \$145,000. The district typically replaces its buses every ten years however high mileage and/or mechanical issues with particular vehicles also factor into replacement decision-making.

West Genesee has an outstanding record of vehicle maintenance completed by a nine-member bus garage team. Each vehicle used for student transportation is subject to an extremely comprehensive and detailed inspection by New York State Department of Transportation inspectors at least once every six months. In recent years, the district's rate of passage on the first inspection attempt exceeds 99%.

West Genesee is proud of the safety enhancements included on its vehicles in recent years. Most notably, red lights are now mounted on top of the bus bumpers that coincide with the standard flashing red warning lights at the top of the bus. On the busy roads in the West Genesee district, the bumper lights enhance the other drivers' ability to see when the bus is preparing to load or discharge students. In the nearly three years since the implementation of the



bumper lights, no district bus has been rear-ended while previously there were, on average, approximately six rear-end collisions per year.

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 middle school and 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 63 in-district runs daily that transport students to and from four elementary schools, two middle schools, and the high school. The bus runs, from the time of the first student pick up until the final drop off point, are generally between 45 and 60 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.

The start and release times for each building are documented in Table 9.1 below. The times for the middle schools and high school are approximately 15 minutes later than in 2019-20.

<b>Table 9.1 Student Day by School Building: 2020-21*</b>				
School Building	Grades	Start Time	Release Time	Length of Day
East Hill Elementary	K-5	9:00 a.m.	3:17 p.m.	6 hrs 17 mins
Onondaga Road Elementary	K-5	9:00 a.m.	3:17 p.m.	6 hrs 17 mins
Split Rock Elementary	K-5	9:00 a.m.	3:17 p.m.	6 hrs 17 mins
Stonehedge Elementary	K-5	9:00 a.m.	3:17 p.m.	6 hrs 17 mins
Camillus Middle School	6-8	7:55 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	6 hrs 35 mins
West Genesee Middle School	6-8	7:55 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	6 hrs 35 mins
West Genesee High School	9-12	7:40 a.m.	2:15 p.m.	6 hrs 35 mins
* Times listed are exclusive of COVID accommodations.				

The elementary and middle school building of attendance for students in the West Genesee district is determined by the attendance zone in which the student resides. The attendance zones are determined by the district and can be modified should there be significant changes in the location of the student population.

Nearly all students in the West Genesee district are provided with bussing to their school of attendance. The district has determined that this is necessary to ensure the safety of the students given the volume of traffic on district streets and the absence of sidewalks in many



neighborhoods within the district. A very small number of high school students that live in a neighborhood adjacent to the high school are permitted to walk to school.

West Genesee also provides transportation to students whose respective educational program is located outside of the district. Approximately twenty different schools at over thirty different locations are supported by the West Genesee transportation system. These locations include Baldwinsville Christian Academy, Bishop Grimes School, Bishop Ludden School, Christian Brothers Academy, Faith Heritage School, Holy Cross School, Holy Family School, Ihsan School of Excellence, Living Word Academy, Manlius Pebble Hill School, Mater Dei Academy, Most Holy Rosary School, OCM BOCES (multiple sites), Southside Academy School, St. Margaret's School, Syracuse Academy of Science, and Word of Life Christian Academy. These program locations are served by twelve bus routes with stops at multiple sites combined on one route wherever possible to improve efficiency.

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. Routes are adjusted as needed to ensure that no bus is transporting more students than its approved capacity.

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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 2010 to 2020. The West Genesee community has resoundingly supported the district's budget proposals for the past decade. In eight of the eleven years examined, the budget approval was greater than 80%! This consistent level of overwhelming support from the taxpayers is very unusual and should be viewed as an indication of the level of community satisfaction with the educational experience provided for its students for a reasonable cost.

<b>Table 10.1</b>				
<b>District Budget Vote History</b>				
Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes	% Yes
2020	3901	1212	5113	76.3%
2019	1573	282	1855	84.8%
2018	1085	154	1239	87.6%
2017	1073	186	1259	85.2%
2016	1394	257	1651	84.4%
2015	1183	208	1391	85.0%
2014	1454	323	1777	81.8%
2013	1335	265	1600	83.4%
2012	1604	392	1996	80.4%
2011	2061	695	2756	74.8%
2010	2037	728	2765	73.7%

In addition, the West Genesee school community has supported capital project votes in 2013 and 2018 as well as all annual bus propositions since 2010.



A second window into the district's current fiscal condition 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 West Genesee's general fund balance sheet from this report for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2016 through June 30, 2020.

<b>Table 10.2</b>					
<b>West Genesee Central School District General Fund Balance Sheet</b>					
	<b>6/30/16</b>	<b>6/30/17</b>	<b>6/30/18</b>	<b>6/30/19</b>	<b>6/30/20</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>					
Unrestricted/Restricted Cash	\$19,519,918	\$20,120,353	\$19,568,971	\$19,364,104	\$20,144,521
Accounts Receivable	\$2,106,498	\$2,186,847	\$2,408,945	\$2,185,019	\$2,606,704
Due from other funds	\$547,669	\$320,514	\$379,514	\$392,478	\$575,864
Due from other governments	\$19,519,918	\$20,120,353	\$19,568,971	\$19,364,104	\$20,144,521
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$22,174,085</b>	<b>\$22,627,714</b>	<b>\$22,357,430</b>	<b>\$21,941,601</b>	<b>\$23,327,089</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>					
Accounts payable	\$370,033	\$529,252	\$368,651	\$437,316	\$290,722
Revenue Anticipation Notes Payable	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$6,000,000
Due to other funds	\$6,039	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$43,561
Due to Retirement Systems	\$4,970,313	\$4,765,018	\$4,312,295	\$4,563,130	\$4,013,154
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$10,346,385</b>	<b>\$10,294,270</b>	<b>\$8,680,946</b>	<b>\$9,000,446</b>	<b>\$10,347,437</b>
<b>FUND BALANCE</b>					
<b>Restricted Fund Balance</b>					
Workers' Compensation Reserve	\$555,775	\$556,099	\$331,820	\$109,942	\$111,662
Unemployment Reserve	\$280,071	\$258,995	\$246,883	\$238,291	\$226,279
Reserve for Retirement Contributions	\$1,815,539	\$1,816,629	\$1,798,125	\$1,588,070	\$1,599,893
Reserve for TRS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$260,530
Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$756,616	\$750,118	\$751,149	\$757,429	\$763,016
Reserve-Empl Benefits & Accrued Liability	\$1,534,357	\$2,815,271	\$2,819,043	\$2,842,612	\$2,758,289
Reserve for Capital Projects	\$700,262	\$700,669	\$701,632	\$707,498	\$712,717
<b>Total Restricted Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$5,642,620</b>	<b>\$6,897,781</b>	<b>\$6,648,652</b>	<b>\$6,243,842</b>	<b>\$6,432,386</b>
<b>Assigned Fund Balance</b>					
Appropriated for Taxes	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000
Encumbrances	\$1,500,993	\$634,381	\$2,109,169	\$1,722,087	\$1,459,505
<b>Total Assigned Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$2,900,993</b>	<b>\$2,034,381</b>	<b>\$3,509,169</b>	<b>\$3,122,087</b>	<b>\$2,859,505</b>
<b>Unassigned Fund Balance</b>					
Unassigned Fund Balance	\$3,284,087	\$3,401,282	\$3,519,051	\$3,575,226	\$3,687,761
<b>Total Unassigned Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$3,284,087</b>	<b>\$3,401,282</b>	<b>\$3,519,051</b>	<b>\$3,575,226</b>	<b>\$3,687,761</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$11,827,700</b>	<b>\$12,333,444</b>	<b>\$13,676,872</b>	<b>\$12,941,155</b>	<b>\$12,979,652</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$22,174,085</b>	<b>\$22,627,714</b>	<b>\$22,357,818</b>	<b>\$21,941,601</b>	<b>\$23,327,089</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

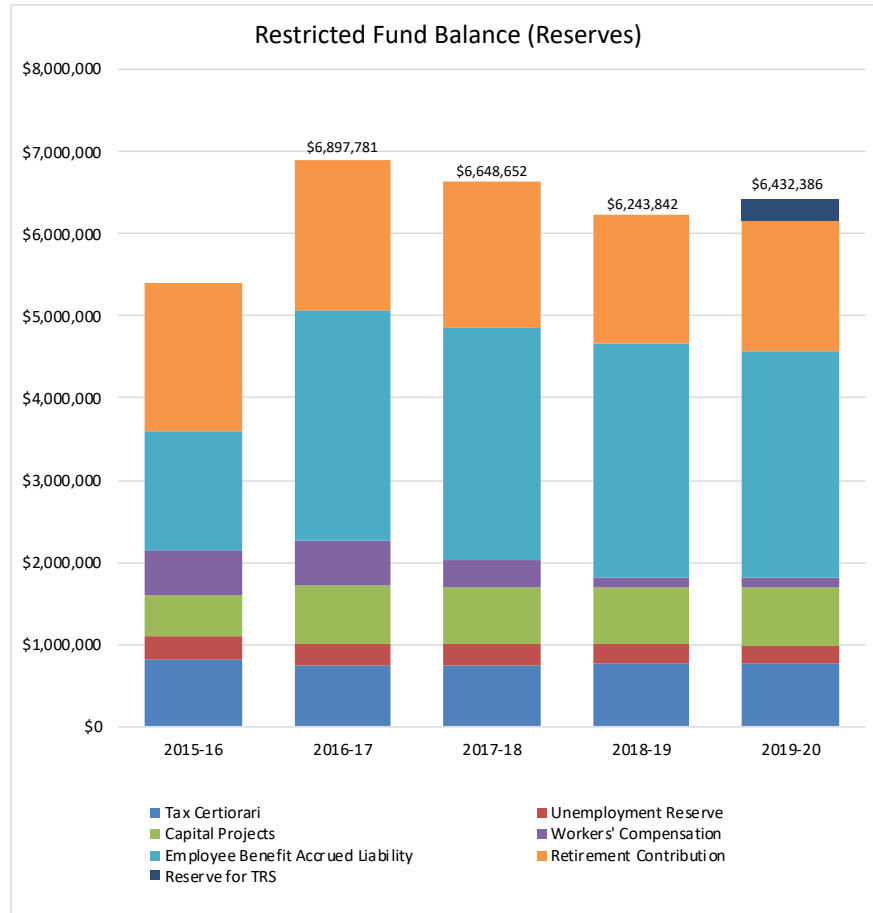


and amount of reserve accounts in the restricted fund balance is an indicator of long-range fiscal planning. As can be seen, on June 30, 2020, the district had \$111,662 in reserve for workers' compensation, \$226,279 in a reserve for unemployment expense, \$1,599,893 in a reserve for retirement contribution, \$260,530 in a newly-established reserve for teachers' retirement system (TRS), \$763,016 in a tax certiorari reserve (property assessment challenges), \$2,758,289 set aside for employee benefits and accrued liabilities, a \$712,717 capital reserve. The following table summarizes the most recent five-year history of the district's restricted fund balance for each reserve category.

<b>Table 10.3</b>					
<b>Restricted Fund Balance: A Five Year Summary</b>					
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Tax Certiorari	\$802,527	\$750,117	\$751,149	\$757,429	\$763,016
Unemployment Reserve	\$290,962	\$258,995	\$246,883	\$238,291	\$226,279
Capital Projects	\$500,000	\$700,669	\$701,632	\$707,498	\$712,717
Workers' Compensation	\$555,446	\$556,099	\$331,820	\$109,942	\$111,662
Employee Benefit Accrued Liability	\$1,450,238	\$2,815,271	\$2,819,043	\$2,842,612	\$2,758,289
Retirement Contribution	\$1,814,447	\$1,816,629	\$1,798,125	\$1,588,070	\$1,599,893
Reserve for TRS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$260,530
Total	\$5,413,620	\$6,897,780	\$6,648,652	\$6,243,842	\$6,432,386

The graph below provides a visual illustration of the restricted fund balance (reserves) of the district. The Reserve for Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) was established by the state for the 2019-20 budget year and, therefore, was not available in prior years. The total restricted fund balance has fluctuated slightly during the analysis period but has generally remained stable; a strong indicator of good fiscal condition.





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 2019-20 fiscal year, West Genesee had \$3,687,761 set aside or 4.9% of its 2020-21 general fund budget (\$92,199,225).

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 2019-20 general fund budget, West Genesee applied \$1,400,000 to hold the 2020-21 tax rate down. The district has done an excellent job in keeping this amount stable in recent years. This is important because



fluctuations in the use of assigned fund balance year to year can have an adverse impact on the budget development process and resulting tax rates for district taxpayers.

A five-year history as illustrated in Table 10.4 that follows shows the use of assigned fund balance has remained steady. Unassigned fund balance has also been relatively stable with balances at or slightly above the statutory limit.

<b>Table 10.4</b>		
<b>Five Year History of Assigned and Unassigned Fund Balance</b>		
Fiscal Year Ending 6/30	Assigned Fund Balance*	Unassigned Fund Balance
2020	\$1,400,000	\$3,687,761
2019	\$1,400,000	\$3,575,228
2018	\$1,400,000	\$3,519,052
2017	\$1,400,000	\$3,401,281
2016	\$1,400,000	\$2,964,952
*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 alignment and facilities, West Genesee 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. There are three years in which the district will have significant changes in the debt service payments and resulting local share: 2022-23, 2032-33, and 2036-37. As one capital project obligation of the district is completed, prudent fiscal management suggests that future capital work be developed so that new debt service payments begin in a year when an old debt is completed. This results in a fairly level local share lessening the likelihood of large swings in property taxes related to capital project work. Additionally, level debt service payments reduces the potential for an adverse impact on the property tax cap calculation for the district.



<b>Table 10.5</b> <b>Capital Debt After Aid Received 2020-21</b>			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Principal &amp; Interest</i>	<i>Estimated Aid</i>	<i>Estimated Local Share</i>
2020-21	\$6,164,387	\$5,257,042	\$898,650
2021-22	\$6,902,442	\$5,984,320	\$909,427
2022-23	\$5,150,608	\$5,141,229	\$684
2023-24	\$5,152,822	\$4,298,138	\$845,989
2024-25	\$5,056,250	\$4,210,873	\$836,682
2025-26	\$4,949,884	\$4,123,608	\$817,581
2026-27	\$4,956,034	\$4,123,608	\$823,731
2027-28	\$4,949,759	\$4,123,608	\$817,456
2028-29	\$4,956,209	\$4,123,608	\$823,906
2029-30	\$4,959,269	\$4,123,608	\$826,966
2030-31	\$4,563,900	\$3,817,871	\$737,334
2031-32	\$4,009,200	\$3,216,116	\$793,084
2032-33	\$2,704,075	\$2,153,410	\$550,665
2033-34	\$2,696,700	\$2,153,410	\$543,290
2034-35	\$2,700,050	\$2,153,410	\$546,640
2035-36	\$2,518,450	\$2,004,898	\$513,552
2036-37	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Total</i>	\$72,390,039	\$61,008,757	\$11,285,637

An examination of the data in Table 10.5 indicates that state building aid is a significant resource for the district in paying the principal and interest for capital construction projects. The current level of reimbursement for the West Genesee district for approved capital project expense is 83.1% as noted in Table 10.6 below.

<b>Table 10.6</b> <b>Building Aid Ratios</b>	
<b>West Genesee</b>	<b>Voter Approval Date</b>
0.774	prior to 7/1/98
0.874	on or after 7/1/1998 but prior to 6/30/2000
0.831	on or after 7/1/2000 but prior to 6/30/2005
0.831	on or after 7/1/2005



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.

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 villages within the school district.

In Table 10.7, it is clear that the property value of the West Genesee district has steadily increased over the past 5 years. Local officials have been proactive in assessment practices to ensure that the property value of the district is reflected accurately.

<b>Table 10.7 Full Property Value</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>West Genesee</b>	<b>\$ Increase</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
2015-16	\$1,985,119,876		
2016-17	\$2,022,838,396	\$37,718,520	1.9%
2017-18	\$2,043,403,061	\$20,564,665	1.02%
2018-19	\$2,079,913,200	\$36,510,139	1.8%
2019-20	\$2,200,150,084	\$120,236,884	5.8%

Another factor used to determine the property tax rates for property in the district is the property tax levy as established by the Board of Education. The property tax levy is the total local dollars needed to support the approved district budget. As documented in Table 10.8, the property tax levy for West Genesee has steadily increased at an average rate of slightly over 2% annually.

<b>Table 10.8 Property Tax Levy</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>West Genesee</b>	<b>\$ Increase</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
2015-16	\$45,934,717		
2016-17	\$46,636,297	\$701,580	1.5%
2017-18	\$47,640,834	\$1,004,537	2.2%
2018-19	\$48,677,814	\$1,036,980	2.2%
2019-20	\$50,012,761	\$1,334,947	2.7%



Table 10.9 below illustrates that the full value tax rates of the West Genesee school district have decreased from \$23.14 per thousand in 2015-16 to a rate of \$22.73 in 2019-20. This is a result of the total property value of the district increasing at a rate greater than the total tax levy.

<b>Table 10.9</b> <b>History of Full Value Tax Rates</b>					
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
<b>Tax Levy</b>	\$45,934,717	\$46,636,297	\$47,640,834	\$48,677,814	\$50,012,761
<b>Full Value</b>	\$1,985,119,876	\$2,022,838,396	\$2,043,403,061	\$2,079,913,200	\$2,200,150,084
<b>FV Tax Rate</b>	\$23.14	\$23.05	\$23.31	\$23.40	\$22.73
<b>% Change</b>		-0.4%	1.1%	0.4%	-2.9%

All of the financial factors reviewed in this study indicate that the West Genesee school district is in excellent financial condition as a result of outstanding fiscal management. It should be noted that all data reviewed is retrospective and does not account for conditions that may present in future years.





## CHAPTER 11

### 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, and finances. 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 and by gratefully acknowledging the input of the strategic planning team.

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

*Finding 1:* Live births in the West Genesee district were used to predict kindergarten enrollment five years later. The live birth rate has generally increasing since 2004 with 2017 being the last year of actual data.

*Finding 2:* The K-12 district enrollment has declined from 4,733 in 2014-15 to 4,458 in 2019-20, or a 5.8%. During this same period of time, elementary enrollment increased while secondary enrollment decreased. In 1995-96, the district enrolled 5,042 K-12 students with a peak enrollment of 5,172 in 2002-03, 2006-07, and 2007-08.

*Finding 3:* Looking out to 2026-27, enrollment projections estimate the district will have approximately 4,600 K-12 students, an *increase* of 3.2% from 2019-20 enrollment. This increase will at the elementary and middle school levels.

*Finding 4:* Examining enrollments at the elementary schools we find that in the past five years enrollment has increased at East Hill (+4.5%), Onondaga Road (+5.7%), and Stonehedge (+4.9%) while remaining flat at Split Rock (-0.1%)

*Finding 5:* The number of district residents that elect to home-school their children has increased over the past five years while district resident students enrolled in non-public schools has decreased with resident student enrollment in charter and other public schools has remained constant.



*Finding 6:* Onondaga County population has increased slightly from 2009 (465,633) to 2013 (468,146) and then declined until 2019 (460,528) and the U. S. Census projects it will continue to decline through 2040 (457,256).

*Finding 7:* Like most upstate counties, the median age in Onondaga County has been rising, albeit gradually, from 38.3 years in 2009 to 39.2 years in 2017. Additionally, the Onondaga County childbearing age group (25-44 years) has been declining since 1990.

*Finding 8:* In 2019-20 the elementary schools have reasonable class size averages (East Hill, 21.7; Onondaga Road, 22.1; Split Rock, 19.1; Stonehedge, 21.1).

*Finding 9:* In addition to the typical core elementary subjects, the four elementary schools also offer special area subjects at all grade levels including art, music, physical education, band and orchestra, chorus, and library skills.

*Finding 10:* On the New York State grades 3-8 tests, West Genesee students score above Onondaga County students in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

*Finding 11:* The Middle School program is typical for a school district of this size. The High School Program provides an extensive number and variety of course options for students.

*Finding 12:* Class sizes in the middle and high schools are strong.

*Finding 13:* An extensive number of interscholastic athletic and co-curricular opportunities are available to the students in West Genesee.

*Finding 14:* The district educates many of its special needs students in district schools (250 in 2019-20) while sending a smaller number (55 in 2019-20) to out-of-district programs evidencing a wide variety of options utilized to meet the students' educational needs.

*Finding 15:* The West Genesee Strategic Planning Committee generated a number of ideas for enhancing the educational opportunities for district students (Appendix A).

*Finding 16:* All available space is currently utilized in elementary and middle school buildings.

*Finding 17:* West Genesee Middle School enrollment (607) is greater than Camillus Middle School enrollment (398) even though it is the smaller building.

*Finding 18:* Middle School enrollment is projected to increase through 2026-27.

*Finding 19:* In 2019-20, there were 15 fifth grade classrooms.

*Finding 20:* School building utility costs are a relatively small expense.



*Finding 21:* The district has developed long range facilities plans for its elementary and secondary school buildings with capital project work totaling approximately \$69 million.

*Finding 22:* Of the 841 district employees, 539 of them are teachers, teaching assistants, or teacher aides.

*Finding 23:* The cost of employee fringe benefits equals, on average, approximately 50% of the salary.

*Finding 24:* Retirements occur in the district on a regular basis so should facilities changes result in staff reductions, these reductions in staff could be accomplished through attrition and no one would involuntarily be released from a position.

*Finding 25:* The district employs a two-tier (double trip) routing plan for daily routes to and from its school buildings.

*Finding 26:* Nearly all students are bussed to school due to the volume of traffic on district streets and the lack of sidewalks in most neighborhoods.

*Finding 27:* The district transportation fleet has nearly 100 buses and other vehicles used to transport students to in-district and out-of-district educational locations.

*Finding 28:* The West Genesee community has overwhelmingly supported the district's spending plans.

*Finding 29:* Restricted fund balance accounts (reserves) have been established and funded by the district.

*Finding 30:* Use of assigned fund balance to support the district spending plan has been unchanged the past five years.

*Finding 31:* From 7/1/15 – 6/30/20, unassigned fund balance has been maintained at statutory limits.

*Finding 32:* Full value tax rate is less in 2019-20 (\$22.73/\$1000) than it was in 2015-16 (\$23.14/\$1000) largely due to increasing property value of the district.

*Finding 33:* West Genesee has approximately \$11.2 million in local share of debt service (after estimated building aid at approximately 83%) on its current borrowing through 2035-36.

*Finding 34:* 2022-23, 2032-33, 2036-37 are key transition years when there are significant reductions to the annual local existing debt service payment.





### ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

With these findings in mind, the following conclusions and recommendations—or answers to the key question that focused this study—have been reached. The key question that served as the focus of this study follows:

***How can the district maintain and enhance the educational opportunities for West Genesee students in its tradition of excellence while continuing to ensure efficient and effective utilization of staff and facilities as well as fiscal responsibility for the district’s taxpayers?***

As consultants we have concluded, with the help of the Strategic Planning Committee, that the district will likely experience a growth in enrollment over the next decade and there is little, if any, unused or underutilized spaces in the elementary and middle school buildings. Once the desired grade configurations are determined, it would behoove the district to convene a facilities planning team and commence discussions with the district’s architects to determine what modifications to the buildings are necessary to ensure that buildings are equipped to provide West Genesee students with the best possible educational experiences in a way that effectively and efficiently utilizes staff and facilities and is fiscally responsible to the district’s taxpayers.

### ***Recommendations***

1. It is recommended that the district update enrollment projections annually to obtain the best data upon which to make decisions regarding educational programs, staffing, and facilities usage. Current enrollment projection data indicate that enrollment will increase beginning in the 2021-22 school year.
2. It is recommended that the district consider the following two options:
  - Option 1: Status quo...make no changes in the current use of facilities.
  - Option 2: Create a grades 5-6 intermediate school at the current West Genesee Middle School; create a grades 7-8 junior high school at the current Camillus Middle School;



reconfigure the vacant space created by moving fifteen 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms out of the four elementary schools to allow for future enrollment increases, alleviate current crowded conditions, and/or begin the development of a district Pre-K program.

3. 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 plan will include:

- ✓ possible renovations and/or additions related to student enrollment and instructional program changes,
- ✓ scope of work to be performed from the current and future Building Condition Surveys,
- ✓ long term the design of appropriate school facilities as program needs change,
- ✓ financing of these initiatives.

This committee should be comprised of both school staff and members of the community.

4. It is recommended that the district engage its community and its architect in the planning and discussion of facilities needs and options as early in the process as possible.

5. It is recommended that the district thoughtfully consider the fiscal implications of any potential capital project related to existing debt service to continue the strong financial health of the district and minimize any adverse budgetary impact in future years. This requires coordination with the district's architects and financial advisors.

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**It is recommended that the district hold a public meeting on these options, form a long-range facility planning committee, and implement the chosen option for the 2021-22 school year.**

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## APPENDIX A

### THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

#### **What do you think are future facilities needs and priorities for West Genesee?**

- West Genesee Middle School needs a gym
- Sound systems in the gyms
- Technology upgrades are needed in some buildings
- Maker space is needed in the buildings
- Principals maintain a facilities wish list for each of the buildings
- If a new gym is built, make it usable for other purposes
- OT and PT need designated spaces in all of the buildings
- A better traffic pattern is needed at WGMS
- Need sensory rooms for all buildings
- Can the courtyards at East Hill and Onondaga Road be closed off to create additional space for offices and classrooms?
- Buildings need designated spaces for students with mental health needs
- Consider a multi-use facility between Stonehedge and WGMS
- Reconfigure shop areas in the middle schools and the high school
- WGMS needs an additional cafeteria and lockers
- Need 8:1 and 12:1 special education rooms
- Create office pods spread throughout the high school for administrators and counselors
- Middle schools and the high school need space for counselors who come in from outside the district
- Need softball fields
- Create quiet rooms in libraries
- Need more flexible furniture
- Is the current bus garage used to its best purpose or should the district consider a new transportation center?
- There might be additional space in high school room C-213
- Elementary schools need break out rooms for mental health concerns
- How do facilities options impact BOCES classes located in WG buildings?



**In thinking about the possibility of the fifth grade moving to the Middle Schools, what are the advantages of 5/6 and 7/8 buildings?**

- How will it impact the students instructionally? Will allow more developmentally appropriate
- 5<sup>th</sup> graders are now more socially aware that they used to be...more like 6<sup>th</sup> graders
- Bus ride to WGMS more central for 5/6...then further for all in 7/8 CMS
- More collaboration for instruction when all of 1 grade level in a building
- Some teachers are excited about the change for this year
- Having the students together for 8 years vs. 4 years will build more familiarity and friendships
- Teacher collaboration
- Alleviate crowding in elementary schools

**What are the disadvantages of 5/6 and 7/8 buildings?**

- Could be emotional for parents to change to 5/6 and 7/8
- Loses connection to neighborhood school earlier
- We have a small school feel that we'd want to keep
- More transitions
- Transportation issues

**What other middle school building configurations should be considered?**

- 5-8 middle schools mean greater family relationships with counselors
- Bring in other districts to share their experiences with similar models
- Why not just look at redistricting middle schools similar to other students?
- Would the installation of solar panels minimize utility costs?
- Moving 5<sup>th</sup> grade out of the elementary schools could free up space for Pre-K programs
- Class size needs to be addressed. Space re-configuration is what is needed. Rooms at CMS are dedicated to BOCES, costumes, etc. At WGMS they need some redesign, especially in the old tech rooms