

**SOUTH SENECA
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL FACILITIES UTILIZATION**



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Purpose of the Study	3
II. Enrollment History and Projections	4
III. Facility Utilization	8
IV. Options	14
V. Findings	20

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide the district with data that may be used by the Board of Education and Superintendent Nusser to decide the best course of action for the school district with regard to utilization of its buildings.

The South Seneca Elementary School in Interlaken houses prekindergarten-grade 5 and the Middle/High School in Ovid has grades 6 through 12. There are 320 students in the elementary school and 427 in the secondary school. Both buildings have vacant classrooms.

The study is designed to review the current usage of school facilities and to identify potential options that fully support instructional programs and services in a more cost effective manner. Specifically, the study will explore whether the district can close a building and maintain the current level of education. If not, could the district close a building if students in grades 9-12 were tuitioned to another school district.

The study includes student enrollment data and existing building capacities. It provides preliminary findings for consideration by the South Seneca Board of Education and Superintendent. The study is not intended to gauge community opinion on findings.

Enrollment History and Projections

To assess the future needs of the district, it is important to study enrollment history and projections. Accurate student enrollment projections are essential for district long range planning. Virtually all aspects of a school district's operation, including program, staffing, facilities, and finances, are related to the number of students enrolled.

The procedure for projecting student enrollments is referred to as the cohort survival method. This methodology is highly reliable and is the most frequently used projective technique for making short-term school enrollment projections. To calculate enrollment projections, the following data and procedures are used:

- Six years 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 by the enrollment of the preceding grade a year earlier. For example, the number of students in grade three in any year is divided by the number of students in grade two of the previous year. The ratio indicates the proportion of the cohort "surviving" to the following 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 projective 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 more than one, more students "survived" to the next grade. Grade-to-grade survival ratios reflect the net effects

of deaths, dropouts, the number of students who are home schooled, promotion policies, transfers to and from nonpublic schools, and migration patterns in and out of the school district.

Since estimating births introduces a possible source of error, enrollment projections are most accurate when existing data on live residential births can be used. Live birth data is currently available from the New York State Department of Health for school districts from 2002 through 2011. Enrollment projections are therefore most accurate for five years into the future for the elementary school grades.

The methodology used in this study is an extrapolation of kindergarten enrollment cohorts from live birth data from the school district. Live birth data for South Seneca from 2002-2011 are shown in the following table, and K-12 enrollment history and projections are shown in Table 2.

Table 1

Number of Live Births, 2002-2011 South Seneca Central School District	
Calendar Year	Number
2002	62
2003	77
2004	71
2005	73
2006	70
2007	83
2008	75
2009	72
2010	78
2011	78

Table 2

South Seneca School District K - 12 Enrollment History and Projections																		
Yr/Gr	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	U.S.	K-12	K-5	6-8	9-12
07-08	49	59	47	58	63	54	64	58	70	84	84	78	67	2	837	330	192	313
08-09	46	56	61	47	63	66	53	65	59	84	86	61	62	0	809	339	177	293
09-10	48	46	58	64	51	61	69	57	63	65	80	84	65	0	811	328	189	294
10-11	48	51	48	56	64	49	61	67	56	67	71	75	68	14	795	316	184	281
11-12	57	42	45	43	60	68	50	62	64	68	67	45	65	0	736	315	176	245
12-13	55	62	43	51	45	64	67	53	65	72	59	56	55	0	747	320	185	242
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		K-12	K-5	6-8	9-12
13-14	51	57	62	43	54	46	65	69	52	74	71	48	53	0	745	313	186	246
14-15	49	53	57	63	46	55	46	67	68	59	73	58	46	0	740	323	181	236
15-16	53	50	53	58	67	47	56	47	66	78	58	60	55	0	748	328	169	251
16-17	53	55	50	54	61	68	47	58	47	75	77	48	57	0	750	341	152	257
17-18	52	55	55	51	57	62	69	48	57	54	74	63	46	0	743	332	174	237
18-19							63	71	48	65	53	61	60				182	239
19-20								65	70	55	64	43	58					220
20-21									64	80	54	52	41					227
21-22										73	79	44	49					245

Based on the live birth and enrollment data from the previous two tables the following observations can be made:

1. Live births in the district range from a low of 62 in 2002 to a high of 83 in 2007
2. The average number of live births from 2008 to 2011 of 75.7 is 5 students per year greater than the average number from 2002 to 2005
3. This increase in live births is reflected in the increase in kindergarten class sizes of less than 50 students prior to 2011-12 and more than 50 students thereafter
4. This increase in live births and incoming kindergarten class sizes has dampened the decline in K-12 enrollments from more than 800 prior to 2010-11 to mid 700s currently
5. Accordingly, K-12 enrollments have stabilized and are projected to remain stable over the next several years

6. Over the past five years K-5 and 6-8 enrollments have remained stable and are projected to remain stable
7. After declining from 313 in 2007-08 to 242 in 2012-13, grades 9-12 enrollment is projected to remain stable over the next ten years.

Facility Utilization

From the previous section on enrollment it is clear that the district will continue to require the same amount of classroom space and possibly additional space over the next five years.

To better understand the need for classroom space in the future, a first step is an assessment of the number of classrooms necessary by grade level. This assessment is based on the assumptions of maintaining the current level of instructional program and class size guidelines of 20 students in grades K-2 and 25 students in grades 3-12. The following table identifies the number of classrooms necessary for the next five years, based on enrollment projection and class size guidelines.

Table 3

Number of Regular Classrooms needed for General Education Classes, not including all special program areas 2012-13 through 2017-18		
Grade Levels	2012-13	2012-13 through 2017-18
K-5	15	15-18
6-8	8	7-8
9-12	10	10-12

The next step is identifying the manner in which building space is currently being utilized. The building in Interlaken has 122,729 sq. ft., and is used as a preK-5 elementary school. The building in Ovid has 186,795 sq. ft., and is used as a 6-12 middle/high school. The next two tables illustrate the room utilization of these two buildings.

Table 4

Elementary School Classroom Utilization				
School Building	Number of Full-Size Classrooms	Number of Classes 2012-13	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms 2012-13	Usage of Small Rooms, other than Administration, Nurse, and Custodian 2012-13
South Seneca Elementary School	41	17 PK-2 K-2 Comb/Int K-1 Comb/Int 1-1 1-2 2-2 3-2 4-2 5-3	Speech Title 1 Rdg OT/PT (2) School Psych Comm Couns Comp Lab(3) Special Ed Title 1 Math Rdg/M-3-5 Dean of Stud Behav Mgmt Planning BOE meet Rm Title 1 R-4/5 Spec Ed 4/5 Empty/stor(5)	Faculty Rm(2) Guid couns Copy Room CSE offices SsAFE/UPK

From this table it is apparent that most of the South Seneca Elementary School building is currently occupied. In addition to 17 full size classrooms used for general education classes, several full size classrooms are used for special functions that could be housed in smaller spaces, if necessary. There are also five

classrooms either empty or being used for storage. Functions could be consolidated and/or rescheduled into smaller spaces and a few could be eliminated (board of education room, planning room, etc.). As a result, it would be possible to reassign classrooms so that the second floor could be made available for other use, possibly the middle school. Fourteen regular classrooms, a computer lab, library space, and faculty room would be available.

The next table illustrates the current utilization of space in the middle/high school.

Table 5

Middle/High School Room Utilization 2012-13		
166	Classroom, science lab	two study halls, alternate Science 8
167	small group	attached to 168
168	Classroom	Special Education 15:1 MS
169	Classroom	Math 7 and 8
170/171	Double classroom	ELA grades 6 and 8, Distance Learning/has movable wall between
158	Small conference	used for various meetings
Faculty lounge	classroom size	eating space for faculty
151	old servery	connected to lounge and lower cafeteria
Lower cafeteria	large	used for overflow lunch in two blocks
185	large recreation	Wrestling and Adaptive PE
MS girls locker	full locker room	for middle school
186	small office	contains closet and bathroom as well
184	large recreation	Fitness Room, attached to 185
MS boys locker	full locker room	for middle school, also has small office with bathroom
180	small office	Athletic Director's office
137	auditorium	Auditorium-- see note for 125 below as well
Concessions	small kitchen	for concessions at games and other events
Gym	large	with two high school locker rooms, and two storage spaces
263	large but narrow classroom	used for timeout/Alternate Classroom/In-school suspension
262	classroom	Reading and Math 6
260	classroom	Reading and Social Studies 6, Math 7
store room	mid-size	computer storage
utility room	mid-size	computer storage
258	classroom, sci lab	Reading and Science 6
small office	small office	Teaching assistant; attached to 248

248	classroom, sci lab	Science 7 and 8
249	classroom	ELA 6 and 7
250/251	double classroom	Social Studies 7 and 8/ has movable wall between
252	classroom	Special Ed Resource Room
253	classroom plus kitchen	Special Ed High School self-contained; room has bathroom
246	large office space	houses CTS and computer related equipment
MS CL	computer lab	for middle school
Media Center	large library	has conference room/storage attached to it
213	classroom	Reading classroom for high school/contains kitchen and bathroom
small office	small office	used for social workers
216	computer lab	has two rooms within it- both computer labs for high school
221	classroom	Reading classroom for middle school
217	classroom	Spanish 6 and 7
218	classroom	Spanish 8 and high school
219	double size classroom	Home and Careers and Health- with kitchen
office	reception plus office space	Superintendent's office with secretary/reception space
conference rm	small conference room	Superintendent's conference room, attached to office
102	large office	Business Office
102A	small office	Business Official office
103	small work room	Teacher work room, with bathroom
104	classroom	HS Social Studies
105	classroom	Unused in 2012-13; storage and alternate testing
102	classroom	*not a typo... also labeled 102* Special Ed Resource Room HS
101	office space	Special Ed teachers' office, with Program Director office attached
100	classroom	High School "Flex" Computer Lab-- for laptop carts
106	office space	High School Alternative Classroom/Timeout/In-School Suspension
107	classroom	Dean of Students room
108	classroom	High School English
109	classroom	High School Social Studies
110	classroom	High School Business
111	office space	Digital Media room, with green room for video production attached

114	Computer lab	Business classes high school-- attached to 111
113	Band room	Large band room space, with attached office spaces
112	classroom	Unused in 2012-13; storage
128	Chorus room	Large chorus room space, two levels, with attached office space
127B	very small office	Music lesson practice room
127C	very small office	Music lesson practice room
144B	Store room	Music storage
Old Chorus Rm	classroom	Unused in 2012-13; storage
Upper Cafeteria	large cafeteria	Study halls HS and all lunch blocks
131	large storage and workroom	Drama props and set building- attached to stage and utility room
125	Stage	Auditorium stage, with access to drama storage and set building
134	large office	Nurse's Office for MS and HS- partitioned into many small spaces
120	Large conference room	Conference space for guidance and district meetings
113	Office suite	*not a typo- labeled 113 like band room* Guidance and Psychologist offices-- partitioned
117	classroom	Computer Aided Drawing (CAD) lab
118	Art room	Large art room with darkroom and storage attached
119	Wood shop	Technology classes- includes storage spaces
120	Auto shop	Technology classes- contains office/classroom
227	storage room	contains books and other storage items
212	classroom	Resource room for HS Special Ed
211	double classroom, science lab	Biology HS/movable wall between two spaces
209	classroom	HS Math
208	classroom	HS Math
208A	small office	Resource room- attached to 208
207	classroom	Used for study halls in 2012-13
206	classroom	HS Math
205	classroom, science lab	HS Biology electives
Prep room	small science prep room	Between and attached to 205 and 204
204	classroom,	HS Earth Science

	science lab	
226	science prep room	Separate science prep room across hall from 204
201	double classroom, science lab	Physics and Chemistry- contains chemical storage room as well
201A	science prep room	Attached to 201 opposite side from chemical storage
203	classroom	HS Social Studies
202	classroom	HS English

In a manner similar to the elementary school, the middle/high school has vacant classrooms or classrooms currently used for purposes that could be reassigned to smaller spaces. By closing movable walls, reassigning classes and study halls, reducing the number of computer labs, converting offices back to classrooms, and building the three classrooms in the middle school wing, there would be fourteen classrooms for additional students.

Option 1

The first option for consideration is determining whether grades kindergarten through 5 could be housed in the middle/high school building. From the previous paragraph, fourteen full size classrooms could be available. However, this magnitude of available space is insufficient to house the 320-340 students in grades K-5 and the pre-kindergarten program since twenty-five classrooms are required.

If the K-5 elementary school were to be relocated in the middle/high school, it would need fifteen to eighteen regular classrooms for K-5, two classrooms for pre-kindergarten, three classrooms for Title 1 and special education, one classroom for a computer lab, one classroom for OT/PT, a space for speech therapy, one classroom for art, one large room for choral/general music, one large room for instrumental music, one large room for a library, a gymnasium for physical education, a smaller room for a faculty room, a nurse's office with dental service space, office space for special education staff, work room space for teacher aides/assistants and a main office area. Therefore, the minimum number of full-

sized classrooms necessary is twenty-five, plus four larger rooms, at least five smaller rooms, a nurse's office, and main office.

Option 2

Another option is to consider relocating the middle school program to the elementary school building and tuitioning the 9-12 high school students to another school district. It is possible the second floor in the elementary school, with 27,583 sq. ft., could be vacated, providing fourteen full size classrooms, as well as space for a library, computer lab, and faculty room. These fourteen rooms would provide sufficient space for the eight general education classes necessary for grades six through eight, as well as space for most of the special area classes. Art, music, and physical education instruction would be scheduled in the respective elementary school classrooms, when these rooms are available.

This option would also require extension of meal serving times in the cafeteria, renovation the former technology classroom to current instructional program standards, renovating at least one general classroom for science instruction, and upgrading the art room.

Although not a facility matter, another dimension of this consideration is accelerated courses in eighth grade. To provide instruction in 9th grade level courses, some teachers may need additional college level coursework in order to meet certification requirements as well as to become proficient in providing appropriate instruction.

A second component of this option is tuitioning South Seneca 9-12 high school students to another district. Tuitioning relocates and assigns the students of one school district to another through a contractual arrangement. Assuming these students are high school students, they become full members of the receiving school, participate in activities and athletic teams, and receive their diplomas from the receiving high school. Through the provisions of a mutually determined

contract, the sending school district pays tuition on a per student basis to the receiving school district.

For a tuitioning arrangement to come into existence it must be authorized by the sending school district through referendum at a district-wide meeting. Once authorized, the board of education can determine which other school districts it permits its students to attend, and can enter into a tuition-based contract with each of those respective districts. The contract must have at least a two-year duration, but not more than five, and be approved by the Commissioner of Education. The tuition rate is limited based on specific cost and state aid factors of the receiving school district.

The most significant financial factor in a tuitioning arrangement is that the sending district no longer maintains its cost of operating the respective grade level program. Typically, the total tuition costs are less than the corresponding program operational costs.

From another perspective, the sending district loses its high school identity while maintaining its district and elementary school identities. Should the sending district decide to terminate its practice of tuitioning students, such decision must be reviewed by the State Education Department.

First and foremost, tuitioning requires a receiving (host) school district willing and able to accept students from another district.

Secondly, tuitioning students to another school district has positive and negative consequences. Positives include potential cost savings from the closing of the high school building and relocating the student population to other schools. In addition, relocating the student population to another high school by its nature increases the size of the combined population, which typically means an increase in the range of curricular offerings, extracurricular activities and athletic opportunities.

The negatives, on the other hand, include the loss of the high school in the school district and community, the loss of control over the high school program, the tuition determined by the receiving school district, students commuting a longer distance to school and to activities/sports, possible difficulty in qualifying to participate in extracurricular activities due to the increased competition in a larger school, and later entry of South Seneca students in the school system than the receiving district's students.

Current New York State requirements for tuitioning allow for a two to five year contract between school districts. The law also requires that school districts that want to bring high school students back to the home district need to have a minimum of 100 students per grade in order to discontinue the tuition arrangement. That ruling is under review at this time. Regardless, it is a decision that requires extensive review and study.

Option 3

This option is similar to Option 2, except that K-8 students would be housed in the middle/high school building in Ovid rather than the elementary school building in Interlaken. The Ovid building clearly has sufficient classroom space, but needs renovation to accommodate the younger children. This option would also require tuitioning 9-12 high school students to another school district.

Table 6, which follows, illustrates the positive and negative consequences associated with each of the three options.

Table 6

Options for Building Use		
Option	Positive Consequences	Negative Consequences
#1: K-12 in the Ovid building		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient room
#2: K-8 in the Elementary building at Interlaken; 9-12 attending another school district through tuitioning arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost saving through building closure • Students may have a wider variety of courses, extracurricular activities, and sports • Revenue from possible lease or sale of the middle/high school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a receiving district • Would be closing the larger facility • Eliminates space for future growth • Leaves the transportation center at a closed facility • Uncertain use of closed building • Tuition costs are set by the receiving district • District would no longer have a high school program • Students would graduate from another district • Loss of control over the high school program • Longer student commute to school and extracurricular activities • Increased competition for sports and extracurricular activities • Students might not get the same level of individual attention/recognition in a larger school • Students would be

		entering a school system in a higher grade than the majority of the students
#3: K-8 in the Ovid building; 9-12 attending another school district through tuitioning arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as option #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires tuitioning of South Seneca 9-12 grade students to another school district. • Same as option #2 except smaller building would be closed and transportation center would not be an issue • Renovations necessary to accommodate younger children

Findings

The South Seneca Central School District has two well-maintained facilities.

The district has experienced a decline in enrollment over the past ten years, but enrollment seems stable for at least the next five years.

Neither of the district's two school buildings is large enough to house the entire K-12 student population while maintaining current levels of education.

If students in grades 9-12 attend high school in another school district through a tuition contract, students in grades K-8 could be housed in either the Interlaken or Ovid school buildings. There would be positive and negative consequences to either arrangement.