



# *Oswego City School District*

## *School Facilities & Efficiency Study*

*June 30, 2022*



OSWEGO  
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## CHAPTER 1

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oswego City School District, like many upstate school districts, has recently experienced declining K-12 student enrollment. Projections indicate that the overall K-12 enrollment will continue to decrease over the next seven years. Realizing that it is time to examine the structure of its school buildings to best accommodate the educational program needs for its students, 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 respond to the following question:

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

The following findings, conclusions, and recommendations are made about the school facilities in Oswego.

*Finding 1:* Live births in the Oswego City School District were used to predict kindergarten enrollment five years later. The live birth rate has generally decreased since 2007 with 2019 being the last year of actual data.

*Finding 2:* The K-12 district enrollment has declined from 3,634 in 2016-17 to 3,445 in 2021-22, or a decrease of 5.2%. In 1996-97, the district enrolled 5,370 K-12 students with decreases in each subsequent year except for 2013-14 and 2018-19.

*Finding 3:* Looking out to 2028-29, enrollment projections estimate the district will have approximately 3,033 K-12 students, a further decrease of 12.0% from 2021-22 enrollment.

*Finding 4:* Examining enrollments at the elementary schools we find that, in the past five years, enrollment has decreased at Charles Riley (-10.0%), Leighton (-2.5%), Fitzhugh Park (-14.3%), and Minetto (-12.2%) while increasing at Kingsford Park (+4.5%)

*Finding 5:* The number of district residents who elect to home-school their children has increased over the past five years; district resident students enrolled in non-public schools have



decreased while resident student enrollment in charter and other public schools has remained constant.

*Finding 6:* Oswego County population has decreased each year from 2010 (122,141) to 2020 (116,346) and the U. S. Census projects it will continue to decline through 2040 (108,231).

*Finding 7:* Like most upstate counties, the median age in Oswego County has been rising, albeit gradually, from 38.6 years in 2010 to 40.8 years in 2020. Additionally, the Oswego County childbearing age group (15-44 years) has been declining since 1990.

*Finding 8:* In 2021-22 the elementary schools have reasonable class size averages (Charles Riley, 17.4; Fitzhugh Park, 16.6; Kingsford Park, 20.3, Frederick Leighton, 18.9, Minetto, 17.2).

*Finding 9:* On the New York State grades 3-8 tests, Oswego students generally score above Oswego County students in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

*Finding 10:* 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 11:* Class sizes in the middle and high schools are very reasonable; elective courses generally have sufficient enrollment to maintain these options for students.

*Finding 12:* Approximately 26.5% of Oswego's juniors and seniors attend a CTE program at BOCES.

*Finding 13:* Only 7.8 % of the 319 sections of courses offered at Oswego High School have fewer than 10 students.

*Finding 14:* An extensive number of interscholastic athletic and co-curricular opportunities are available to the students in Oswego.

*Finding 15:* The district educates many of its special needs students in district schools while sending only 22 students to out-of-district programs in 2021-22.

*Finding 16:* The graduation rate for Oswego students has been in the low to mid 80% range while the dropout rate has been between 8%-13%.

*Finding 17:* The district has five older elementary buildings that have all been rated as satisfactory in the 2015 Building Condition Survey.

*Finding 18:* In 2021-22, there are 85 sections of elementary classes; should the district close the Frederick Leighton school and distribute the students to the other three city elementary schools, there would be 74 sections of elementary classrooms.



*Finding 19:* There is not sufficient room in the middle school to move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to that building..

*Finding 20:* Based on the 2015 Building Condition Survey and the district's long range facilities plan, there is approximately \$17 million worth of capital work to be considered for the district's five elementary buildings.

*Finding 21:* School building utility costs are a relatively small expense.

*Finding 22:* Of the 676 district employees, 452 of them are teachers, teaching assistants, or teacher aides.

*Finding 23:* The cost of employee fringe benefits equals, on average, approximately 61% of the salary.

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

*Finding 25:* Should the district decide to close the Frederick Leighton Elementary School, staff savings of approximately \$1,868,476 could be realized.

*Finding 26:* District Office staffing levels are generally comparable to other similar districts.

*Finding 27:* Non-instructional staffing levels are generally comparable to other similar districts.

*Finding 28:* The Oswego community has 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 fluctuating over the past five years.

*Finding 31:* From July 1. 2016 – June 30, 2021, unassigned fund balance has been maintained at statutory limits.

*Finding 32:* Full value tax rate is less in 2021-22 (\$17.38/\$1000) than it was in 2017-18 (\$20.46/\$1000).

*Finding 33:* Oswego has approximately \$16 million in local share of debt service (after estimated building aid at 88.2%) on its current borrowing through 2046-47.



### ***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 Oswego students 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 that the district will likely experience a decline in enrollment over the next seven years. In order to study the options contained in this report in a comprehensive and transparent fashion, it would behoove the district to convene a facilities planning team. This team should commence discussions with the district's architects to determine what modifications to the current buildings are necessary to ensure that buildings are equipped to provide Oswego 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.
2. It is recommended that the district consider closing the Frederick Leighton Elementary School and distribute its current students to the other three city elementary school buildings.
3. It is recommended that the district convene a facilities planning team 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 closures related to student enrollment and instructional program changes,



- ✓ scope of work to be performed from the current and future Building Condition Surveys and the district's long range facilities plan,
- ✓ long term structure of appropriate school facilities as program needs and enrollment 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 soon 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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## 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 Oswego superintendent Dr. Mathis Calvin. His vision and leadership is prompting the Oswego City School District to clearly define its future.

From an operational standpoint, no one was more important to completing this study than Dr. Calvin's most able secretary Karen Canale. Karen was extremely responsive in helping gather information for the study and she was always a very pleasant person with whom to work. Karen gets the biggest thank you of all!!!

We also wish to thank the members of the Oswego Board of Education. As all responsible school leadership teams, they took the risk of examining the use of their district facilities, program, and staff knowing full well that simply asking questions about these topics 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!



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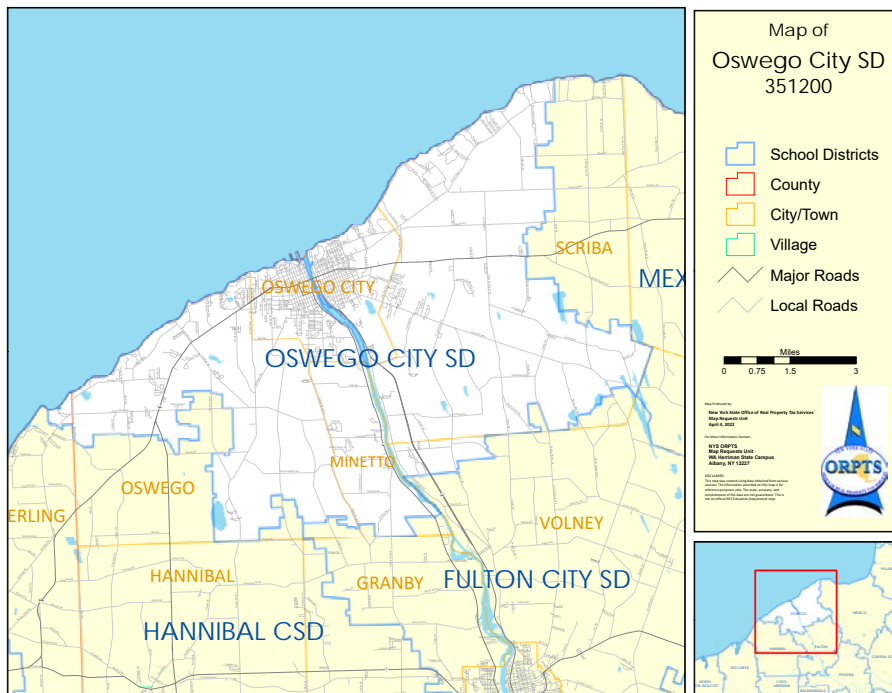
## CHAPTER 3

### 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 Oswego City School District is located in Oswego County and covers approximately 40 square miles serving the townships of Scriba (approximately 21.8% of the tax base), Oswego (approximately 15% of the tax base), Minetto (approximately 6.4% of the tax base), Volney (approximately 0.9% of the tax base), Sterling (0.2% of the tax base) and the city of Oswego (approximately 55.6% of the tax base). The district's instructional facilities include five elementary schools housing grades PK-6 (Fitzhugh Park Elementary School, Kingsford Park Elementary School, Frederick Leighton Elementary School, Minetto Elementary School, and Charles Riley Elementary School), Oswego Middle School serving grades 7 and 8, and Oswego High School for grades 9-12. A map of the district follows.





The Oswego City School District community has consistently shown its support for the education of resident students as noted in the historical budget voting pattern in the following table. Residents have passed school budgets in each of the past ten years as shown in Table 3.1. In addition, district residents have also passed two capital projects since 2012 (2012, 2017) as well as bus purchase propositions in nine of the ten years included in Table 3.1.

<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>
2021-22	1098	580	1678	65.4%
2020-21	2594	1380	3974	65.3%
2019-20	957	454	1411	67.8%
2018-19	1391	900	2291	60.7%
2017-18	1503	700	2203	68.2%
2016-17	2521	1116	3637	69.3%
2015-16	1150	1079	2229	51.6%
2014-15	1445	790	2235	64.7%
2013-14	1131	407	1538	73.5%
2012-13	1576	445	2021	78.0%

Nevertheless, finding the balance between the provision of a good education and the ability of a local community to provide the financial resources for this educational program 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 Oswego City School District Board of Education chose to examine potential operational efficiencies while providing the best possible educational opportunities for students in a fiscally responsible manner. 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 Oswego students 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 November 2021 with the final report completed by June 30, 2022.

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 Oswego,
  - 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. 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 Oswego students 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. A draft of this report was shared with district leaders to allow for comments and questions prior to finalization of the report.

The final report was presented to the Board of Education in a public session on August 2, 2022.





## **CHAPTER 5**

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

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

#### **Student Enrollment History and Projections**

Accurate enrollment projections are essential data for district long-range planning. Virtually all aspects of a district's operation (educational program, staffing, facilities, transportation, finances, etc.) are dependent on the number of students enrolled. For this reason, updated enrollment projections are crucial for this study and serve as the launching pad for our analysis.

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

- Six-year history of district enrollment by grade level
- Calculation of survival ratios by grade level
- Kindergarten enrollment projections based on resident live births

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

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



Survival ratios usually have values close to one but may be less than or greater than one. Where the survival ratio is less than one, fewer students “survived” to the next grade. Where the survival ratio is greater than one, more students “survived” to the next grade. Grade-to-grade survival ratios reflect the net effects of 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 Oswego City Schools from 2007 to 2019 is shown in the following table:

<b>Table 5.1 Number of Live Births, 2007-2019</b>	
<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Number</b>
2007	324
2008	305
2009	338
2010	300
2011	329
2012	306
2013	314
2014	325
2015	296
2016	338
2017	255
2018	271
2019	259

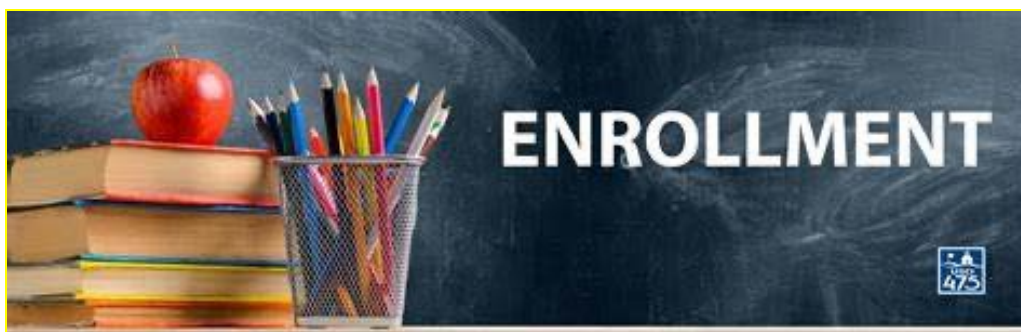


Live births are then compared with the kindergarten enrollment five years into the future...babies born in 2016 will be in kindergarten in 2021-22, babies born in 2017 will be in kindergarten in 2022-23, babies born in 2018 will be in kindergarten in 2023-24, and so on. An average ratio of live births 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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<b>Table 5.2</b> <b>Oswego K-12 Enrollment History and Projections: 2016-17 to 2028-29</b>													
Grade	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Year/ Births	2011/ 329	2012/ 306	2013/ 314	2014/ 325	2015/ 296	2016/ 338	2017/ 255	2018/ 271	2019/ 259	2020/ 284	2021/ 284	2022/ 284	2023/ 284
K	269	282	307	273	227	283	219	233	223	244	244	244	244
1	262	281	282	308	251	235	227	219	233	223	244	244	244
2	316	266	290	268	277	246	245	222	214	227	217	238	238
3	280	311	261	290	256	260	269	238	215	208	221	211	231
4	265	278	305	262	285	245	252	265	234	212	205	217	208
5	279	262	288	301	253	283	283	250	263	233	210	203	216
6	277	263	265	278	302	249	248	278	246	258	228	207	200
7	293	274	278	271	287	302	308	253	284	251	263	233	211
8	279	286	272	280	265	278	283	303	249	279	247	259	229
9	266	286	287	274	276	254	264	281	302	248	278	246	258
10	290	271	287	277	277	274	276	263	281	302	248	278	245
11	271	276	266	261	275	266	266	264	253	269	289	238	266
12	287	284	282	251	284	270	280	270	269	257	274	294	242
K-12 Total	3634	3620	3670	3594	3515	3445	3419	3341	3266	3211	3170	3113	3033
K-6 Total	1948	1943	1998	1980	1851	1801	1744	1705	1628	1605	1570	1565	1581
7-8 Total	572	560	550	551	552	580	591	557	533	530	510	492	440
9-12 Total	1114	1117	1122	1063	1112	1064	1085	1079	1104	1076	1089	1055	1012
Notes: (1) Ungraded special needs students are not included in these totals; (2) 2025-26 to 2028-29 live births are the average of the five previous years. Consequently, from 2025-26 to 2028-29 the early grade estimates are somewhat speculative.													

As is apparent from Table 5.2, K-12 enrollment has declined over the past six years (3,634 in 2016-17 to 3,445 in 2021-22; -189 students/-5.2%). This decline is projected to continue at an even more rapid rate through 2028-29 (3,445 in 2021-22 to 3,033 in 2028-29; -412 students/-12.0%).

The longer-term enrollment history for the district found in Table 5.3 indicates that, with only a few aberrations, enrollment has been steadily declining since 1996-97.





<b>Table 5.3</b> <b>Oswego City School District Enrollment History: 1996-97 to 2021-22</b>													
Year	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
K-12 Total	5370	5287	5166	5112	5010	4919	4974	4809	4718	4605	4541	4409	4384
Year	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
K-12 Total	4301	4234	4084	3967	4001	3987	3948	3820	3810	3857	3737	3637	3578

When considering the five elementary schools, enrollment has decreased in all the schools except Kingsford Park. The enrollment at Kingsford Park, however, has been generally declining since 2018-19. The overall elementary school enrollment has declined by 7.3% 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: 2017-18 to 2021-22</b>						
School	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	5-Year % Change
Charles E Riley	409	407	422	371	368	-10.0%
Leighton	285	295	281	293	278	-2.5%
Fitzhugh Park	421	423	417	386	361	-14.3%
Kingsford Park	403	457	443	413	421	+4.5%
Minetto	425	416	417	388	373	-12.2%
Total	1943	1998	1980	1851	1801	-7.3%
NOTE: These totals may vary slightly from those in Table 5.2 due to students in ungraded programs.						

Conversely, the middle school has experienced a small increase in enrollment in the past five years. The high school enrollment has declined during the same period but at a rate slower than that of the elementary schools. These enrollment trends are documented in Table 5.5 that follows.



<b>Table 5.5</b>						
<b>Five-Year History of Middle and High School Enrollments: 2017-18 to 2021-22</b>						
School	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	5-Year % Change
Oswego Middle School	560	550	551	552	580	+3.6%
Oswego High School	1117	1122	1063	1112	1064	-4.7%
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 that enrollment will decline slightly in all district buildings over the next five to seven years as the current elementary classes progress through the grade levels to the middle school and high school.

The number of resident students who are educated outside of the district's school buildings must be considered when examining enrollment trends. While the number of home-schooled students has increased, the number of students attending non-public schools has decreased over the past five years. When combined, the total number of resident students attending school outside of district buildings has increased from 318 to 438 (+37.7%) over the past five years. The students educated outside of district buildings in 2021-22 represents 12.7% of the grades K-12 enrollment (3445). While unlikely, should all these students return to district buildings, there would be a notable impact on enrollment, staffing, and building utilization. Year-by-year data can be found in Table 5.6.

<b>Table 5.6</b>					
<b>Five-Year History of Resident Students Educated Outside of District Buildings</b>					
School Year	Home-Schooled Students	Resident Students Attending Non-Public Schools	Resident Students Attending Charter Schools	Resident Students Attending Elsewhere	Total Resident Students Educated Outside of District Buildings
2017-18	127	191	0	Data not available	318
2018-19	132	191	0	Data not available	323
2019-20	141	174	0	Data not available	315
2020-21	259	170	0	Data not available	429
2021-22	282	156	0	Data not available	438



Lastly, it is important to consider the number of non-resident students attending school in the Oswego district. Board policy #7132 states that “Non-resident families who wish to enroll children in the School System shall submit a request in writing to the Superintendent, who shall determine whether or not the student(s) will be admitted. The Superintendent will also determine which building the student will attend. Although the Superintendent may make a recommendation to the Board on the issue of whether admission should be granted, the Board of Education shall have final approval on all non-resident student enrollment requests.” Non-resident students who are granted permission to attend Oswego City SD are required to pay tuition. While district policy permits the enrollment of non-resident students, the number of non-resident students is a very small number as detailed in Table 5.7. This has no bearing on overall district enrollment trends.

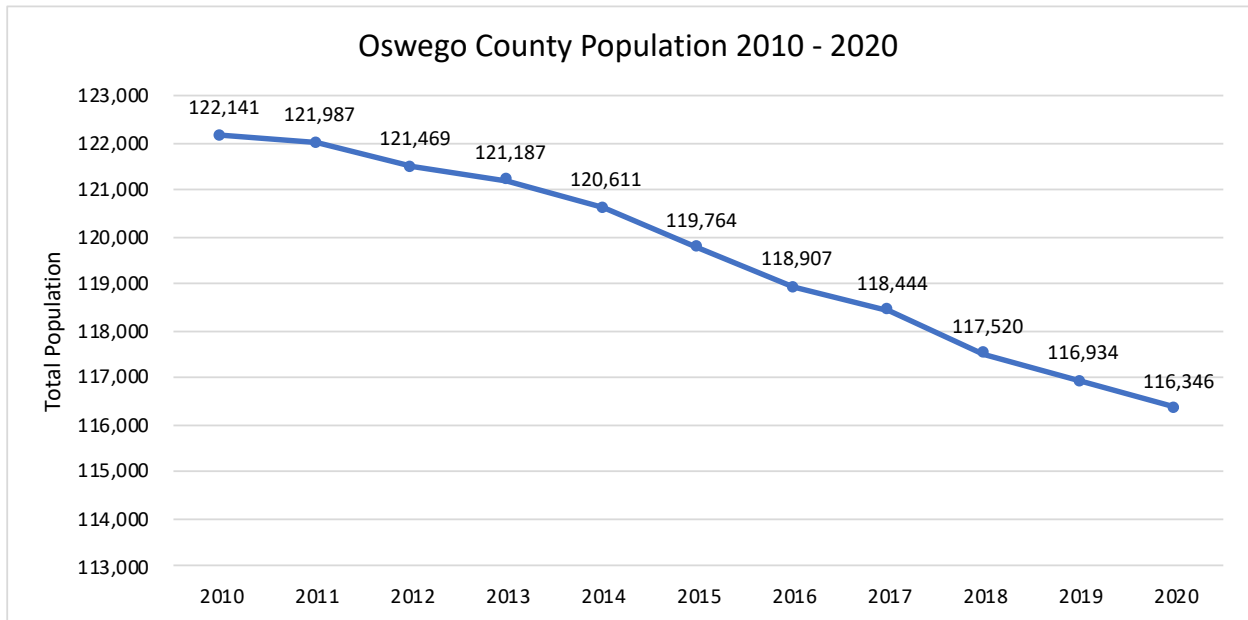
<b>Table 5.7</b> <b>Five-Year History of Non-Resident Students Attending Oswego City SD</b>	
<i>School Year</i>	<i>Non-Resident Students Attending Oswego City SD</i>
2017-18	< 2
2018-19	< 2
2019-20	< 2
2020-21	< 2
2021-22	< 2

The decline in total school district enrollment is not surprising given the overall Oswego County population trends. As the graph that follows shows, the total county population has declined annually from 2010 through 2020.



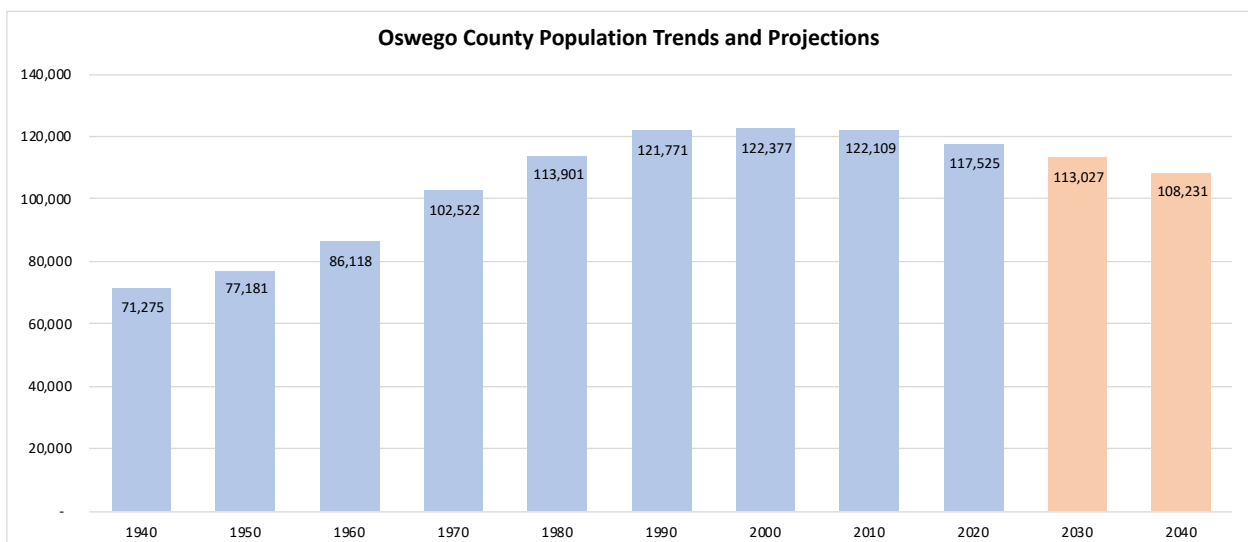


**Graph 1: Oswego County Population 2010-2020**



Looking to the future, Graph 2 illustrates that the Oswego County total population reached its peak in 2000 based on the U.S. Census data and is projected to continue to decline through 2040.

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



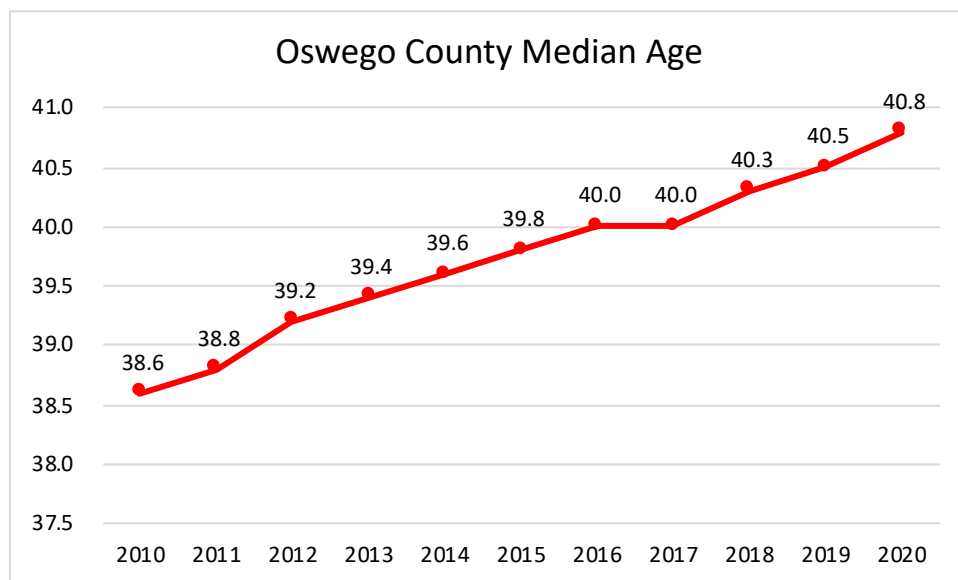


It is important to also examine the median age of Oswego County residents since this may provide some insight into future school enrollments. Populations that are aging generally mean that there is likely an out-migration of younger residents, hence fewer families that may have children entering the 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 Oswego County's resident median age. Spanning 2010 to 2020, we can see that the median age of county residents rose from 38.6 to 40.8. The county population is slowly aging like most Upstate New York communities.



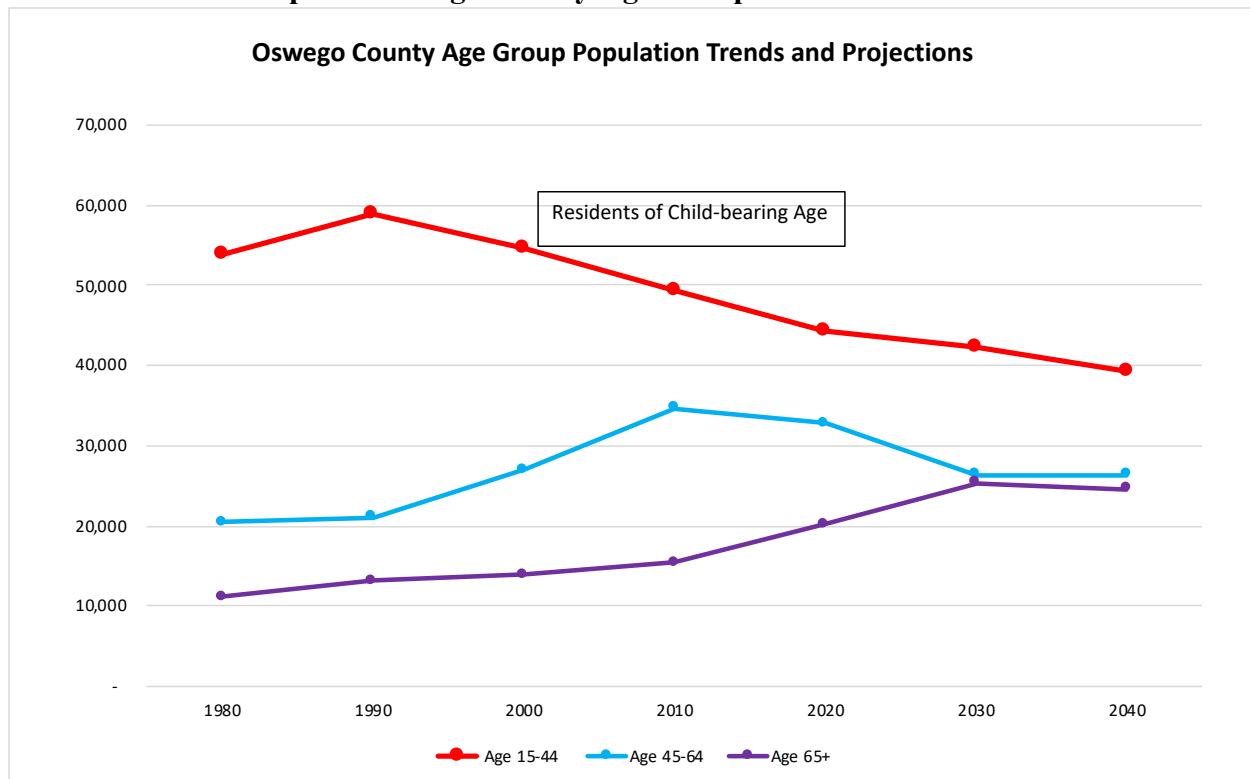
**Graph 3: Median Age of Oswego County Residents 2010-2020**





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 Oswego 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 Oswego County will also continue to decline.

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



In summary, it appears that the district enrollment will decline over the next several years. 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.



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

Oswego has five elementary schools, all educating students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Oswego Middle School serves students in grades 7-8 while Oswego High School is a grades 9-12 building. 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. The district also contracts with a Community Based Organization to offer universal Pre-K programs in each of its schools.



<b>Table 6.1</b> <b>2021-22 Class Sizes for Each Elementary School-100 Sections K-6</b> <b>(+1 Pre-K Section in Each School)</b>						
Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park	Frederick Leighton	Minetto	Total/Average
K	20, 22, 23	19, 20, 18	22, 22, 17	22, 22	17, 17, 18	279/19.9
1	15, 12, 14	14, 15, 13, 14	15, 18, 20	17, 19	15, 14, 12, 14	241/15.1
2	14, 15, 15	15, 16, 15	19, 20, 19	16, 20	20, 17, 18	239/17.1
3	18, 18, 17	15, 18, 16	21, 20, 22	19, 22	17, 19, 19	261/18.6
4	18, 19, 16	15, 16, 16	21, 20, 19	20, 19	16, 14, 15	244/17.4
5	18, 21, 20	17, 17, 18	24, 23, 22	23, 21	19, 20, 20	283/20.2
6	18, 17, 16	19, 17, 23	19, 19, 24	14, 11	18, 21, 19	255/18.2
TOTAL	21/366 (17.4 avg)	22/366 (16.6 avg)	21/426 (20.3 avg)	14/265 (18.9 avg)	22/379 (17.2 avg)	1802 (18.0 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 building 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 Oswego.

One of the questions that was asked as part of this study was how class size numbers compared to class size section goals. The district does not have any policy or written goal for class size. The only reference to class size in Oswego is found in Article VIII of the teacher contract which states that "...the District will strive to maintain levels as follows:...Maximum class load of 25 students." In examining Table 6.1, there is no section that has as many as 25 students. In addition, the average class sizes in each building are between five and eight students below the 25 student maximum. In addition, the average class size of 18.0 students across all buildings is seven students below the maximum number of 25. From these data, the question about class size in the elementary grades can be answered in the affirmative; the section sizes are well within the class size levels identified in the teacher contract. As a final point, it should be





emphasized that the contract language does not set concrete limits for class size; rather, it says that the district will strive to maintain the stated “limits.”

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. Across all elementary school buildings, students are offered regular access to art, music, and physical education. The consistency that exists across the five elementary schools in Oswego 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 Oswego’s elementary and middle school students on New York State’s English-Language Arts and Mathematics assessments that are offered in grades 3-8. Student performance on these state assessments is graded on a Level 1 to Level 4 continuum. The following are the performance descriptors for these assessments.

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

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

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

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

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





<b>Table 6.3</b> <b>% of Students Scoring at Levels 3 &amp; 4</b> <b>3-8 NYS Assessments in English/Language Arts</b>				
Schools	2016	2017	2018	2019
Charles Riley	35%	44%	47%	45%
Fitzhugh Park	28%	23%	33%	32%
Kingsford Park	31%	30%	46%	37%
Frederick Leighton	30%	26%	40%	29%
Minetto	33%	23%	38%	40%
Oswego Middle School	25%	29%	23%	29%
<i>Oswego County</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>32%</i>	<i>32%</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	2016	2017	2018	2019
Charles Riley	39%	48%	54%	55%
Fitzhugh Park	32%	24%	33%	30%
Kingsford Park	51%	47%	49%	49%
Frederick Leighton	37%	28%	47%	37%
Minetto	38%	34%	38%	40%
Oswego Middle School	23%	21%	25%	31%
<i>Oswego County</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>38%</i>

If an examination of student performance was to 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 6.2 and 6.3, it is clear that the performance of the students in the five Oswego elementary schools is more similar than different. While there clearly are differences, in looking at the big picture over the four-year period studied, the data are quite similar. It is also clear that the Oswego elementary performance is approximately the same as the rest of the schools in Oswego County.

The next area for analysis involves the program that is available to the middle and high school students in Oswego. Middle school students have very busy schedules 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. Oswego offers this acceleration in math, living environment (biology), French, and Spanish. Table 6.4 that follows shows the courses that are available to students in the district's middle school.

<b>Table 6.4</b>	
<b>Middle School Course Offerings-2021-22</b>	
Course	# of Sections & Section Sizes
<b>ENGLISH</b>	
English 7	24, 28, 27, 25, 26, 22, 22, 27, 25, 25, 28, 24
English 8	22, 18, 21, 23, 22, 16, 22, 24, 25, 24, 17, 19, 22
Literacy Enrichment	6, 6, 10, 6, 4, 7, 8, 6, 7, 6, 5, 6, 10, 3, 2, 9, 10, 7, 9, 7, 6, 1, 5, 7, 6, 6, 10, 5, 4, 7, 8, 6, 8, 6, 3, 7, 9, 1, 1, 8, 10, 7, 9, 7, 6, 2, 4, 9
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>	
Social Studies 7	26, 29, 19, 28, 28, 25, 25, 19, 27, 26, 27, 24
Social Studies 8	16, 22, 23, 24, 21, 21, 24, 21, 17, 19, 22
Social Studies 8 E	21, 24
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	
Math 7	19, 24, 20, 24, 20, 22, 24, 13, 16, 23, 28, 15, 13
Math 8	15, 18, 18, 17, 19, 15, 15, 16, 25, 21, 19, 22, 18
Math 7 Accelerated	22, 20
Algebra 1	19, 19
Math Enrichment	14, 13, 10, 9, 11, 10, 14, 14, 11, 9, 11, 8
<b>SCIENCE</b>	
Science 7	26, 24, 19, 25, 25, 28, 28, 29, 28, 29
Science 8	21, 23, 25, 24, 21, 17, 20, 22, 26, 21, 18
Science 7 Accelerated	29, 13
Living Environment*	19, 19
<b>FRENCH &amp; SPANISH</b>	
French 8	18, 11, 22
French 1	24, 7
Spanish 8	22, 22, 13, 19, 21, 20
Spanish 1	24, 24, 9, 13



TECHNOLOGY/HOME & CAREER SKILLS	
Home & Careers 7	26, 25, 26, 27, 25, 24, 23, 25, 21, 22
Home & Careers 8	19, 19, 22, 21, 21, 22, 25, 25, 24, 25
Career & Financial Management	27, 27, 24, 23, 27, 27, 27, 25, 22, 24, 24, 25
Technology 7	18, 18, 18, 17, 17, 18, 16, 16, 16, 16, 16, 17, 15, 14, 14
Technology 8	13, 16, 15, 14, 13, 11, 19, 18, 15, 14, 15, 15, 17, 12, 18

MUSIC	
General Music 7	29, 29, 30, 30, 24, 26, 26, 26, 18
General Music 8	20, 22, 18, 22, 19, 21, 14, 16, 11, 12
Band 7	62
Band 8	44
Chorus 7	34
Chorus 8	31
Orchestra 7	30
Orchestra 8	20

ART	
Art 7	12, 30, 30, 29, 29, 25, 27, 24, 26, 17, 7, 9
Art 8	26, 25, 26, 27, 25, 24, 23, 25, 21, 22

SPECIAL EDUCATION	
Life Skills	8
English	8
Math	8
Science	8
Social Studies	8
Resource Room 7	4, 5, 5, 5
Resource Room 8	4, 5

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION	
Health	27, 25, 25, 24, 24, 27, 28, 24, 23, 27, 27, 22
Physical Education 7	21, 21, 22, 22, 22, 22, 23, 19, 20, 20, 20, 20, 13, 14, 10, 5, 5, 7
Physical Education 8	16, 20, 18, 22, 15, 22, 20, 14, 21, 15, 22, 14, 16, 20, 17, 3, 5, 5



ADVISORY	
Advisory	7, 4, 4, 13, 18, 13, 18, 15, 20, 15, 20, 13, 18, 13, 18, 14, 16, 14, 16, 18, 18, 18, 18, 9, 16, 9, 16, 14, 20, 14, 20, 13, 18, 13, 18, 11, 23, 11, 23, 11, 20, 11, 20, 13, 19, 13, 19, 11, 16, 11, 16, 14, 13, 14, 12, 5, 4, 5, 4, 15, 16, 15, 17, 19, 17, 19, 16, 17, 14, 17, 15, 3, 20, 13, 20, 13, 10, 9, 11, 10, 16, 14, 16, 14, 15, 11, 15, 11, 15, 15, 16, 15, 18, 13, 18, 14, 19, 14, 19, 14, 18, 18, 19, 15, 17, 16, 18, 16, 20, 11, 20, 11, 9, 9, 9, 8, 9, 8, 9, 8, 3, 2, 19, 3, 11, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1,

STUDY HALL	
Study Hall	3, 3, 2

In looking at Table 6.4 regarding the middle school offerings, it is apparent that the students in Oswego have access to a large number of program options for grades 7 and 8. The opportunity to accelerate in math, living environment, French, and Spanish allows students to begin accumulating high school credit as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader. It is also evident that the district has made a significant commitment to literacy enrichment and advisory periods for its students.





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 Oswego is provided in table 6.5 that follows.

<b>Table 6.5</b>	
<b>High School Course Offerings-2021-22</b>	
Course	# of Sections & Section Sizes
<b>ENGLISH</b>	
English 9	17, 19, 12, 11, 13, 18, 22, 21, 23, 22, 22
English 10	22, 22, 23, 22, 20, 11, 16, 12, 11, 9, 13, 23
English 11	20, 23, 16, 18, 23, 20, 24, 10, 13, 12, 9, 20
English 12	25, 25, 23, 10
English 9 Honors	20, 16
English 10 Honors	19, 16
English 11 Honors	22
English 12 Honors	13
World Literature	23, 23, 22, 17, 20
AP Literature & Composition	12
Drama	8
A Touch of Evil	12
A Touch of Evil 2	11
Disney Debunked	19
Cinema	11
Film Study	10
Changing Images of Women	7
Yearbook Production	22, 21
English Lab 9	9, 9, 5, 11, 10, 8, 9
English Lab 10A	7, 6
English As A New Language	5, 5

<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>	
Global Studies 9	19, 22, 22, 13, 12, 16, 23, 18, 22, 12, 23
Global Studies 10	22, 20, 22, 20, 16, 14, 15, 12, 10, 10, 11, 22
US History & Government	23, 26, 12, 23, 18, 11, 12, 8, 11, 17, 22
Economics	18, 26
Participation in Government	25, 24, 23, 19
World History 9 Pre-AP	24, 14
AP World History	22, 19
AP US History	24
Participation in Government Honors	12



Economics Honors	12
College Economics	18, 14
Criminal Justice	23, 20, 7, 8
CCC-Oswego Economics & Government	25, 25, 25, 22
Psychology	17, 20, 21
AP Psychology	16
Sociology	23, 22
20 <sup>th</sup> Century Wars of the US	12
American Civil War & Reconstruction	15
Advanced Criminal Justice Applications	21, 17
Global Studies AIS	7, 3, 1, 2

MATHEMATICS	
Algebra	21, 22, 19, 18, 24
Geometry	20, 21, 25, 22, 21, 13
Algebra 2	15, 17, 22, 19
Fundamentals of Algebra 1	17, 19, 21, 19, 17, 17
Fundamentals of Algebra 2	13, 15, 18, 17, 15, 14
Geometry Honors	17, 25
Math 12	20
Calculus	6
Pre-Calculus Honors	17, 23
AP Calculus	17
AP Statistics	5
Computer Programming 1	12
Computer Programming 2	10
AP Computer Science Principles	2, 1
Consumer Math A	24, 23
Consumer Math B	25, 25
Personal Finance A	19, 24, 21, 19
Personal Finance B	23, 18, 24, 22
Financial Algebra	22, 12

SCIENCE	
Earth Science*	22, 20, 17, 16, 22, 20, 24
Living Environment*	21, 18, 17, 10, 15, 19, 10, 7, 19, 18, 19, 20
Chemistry*	17, 20, 18
Physics*	12
Earth Science Honors*	25, 20
Applied Biology	12, 20, 14, 20
AP Biology*	14
General Chemistry	25, 21, 24
Chemistry Honors*	18, 20
Conceptual Physics	21, 14



Bio-Ethics/Socio Scientific Issues	22
SUPA Forensic Science*	6
College Physics*	22
Intro to Meteorology	14
Intro to Oceanography	20
Anatomy & Physiology 1	23, 17, 19, 18
Anatomy & Physiology 2	16, 23, 17, 18

FRENCH/SPANISH	
French 1	20
French 2	14
French 3	15
French 4	6
Spanish 1	19, 15, 13, 18
Spanish 2	12, 19
Spanish 3	17, 16, 20, 14
Spanish 4	7
Spanish 9 Honors	14, 12, 13
French 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	14, 16
Spanish 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	17, 17, 14, 19, 19
French 3 Honors	10
Spanish 3 Honors	21, 17
French 4 Honors	6
Spanish 4 Honors	11
Spanish 5	1

TECHNOLOGY/HOME & CAREER SKILLS	
Production Systems	19
Aerial Videography	16
Architectural Drawing	19
Architectural Structures	19
Woodworking	14, 15, 8, 7
Clothing & Textiles	21, 22
Food & Nutrition	24
Housing/Environment	23, 24
Independent Living	17
Culture & Foods	26
Gourmet Food	25
Parenting/Childhood Education	20
Structures	10, 11
TV Communication/Production 1	22, 19
TV Communication/Production 2	23, 18
Design & Drawing for Production	20, 18, 21
Photography	16, 16, 23





Advanced Photography	13
Foundation in Media Arts	21, 21
3-D CAD/Animation	5

MUSIC	
Music Theory 1	4
Music Theory 2	6
Concert Choir	47
Chorale	19
Chamber Singers	25
Concert Band	47
Jazz Ensemble A	17
Jazz Ensemble B	12
Symphonic Band	35
Wind Ensemble	40
Concert Orchestra	29
Symphonic Orchestra	34

ART	
Studio in Art	22, 19, 21, 19, 22, 21
Drawing & Painting 1	16, 9
Drawing & Painting 2	16, 10
Computer Graphics Design	9
Advanced Computer Graphics	9
Ceramics 1	20
Ceramics 2	21
Advanced Study in Art	4

SPECIAL EDUCATION	
Life Skills	5, 3
English	5, 9
Math	3, 5, 5
Science	5
Social Studies	5
Resource Room	5, 5, 4, 4, 4, 7, 5, 5, 3

HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION	
Health	23, 20, 24, 23, 22, 21, 25, 25
Silver Bullets	25
Girls Phys Ed 9/10-Fall	25, 18, 21, 19, 10, 16, 28, 20, 29, 28, 19, 23
Girls Phys Ed 9/10-Spring	27, 19, 20, 17, 10, 16, 29, 22, 28, 29, 20, 25
Boys Phys Ed 9/10-Fall	12, 10, 25, 27, 10, 15, 18, 25, 16, 11, 29, 30
Boys Phys Ed 9/10-Spring	14, 9, 25, 25, 29, 16, 17, 24, 16, 11, 30, 30
Phys Ed 11/12-Fall	26, 26, 19, 22, 22, 18, 28, 28, 34, 34, 15, 13, 12, 15, 13, 11, 14, 18, 16, 18, 23, 26, 25, 27



Phys Ed 11/12-Spring	24, 26, 20, 19, 18, 19, 23, 21, 33, 33, 19, 17, 14, 16, 14, 14, 13, 12, 12, 19, 27, 29, 25, 29
Does not include Work Study (17), Independent Study (2), Credit Recovery (23), Structured Study (39), Study Hall (72), Senior Study hall (20) or BOCES Courses	

The previous table 6.5 above shows a very comprehensive program that is available to the high school students in Oswego. The district offers numerous courses in the core academic areas that are taken by the vast majority of regular education students. Nearly all of the core courses in the main academic areas have enrollments that are very solid. Where core academic course enrollments are lower, such as sections of 9, 11, 12, and 13 in English 10, it is assumed that scheduling does not permit higher enrollments.

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, for the most part, also very solid. This bodes well for future academic opportunities for the students in Oswego as the district tries to maintain a balance between offering as many elective options as possible with the need to maintain costs at a reasonable level.

It is clear that the opportunities for the high school students in Oswego are quite comprehensive. Advanced placement courses, courses carrying college credit, two languages other than English, and a robust listing of electives are all positive aspects of the high school program in Oswego. Having said that, and understanding that this is not a curriculum study, it is surprising to see a high school of this size that has no business offerings such as accounting, marketing, law, or management courses.

In addition to the program offered at the high school, Oswego students have the opportunity to take career and technical education classes at the Oswego County (CITI) BOCES. In 2021-22, 24.4% of the district's juniors and 28.5% of the seniors took advantage of the career and technical education courses as evidenced by the following Table 6.6.



<b>Table 6.6</b> <b>BOCES Participation- Career &amp; Technical Education Classes</b> <b>2021-22</b>		
	Juniors	Seniors
# of students in class	266	270
# of students attending BOCES CTE	65	77
% of student attending BOCES	24.4%	28.5%
Overall BOCES CTE participation	26.5%	

As was done with the elementary program, it is now appropriate to look at the class sizes that exist at the high school level. Table 6.7 that follows examines those high school class sizes. Curriculum areas that would distort the results have been omitted from this table. For example, music has not been included because many of the department's classes involve chorus and band offerings that, by nature, include large groups of students. Special education, AIS, and remedial classes have also not been included because, by nature, they are designed to be small group instruction.

<b>Table 6.7</b> <b>Number of Sections with Fewer than 10/More than 25 Students</b> <b>(Does Not Include Music, Special Education, Physical Education, AIS or</b> <b>Remedial Lab Classes)</b>			
Curriculum Area	# of Sections Offered	# of Sections with Fewer than 10 Students	# of Sections with More than 25 Students
English	62	5	0
Social Studies	67	3	2
Math	53	4	0
Science	50	2	0
Spanish & French	31	4	0
Tech & Home & Careers	33	3	1
Art	15	4	0
Health	8	0	0
TOTAL	319	25 (7.8%)	3

Looking at Table 6.7 above, it is apparent that only 7.8% of the 319 sections of classes that are offered have fewer than 10 students. This is an important statistic for the district to continue to monitor. Smaller class sizes present a challenge for all school districts. On one hand, districts would like to offer as many electives as possible for their students. On the other hand, financial challenges mean that school districts have to assess how many classes they can afford



to offer with a small number of students in those classes. Given this challenge, however, Oswego having 7.8% of its high school classes with fewer than ten students is a very low percentage compared with most other districts.

Also, Table 6.7 shows that only three of the 319 sections offered have more than 25 students, and all three of these classes have 26 students. It is obvious that the district is striving to maintain its class section loads at a maximum of 25 students.

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

<b>Table 6.8 Athletic Participation</b>			
<b>Sport</b>	<b>Varsity</b>	<b>Junior Varsity</b>	<b>Modified</b>
<b>Winter 2021-22</b>			
Basketball, Boys	14	15	30
Basketball, Girls	11	12	24
Wrestling	19		22
Ice Hockey, Boys	24		
Ice Hockey, Girls	18		
Indoor Track-Boys	22		
Indoor Track-Girls	25		
Cheerleading	14	9	
Bowling-Boys	10		
Bowling-Girls	6		
Swimming/Diving, Boys	16		35
Volleyball, Boys			16
Volleyball-Girls			32
<b>Spring 2021</b>			
Baseball	17	16	28
Softball	22		17
Lacrosse-Boys	28		19
Lacrosse-Girls	17	17	21
Golf-Girls	3		
Tennis-Boys	13		
Track, Boys	30		19
Track, Girls	35		24
Unified Boys Bowling	23		



Fall 2021			
Football	31		55
Soccer-Boys	22		24
Soccer-Girls	25		24
Cross Country-Boys	9		10
Cross Country-Girls	10		11
Golf-Boys	12		
Tennis-Girls	15		
Swimming/Diving-Girls	21		
Cheerleading	15		
Volleyball, Boys	10	11	
Volleyball-Girls	15	16	

As Table 6.8 indicates, students at Oswego have numerous interscholastic athletic activities in which to participate. In addition to having numerous sports, Oswego also has many sports with teams at the varsity, junior varsity, and modified 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 the educational program that was provided for regular education students, in 2021-22, the district had a variety of placements for its special education students. Both the middle school and the high school have consultant teachers providing direct instruction in English, math, and social studies. Both schools also have resource rooms. In addition, both the middle school and the high school have a 12:1:1 class for students who are eligible for the New York State Alternate Assessment. The high school also has a 15:1 class in English 9, 10, 11, and 12 as well as a 15:1 class in Global History 9 & 10 and US history.

In addition to the special education students who are educated in the Oswego City School District buildings, the district also sends some students to other locations for their programming. Table 6.9 that follows shows those out of district placements.

Location	Type of Program	Grade/Age	# of Students
Anderson Centers	Residential		1
Devereux	Residential		1
Fourth Street-Fulton	CITI A+ Autism Program	7 & 12+	2
Fourth Street-Fulton	CITI Day Treatment	5, 6, 9, 12	4
CITI Campus	STRIVE-NYSAA	9, 10, 11	3
CITI Campus	CITI STRIVE-Regents/Local	9, 10, 11, 12	4
Central Square Middle School	CITI STRIVE-Regents/Local	6, 6, 7, 8	4
Volney Elementary	CITI STRIVE-Regents/Local	4, 4	2
Fourth Street-Fulton	CITI Work Study-NYSAA	12+	1



If the goal of a school district is to prepare its students to be successful in higher education, the world of work, or both, perhaps the most important measure of the district's effectiveness is found in statistics related to graduation. Table 6.10 that follows examines high school graduation data for Oswego students compared with the rest of New York State.

<b>Table 6.10</b>			
<b>High School Graduation Rates</b>			
Year	Diploma Type	Oswego	New York State
2018	Total Graduates	223 (76%)	81%
	Regents Diploma	109 (37%)	44%
	Advanced Regents Diploma	101 (34%)	32%
	Local Diploma	13 (4%)	4%
	<i>Dropped Out</i>	38 (13%)	7%
	<i>Still Enrolled</i>	25 (9%)	11%
2019	Total Graduates	240 (80%)	82%
	Regents Diploma	117 (39%)	46%
	Advanced Regents Diploma	111 (37%)	31%
	Local Diploma	12 (4%)	5%
	<i>Dropped Out</i>	39 (13%)	6%
	<i>Still Enrolled</i>	14 (5%)	10%
2020	Total Graduates	218 (81%)	82%
	Regents Diploma	101 (38%)	44%
	Advanced Regents Diploma	116 (43%)	33%
	Local Diploma	1 (0%)	5%
	<i>Dropped Out</i>	21 (8%)	6%
	<i>Still Enrolled</i>	16 (6%)	10%
2021	Total Graduates	245 (84%)	86%
	Regents Diploma	121 (41%)	42%
	Advanced Regents Diploma	121 (41%)	42%
	Local Diploma	3 (1%)	2%
	<i>Dropped Out</i>	22 (8%)	4%
	<i>Still Enrolled</i>	14 (5%)	9%

In examining the graduation data for Oswego, a number of observations come to the forefront. First, the graduation rate is relatively low. Most school districts minimally aim for a graduation rate of 90%. While the graduation rate in Oswego has been inching up over the past four years, it is still below the majority of school districts in New York State. While the Oswego



graduation rate of 2021 matched the graduation rate in Oswego County, Oswego City was behind the county in the other three years in the table. Caution should also be advised when comparing Oswego data with New York State data which includes data from all over the state including the big 5 cities which traditionally have a significantly lower graduation rate than the rest of the state.

Consistent with a graduation rate that could use some attention, the dropout rate for Oswego is also relatively high. Oswego has seen an improvement in its dropout rate in the past four years declining from 13% to 8%. The dropout rate in Oswego County fluctuates between 7-8%, a percentage that is lower than Oswego City but still higher than the rest of New York State. While the dropout rate is headed in a positive direction, attention still needs to be paid to the number of students who are leaving Oswego High School without earning their high school diploma.



OSWEGO  
CITY 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 2021-22 academic year, and to gauge how enrollments may impact them in the future. Table 7.1 that follows provides an overview of the district's elementary schools.

Table 7.1 Overview of Oswego Elementary School Buildings					
Schools	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park	Frederick Leighton	Minetto
Address	269 E. 8 <sup>th</sup> St. Oswego	195 E. Bridge St. Oswego	275 W. 5 <sup>th</sup> St. Oswego	1 Buccaneer Blvd. Oswego	2411 County Rt. 8 Minetto
Year of Original Building	1955	1927	1927	1956	1958
Sq. Ft. in Current Building	70,139	71,800	71,800	85,900	85,400
Number of Floors	2	3	3	1	2
Grades Housed	Pre-K-6	Pre-K-6	Pre-K-6	Pre-K-6	Pre-K-6
Students Served	368	361	421	278	373
Overall Building Rating	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Architect	King & King				
NOTE: All information was taken from the NYS Building Conditions Survey completed in 2015 except the enrollments that were drawn from the 2021-22 academic year.					



As can be seen in table 7.1, two of the district's elementary buildings were constructed in 1927 and the other three were built in the mid-to-late 50's. Charles Riley, Fitzhugh Park, and Kingsford Park are approximately 70,000 square feet while Frederick Leighton and Minetto are approximately 85,000 square feet. Table 7.1 also illustrates the neighborhood concept that is utilized by Oswego for its elementary program in that the five elementary schools serve students from their



neighborhoods and all buildings house grades Pre-K-6. All buildings were rated as “Satisfactory.”

Like the examination of the elementary school buildings, similar data from the district’s two secondary schools is now reviewed in table 7.2 that follows.

<b>Table 7.2 Overview of Oswego Secondary School Buildings</b>		
Schools	Oswego Middle School	Oswego High School
Address	100 Mark Fitzgibbons Drive	2 Buccaneer Blvd.
Year of Original Building	1980	1970
Sq. Ft. in Current Building	123,510	207,893
Number of Floors	2	2
Grades Housed	7-8	9-12
Students Served	580	1,064
Overall Building Rating	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Architect	King & King	

As can be seen in table 7.2, both of the secondary buildings are newer than any of the elementary school buildings. These are both large buildings that serve a large number of students. Discussions were held about the possibility of moving the sixth grade to the middle school but these conversations ended with the realization that there is simply not enough room in the middle school to accommodate this additional grade. As far as the questions about the use of facilities raised in this study, it is clear that the secondary buildings will remain as currently structured with the middle school housing grades 7 and 8 and the high school housing grades 9-12.

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 elementary buildings is currently being utilized.



Tables 7.3-7.7 that follow show the 2021-22 school year utilization of the district's five elementary schools.

<b>Table 7.3</b> <b>Charles Riley Elementary School Classroom Usage 2021-22-70,139 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Library, Cafeteria/All Purpose Room &amp; Small Storage Areas)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (22)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (15)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Charles Riley	37	Pre-K-1 K-3 1-3 2-3 3-3 4-3 5-3 6-3	Special Ed-1 Music-3 Art-1 AIS-1 Computer Lab-1 Reading-1 Health-1 Speech-1 OT/PT-1 Consultant Teacher-3 Staff Lounge-1	ESL-1 Speech-1

<b>Table 7.4</b> <b>Fitzhugh Park Elementary School Classroom Usage 2021-22-71,800 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafetorium, Library &amp; Small Storage Areas)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (23)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (9)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Fitzhugh Park	32	Pre-K-1 K-3 1-4 2-3 3-3 4-3 5-3 6-3	Special Ed-1 OT/PT-1 Art-1 Music-2 Storage-1 Counselor-1 AIS-2	Special Ed.-1 Speech-2 Counselor-1 AIS-4 Psychologist-1 Work Room-2 Faculty Room-1



<b>Table 7.5</b> <b>Kingsford Park Elementary School Classroom Usage 2021-22-71,800 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, Library, &amp; Small Storage Areas)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (22)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (11)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Kingsford Park	33	Pre-K-1 K-3 1-3 2-3 3-3 4-3 5-3 6-3	Special Ed.-1 AIS-1 Art-1 Music-3 Office Space-1 COVID Room-1 Open Space-2 Staff Lounge-1	Counselor-1 TA's Room-1 Aides Room-1 OT/PT-1 ENL-1 Speech-1

<b>Table 7.6</b> <b>Frederick Leighton Elementary School Classroom Usage 2021-22-85,900 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, Library &amp; Small Storage Areas)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (15)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (14)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Frederick Leighton	29	Pre-K-1 K-2 1-2 2-2 3-2 4-2 5-2 6-2	Art-1 Music-2 AIS-1 Reading Coach-1 Staff Lounge-1 District Office-8	OT/PT-1 AIS-1



<b>Table 7.7</b> <b>Minetto Elementary School Classroom Usage 2021-22-85,400 Sq. Ft.</b> <b>(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, Library, and Small Storage Areas)</b>				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (23)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (15)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Minetto	38	Pre-K-1 K-3 1-4 2-3 3-3 4-3 5-3 6-3	Large Instruction Area-1 Art-1 Music-3 AIS-3 Consultant Teacher-1 OT/PT-1 Guidance-1 Speech-3 Staff Lounge-1	Aides Room-1 Librarian-1

In looking at tables 7.3 through 7.7, the following table 7.8 shows a comparative summary of the district's five elementary schools.

<b>Table 7.8</b> <b>Summary of Elementary Class Sections by Building</b>				
School	Square Footage	# of Students	# of Pre-K-6 Common Branch Sections	# of Full Size Classrooms Not Common Branch
Charles Riley	70,139	368	22	15
Fitzhugh Park	71,800	361	23	9
Kingsford Park	71,800	421	22	7
Frederick Leighton	85,900	278	15	14
Minetto	85,400	373	23	15

In analyzing the data about the size and utilization of Oswego's five elementary schools, a number of interesting and relevant observations can be made:

--The five elementary buildings are approximately the same size ranging from 70,000 to 85,000 square feet;

--While the number of students in Charles Riley, Fitzhugh Park, and Minetto are nearly the same with approximately 370 students, Kingsford Park has approximately 50 more students



resulting in the largest class sizes in the five elementary schools. On the other hand, Frederick Leighton has 278 students;

--Frederick Leighton has eight of its full size classrooms occupied by the district office;

--Fitzhugh Park and Kingsford Park are the oldest two schools, both having been built in 1927; the other three buildings are approximately the same age having been built between 1955 and 1958;

--All of the buildings have an overall rating of Satisfactory as evidenced in the 2015 Building Condition Survey.

In looking at many elementary buildings across the state, 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 regular instructional program for that building on a daily basis. In Oswego, however, that is not the case. While the buildings do not appear to be overly crowded, neither is there a significant amount of vacant space in the elementary buildings.

One of the questions that was asked as part of this study was whether or not it would be possible to close one of the district's school buildings and, if so, what savings might accrue to the district? The first observation to be made in this regard is that it is very apparent that the district would not be in any position to close either the middle school with 580 students or the high school with 1,064 students. As a result, the question is really whether or not the district could close one of its elementary schools?

The first criterion in the consideration of closing an elementary school is to impact the fewest number of students and the fewest number of staff with the closure. In Oswego, this elementary school would be Frederick Leighton which has 101 fewer students than Charles Riley, 101 fewer students than Fitzhugh Park, 161 fewer students than Kingsford Park, and 114 fewer students than Minetto. Frederick Leighton also has 14 common branch classrooms in grades K-6 while the other four elementary schools have either 21 or 22 K-6 sections. This means that Frederick Leighton not only has fewer students than the other four elementary schools but also has far fewer staff members. Applying the first criterion of impacting the fewest



number of students and the fewest number of staff, it is clear that if consideration was to be given to closing an elementary school in Oswego, that school would be Frederick Leighton.

Once it has been determined that Frederick Leighton is the school that would be studied to be closed, the next question is where the students would go who are currently attending Frederick Leighton? Oswego uses a neighborhood school concept for determining where its elementary students go to school. This means that students who are in the neighborhoods around the schools generally attend those schools closest to their neighborhoods. Should Frederick Leighton be closed, it would be reasonable to assume that the students would be reassigned to the elementary schools which are geographically closest. The table that follows shows the distances from Frederick Leighton to the other four Oswego elementary schools.

<b>Table 7.9</b>		
<b>Distance from Frederick Leighton to Other Four Elementary Schools</b>		
	Number of Minutes	Number of Miles
Charles Riley	7	2.3
Fitzhugh Park	7	2.1
Kingsford Park	4	1.3
Minetto	12	5.9

The table above clearly shows that Charles Riley, Fitzhugh Park, and Kingsford Park are all significantly closer to Frederick Leighton than is the Minetto Elementary School. As a result, the investigation of a possible school closure will assume that if Frederick Leighton is closed, its current students would attend school in Charles Riley, Fitzhugh Park, and Kingsford Park. Since it well beyond the scope of this study to do a student by student analysis, it will also be assumed that 1/3 of the current Frederick Leighton students will go to Charles Riley, 1/3 of the students will go to Fitzhugh Park, and 1/3 of the students will go to Kingsford Park should the district close the Frederick Leighton school. The following table shows the current enrollment and section organization of the four elementary schools involved in this potential closure.



<b>Table 7.10</b> <b>2021-22 Class Sizes for Each Elementary School Within the City Limits of Oswego</b>				
Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park	Frederick Leighton
Pre-K	12, 12	7, 8	15, 16	16
K	20, 22, 23	19, 20, 18	22, 22, 17	22, 22
1	15, 12, 14	14, 15, 13, 14	15, 18, 20	17, 19
2	14, 15, 15	15, 16, 15	19, 20, 19	16, 20
3	18, 18, 17	15, 18, 16	21, 20, 22	19, 22
4	18, 19, 16	15, 16, 16	21, 20, 19	20, 19
5	18, 21, 20	17, 17, 18	24, 23, 22	23, 21
6	18, 17, 16	19, 17, 23	19, 19, 24	14, 11
TOTAL	21/366 (17.4 avg)	22/366 (16.6 avg)	21/426 (20.3 avg)	14/265 (18.9 avg)

The model that will be used to study the impact of closing the Frederick Leighton school is to equally distribute the students currently attending that school across the other three elementary schools located within the City of Oswego. Furthermore, the model for distributing the Frederick Leighton students across the three city elementary school will be built so that no class has more than 25 students, the maximum number of students that the teacher contract states should be the class size that the district should strive to maintain. The following would be the impact of implementing that model.

**Pre-K-16** students from Frederick Leighton would add 5 students to each of the other three city elementary schools. By examining the current enrollments, it is clear that these Pre-K students could be incorporated into the existing sections. This would result in the following Pre-K sections:

Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park
Pre-K	14, 15	10, 10	18, 18







**Kindergarten**-44 students from Frederick Leighton would add 15 students to each of the other three city elementary schools. Current kindergarten sections at Charles Riley and Kingsford Park could not accommodate the additional 15 students without creating an additional section. This would result in the following kindergarten sections:

Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park
K	20, 20, 20, 20	24, 24, 24	19, 19, 19, 19

**Grade 1**-36 students from Frederick Leighton would add 12 students to each of the other three city elementary schools. Current first grade sections are quite small so it is reasonable to assume that the increased number of students could be accommodated in the current sections at each school with enrollment balancing across the building. This would result in the following 1<sup>st</sup> grade sections:

Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park
1	17, 18, 18	17, 17, 17, 17	21, 22, 22

**Grade 2**-36 students from Frederick Leighton would add 12 students to each of the other three city elementary schools. Current second grade sections are quite small so it is reasonable to assume that the increased number of students could be accommodated in the current sections at each school with enrollment balancing across the building. This would result in the following 2<sup>nd</sup> grade sections:

Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park
2	18, 19, 19	19, 19, 20	23, 23, 24

**Grade 3**-41 students from Frederick Leighton would add 14 students to each of the other three city elementary schools. Current third grade sections at Kingsford Park are currently larger than the other two elementary schools. As a result, adding 14 students to Kingsford Park would require the addition of another third grade section in order to stay at or below the maximum class size of 25 students. This would result in the following 3<sup>rd</sup> grade sections:

Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park
3	22, 22, 23	21, 21, 21	19, 19, 19, 20



**Grade 4-**39 students from Frederick Leighton would add 13 students to each of the other three city elementary schools. Current 4<sup>th</sup> grade sections at each of the three elementary schools could absorb 13 students each without exceeding the 25 student maximum limit per section. This would result in the following 4<sup>th</sup> grade sections:

Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park
4	22, 22, 22	20, 20, 20	25, 24, 24

**Grade 5-**44 students from Frederick Leighton would add 15 students to each of the other three city elementary schools. Current fifth grade sections at Kingsford Park are currently larger than at Charles Riley and Fitzhugh Park. As a result, adding 15 students to Kingsford Park would require the addition of another fifth grade section in order to stay at or below the maximum class size of 25 students. This would result in the following 5<sup>th</sup> grade sections:

Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park
5	25, 25, 24	22, 22, 23	21, 21, 21, 21

**Grade 6-**25 students from Frederick Leighton would add 9 students to each of the other three city elementary schools. Current sixth grade sections are quite small so it is reasonable to assume that the increased number of students could be accommodated in the current sections at each school with enrollment balancing across the building. This would result in the following 6<sup>th</sup> grade sections:

Grade	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park
6	20, 20, 20	22, 22, 23	23, 24, 24

Summarizing the previous tables, a model was constructed to determine the feasibility of closing the Frederick Leighton Elementary School and equally distributing the students across the other three elementary schools located in the city of Oswego so that no class would have more than 25 students. Should this occur, 15 sections of elementary classes could be eliminated at Frederick Leighton. In distributing the Frederick Leighton students to the other three city elementary schools, Charles Riley would have to add one kindergarten section and Kingsford Park would have to add one kindergarten section, one 3<sup>rd</sup> grade section, and one 5<sup>th</sup> grade section. This can be shown in the following table.



<b>Table 7.11</b> <b>2021-22 Sections for Each Elementary School Within the City Limits of Oswego Before and After the Closure of Frederick Leighton Elementary School (+1 Pre-K Section in Each School)</b>								
	<b>Charles Riley</b>		<b>Fitzhugh Park</b>		<b>Kingsford Park</b>		<b>Frederick Leighton</b>	
<b>Grades</b>	<b># of Sections Before Closure</b>	<b># of Sections After Closure</b>	<b># of Sections Before Closure</b>	<b># of Sections After Closure</b>	<b># of Sections Before Closure</b>	<b># of Sections After Closure</b>	<b># of Sections Before Closure</b>	<b># of Sections After Closure</b>
Pre-K	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0
K	3	4	3	3	3	4	2	0
1	3	3	4	4	3	3	2	0
2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	0
4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0
5	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	0
6	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><i>Total Number of Sections Before the Closure=85</i></b> <b><i>Total Number of Sections After the Closure in the four City Elementary Schools=74</i></b>								

In examining the previous table, closing the Frederick Leighton Elementary School would eliminate the 15 sections at Frederick Leighton, add 1 section at Charles Riley, and 3 sections at Kingsford Park for a net reduction of 11 elementary sections across the four city elementary schools. The text that follows will discuss the facilities implications of the potential closure while the staffing implications of such a closure will be discussed in the Staffing chapter of this report.

Now that the magnitude of closing one elementary school has been determined, a number of questions arise. The first of these questions is whether or not the buildings whose number of sections will increase can accommodate those additional sections. It must be emphasized that the options for relocating rooms described in this report are made only by consultants analyzing the floor plans for each building. The final determination about the feasibility of implementing this model will have to be made by staff who work in these facilities every day.

Charles Riley would be adding one kindergarten section. Is there room in Charles Riley for this to happen? The following possible options could be explored:

- There is a full size classroom devoted to speech and storage. Could this room be modified to provide a full size elementary classroom?



- The room for the psychologist is a full size classroom. Could this service be moved to a smaller room?
- The literacy center/reading room is a full size classroom. Could this be moved to a smaller room?
- BOCES rents a full size classroom in this building. Could this rental be moved or discontinued to free up a full size classroom?
- There are three classrooms devoted to consultant teachers. Could these rooms be consolidated into smaller spaces to free up full size classrooms?

Given these options, it appears quite likely that a room could be found for the additional kindergarten section.

Kingsford Park would be adding one section of kindergarten, one section of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and one section of 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Is there room to add these three additional classrooms? This would be the biggest facilities challenge but the following possible options could be given consideration:

- One full size classroom is currently being used for office space. Could this office space be incorporated into other currently existing office space?
- One full size classroom is being used as a COVID/waiting room. Could this classroom be made available for one of the additional classrooms?
- There is a fair amount of open space on the second floor that is labeled 201, 203, and 205. Could this space be converted to 2 or 3 full size classrooms?
- There is an AIS room that is located in a full size classroom. Could this class be moved to a smaller room?

The use of space in any school building is a challenging undertaking. It is an activity that is primarily concerned with providing appropriate educational spaces for the students who attend those schools. However, once established, it is often difficult to change these spaces. In addition, there is rarely any empty space in a school since it is human nature for people to expand their needs to conform with the space available. For these reasons, moving the students who attend Frederick Leighton to the other three city elementary schools is clearly more complex than the model in this study depicts. However, the model does point out that, with some flexibility, there



does appear to be space available to move the students from Frederick Leighton. While there is not an abundance of space in the three other elementary schools, neither is there overcrowding.

Finally, should a solution be found to close the Frederick Leighton Elementary School and relocate its students to the other three city elementary schools, the future will relieve any crowded conditions in the first years of the move. K-6 enrollment in 2021-22 is 1,801 but is projected to be 1,581 by 2028-29. While an enrollment projection is never precisely accurate, the enrollment projection for the elementary schools in Oswego clearly points out a trend that will be declining. This will make the relocation of the Frederick Leighton students easier as the years pass.

### **Other Options:**

Other options exist for reconfiguring the elementary grades and were considered for this study. These options are as follows:

1. ***Move all of the Pre-K classes to Frederick Leighton Elementary School.*** Moving all of the Pre-K classes to one location would provide more classroom space in each of the three city elementary schools. However, this option would isolate the Pre-K teachers and students from the rest of the elementary school population. This would detract from the synergy that currently exists from having the Pre-K students and staff located with the rest of the elementary program. Furthermore, moving the Pre-K classes out of the three city elementary buildings would not free up enough space to be able to close another building so there would be little, if any, financial savings from such a move. Finally, moving the Pre-K programs to Frederick Leighton would require that some type of support system be established at this stand-alone location including supervision, special support staff, transportation, and food services. In short, this option has significant issues to be considered without much apparent benefit.

2. ***Move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to the middle school.*** Oswego Middle School currently houses grades 7 and 8. Even though there are only two grades in the building, the school operates much more like a middle school than it does a junior high school even though most middle schools have at least three grade levels. As 7<sup>th</sup> graders, students are becoming acclimated to the operation of the building and as they become 8<sup>th</sup> graders, are in the process of moving out of the



building emotionally to become high school students. Adding the 6<sup>th</sup> grade would provide the transition time and program that is more often associated with a middle school.

Programmatically, this move has a number of benefits.

However, it does not appear that there is room in the middle school to house the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. There are currently 14 sections of 6<sup>th</sup> grade. In 2010, four additional classrooms were added to the middle school, down from the eight classrooms that were originally planned to be added. The middle school is currently not crowded but adding 255 6<sup>th</sup> graders would, at best, bring the building to tight capacity. Also, there would be no room for special education classes that might accompany the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to the middle school. In addition, there do not appear to be sufficient classrooms for some of the special classes that are offered in a middle school. Finally, additional staff would have to be hired to offer the middle school specials without realizing commensurate savings in the elementary schools to offset those costs. In short, there really is not room for the 6<sup>th</sup> graders to fit comfortably within the building and additional staff would have to be hired to meet the needs of the 6<sup>th</sup> graders costing the district more....and no commensurate savings would be realized in the elementary schools.

3. ***Organize elementary schools by grades rather than by neighborhoods.*** Currently the elementary schools in Oswego are called neighborhood schools in that they are organized around neighborhoods. Children, for the most part, attend the elementary school which is closest to their home/neighborhood. An option to the neighborhood school concept is to organize elementary schools around grades rather than neighborhoods. In this approach, one elementary school might house all Pre-K and kindergarten classes, another school would house all grades 1 and 2, another school would house grades 3 and 4, and the fourth elementary school would house grades 5 and 6. This concept is often referred to as the Princeton Plan.

The Princeton Plan houses all students in the same grade in the same location. As a result, it is often the most efficient way of educating elementary children. However, Oswego has a long history of neighborhood schools. Moving to the Princeton Plan would require a great deal of community study and acceptance before this model were to be implemented. The impact of transportation would also be another area that would take a great deal of study to make the move to the Princeton Plan one that is successful for all concerned.



### ***Building Condition Survey/Long Range Facilities Plan***

In addition to space utilization, another important aspect for determining future facility use is the overall physical condition of the buildings themselves. The New York State Education Department requires all school districts to conduct a Building Condition Survey (BCS) every five years. As a result of these Building Condition Surveys and a local assessment of facilities needs, school districts often assemble long range facilities plans and such is the case in Oswego. Table 7.12 that follows summarizes the most significant suggested improvements and related estimated costs for each of Oswego's elementary schools. The items for each school are broken down by:

- Site Work
- Architectural
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Mechanical

Table 7.12 that follows provides a summary of the long range facilities plan as it relates to the district's elementary schools. In total, it is projected that \$17,337,000 will have to be considered to deal with the items identified in the plan.





<b>Table 7.12</b> <b>Summary of 2019 Long Range School Building Plans</b>		
Building	Estimated Capital Construction Costs	Examples of Cost Items
Charles Riley	\$1,480,000	-replace asphalt & sidewalk by playground; -repair concrete & restore masonry; -light replacement, CO detectors, upgrade emergency lighting system; -replace water heaters, replace vintage plumbing fixtures; -replace boiler system, update energy management systems
Fitzhugh Park	\$2,071,750	-reconstruct outfalls; -masonry restoration, replace roof system; -replace lights, add CO detector, upgrade emergency lighting systems; -replace vintage plumbing fixtures; -replace motors; update energy management system
Kingsford Park	\$2,700,250	-replace transformer, replace drainage system, replace asphalt & sidewalks; -masonry restoration, reconstruct stairs, replace roof system, repair cracks in walls & foundation; -replace lights, add CO detectors, replace distribution switchboard, upgrade emergency lighting system, replace emergency power system; -replace vintage plumbing fixtures; -update energy management system
Frederick Leighton	\$5,835,000	-reconstruct drainage system, reconstruct pavement & sidewalks, replace playground surface material, reconstruct playfields & drainage; -masonry restoration, replace carpeting, replace resilient flooring, replace original tiling, replace locker room lockers, replace interior doors; -replace lights, add CO detectors, replace emergency back-up system; -replace domestic water system and sanitary & vent system in K wing, replace vintage plumbing fixtures; -replace boiler system, add air conditioning units in athletic wing, update energy management system
Minetto	\$5,250,000	-replace back-flow preventer, failing asphalt, tennis courts, lighting, drainage, & backstops; -masonry restoration, door/window replacement, replace cracked flooring, replace ceiling systems, replace locker room lockers; -replace lights & emergency power systems, upgrade exit lighting, add CO detectors; -replace plumbing in primary wing, replace vintage plumbing fixtures; -upgrade mechanical system in K & music area, update energy management system
TOTAL	\$17,337,000	

Not all of the items in the long range facilities plan listed previously are urgent. On the other hand, there are items associated with each of the buildings that require attention in the near





future while 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 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 and the long range facilities plan must be considered in those planning efforts.

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**The State Education Department requires all school districts to conduct a Building Condition Survey (BCS) every five years. This BCS is now 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 7.13 below shows the 2021 utility costs for each of the district's seven school buildings.

<b>Table 7.13</b> <b>Building Utility Costs for 2021</b>							
	Charles Riley	Fitzhugh Park	Kingsford Park	Frederick Leighton*	Minetto	Middle School	High School
Natural Gas	18,225	14,440	14,512	68,807	17,562	28,830	259
Electric	49,166	52,956	47,522	201,854	49,673	82,614	*
Total	67,391	67,396	62,034	270,661	67,235	110,944	-
* Frederick Leighton Elementary and Oswego High School are combined for electric costs							



Within its seven school facilities, Oswego has nearly 720,000 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 small.

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

Oswego undertook this study with the following question guiding the parameters for this study:

***How can the district maintain and enhance the educational opportunities for Oswego students 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.

One of the major priorities identified for this study was to examine the district's facilities and provide information about whether or not one of the school buildings could be closed.



Oswego is a school district that provides numerous programs for its students, very fine facilities, and a team of people that is attempting to provide leadership for the future. Through all of the research that was completed by the consultants, only two viable options for facilities 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 Oswego. 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 factor influencing the emergence of the second option was the loss in enrollment of nearly 200 students over the past five years as well as the projected continued decline in student enrollment.

The other option that is considered as part of this study is to close the Frederick Leighton Elementary School and to distribute the students that currently attend that school to the other three elementary schools in the City of Oswego. Data shows that there is room in the other three city elementary schools for this change to take place. Whether it is the right thing for the Oswego City School District to undertake at this point in time is for district leaders to decide.

Finally, it is noted that conversations took place with the middle school principal about the possibility of moving the sixth grade students to the middle school. However, it was clear that the current middle school does not have enough space to adequately house the sixth grade with the type of program and facilities that the district is committed to providing for its students.





## 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 Oswego. Table 8.1 that follows provides an overview of the major staffing categories that exist in Oswego. Only those positions that had three or more people occupying that title are included in the table.

<b>Table 8.1 Staffing Overview by Position-2021-22</b>		
Title	Number of Staff	Average Salary
Account Clerk Typist	7	39,993
Automotive Mechanic	3	55,198
School Bus Attendant	8	14.45/hr.
School Bus Driver	36	24.38/hr.
Cook	7	24,521
Counselor	18	80,525
Custodian/Custodial Worker	31	38,022
Custodian-Senior	8	54,690
Director/Executive/Ass't./Supervisor	10	105,226
Food Service Helper	29	15.32/hr.
Groundworker	3	43,983
LAN Tech-Senior	3	66,195
Library Clerk	7	14.67/hr.
Nurse	11	45,964
Maintenance Worker-Senior	4	66,688
Principal/Assistant Principal	11	110,418
Psychologist	8	82,089
School Monitor	8	14.32/hr.
Social Worker	2	74,859
Teacher	325	76,498
Teacher Aide	23	14.53/hr.
Teaching Assistant	104	29,791
Typist-Senior	10	40,756
<b>Total # of Staff</b>	<b>676</b>	



With respect to instructional staff, Oswego currently has 325 teachers, 104 teaching assistants, and 23 teacher aides. These combined staff categories that are devoted to providing instructional services to students are, not surprisingly, the largest group of employees in the district. Other job titles with a significant number of staff are school bus drivers, custodial staff, and food service helpers. When one thinks about the operation of a school district, it is not unusual that these categories would employ a large number of the district's staff.

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-2021-22</b>	
<b>Teacher Area</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>
Academic Intervention Services	5
Art	8
Behavior Coach	1
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	1
Elementary	98
English	17
English As A Second Language	3
Foreign Language	9
Health	3
Home & Career Skills	3
Home School Liaison	2
Library Media Specialist	7
Literacy Coach	1
Math	20
Music	17
Physical Education	14
Reading	15
Reading Coach	6
Science	17
Social Studies	17
Special Education	40
Special Education Coach/CSE Chair	1
Speech	10
Teacher Center Director	1
Technology	7
Technology Integration Specialist	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>325</b>



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 the employee's salary. For purposes of this study, it was estimated that fringe benefit costs for Oswego staff represent 61% of all salary costs. Table 8.3 that follows shows staffing costs with fringe benefits included.

<b>Table 8.3</b> <b>Cost of Staff Positions With Fringe Benefits-2021-22</b>			
Title	Number of Staff	Average Salary	Average Salary with 61% Fringe Benefit Costs
Account Clerk Typist	7	39,993	64,389
Automotive Mechanic	3	55,198	88,869
School Bus Attendant	8	14.45/hr.	23.26/hr.
School Bus Driver	36	24.38/hr.	39.25/hr.
Cook	7	24,521	39,479
Counselor	18	80,525	129,645
Custodian/Custodial Worker	31	38,022	61,215
Custodian-Senior	8	54,690	88,051
Director/Executive/Assistant & Supervisor	10	105,226	169,414
Food Service Helper	29	15.32/hr.	24.67/hr.
Groundworker	3	43,983	70,813
LAN Tech-Senior	3	66,195	106,574
Library Clerk	7	14.67/hr.	23.62/hr.
Nurse	11	45,964	74,002
Maintenance Worker-Senior	4	66,688	107,268
Principal/Assistant Principal	11	110,418	177,773
Psychologist	8	82,089	132,163
School Monitor	8	14.32/hr.	23.06/hr.
Social Worker	2	74,859	120,523
Teacher	325	76,498	123,162
Teacher Aide	23	14.53/hr.	23.39/hr.
Teaching Assistant	104	29,791	47,964
Typist-Senior	10	40,756	65,617



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. When school districts explore the possibility of closing a school building, they do so with the objective of reducing costs. However, it is not the costs associated with the operation of a building that generate significant savings....in fact utility costs to operate school buildings are relatively small. The reason to consider closing a school building is to possibly generate savings in personnel costs that might be realized from the closing.

Where personnel costs can be reduced, staff reductions are often the vehicle for the savings. Where staff reductions are considered, there is often a reluctance of involuntarily reducing the number of staff. 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 Oswego. Table 8.4 that follows shows the number of resignations/retirements that have occurred in the district in the past three years.

<b>Table 8.4</b>			
<b>History of Resignations/Retirements</b>			
Position	2019	2020	2021
Elementary Teacher	9	11	6
Middle School Teacher	-	3	3
High School Teacher	2	6	6
Teaching Assistant	7	6	9
Teacher/Aide/Monitor	11	5	5
Principal	1	-	1
Clerical	1	4	5
Transportation	7	6	9
District Office	1	-	-
Technology/Security	-	1	2
Nurse	1	1	-
Food Services	2	9	1
Custodial/Grounds	4	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>



As can be seen in Table 8.4, resignations/retirements in Oswego 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.

It has now been determined that staff savings would occur should an elementary school be closed and that the positions that are reduced could be accomplished through attrition. How much staff savings could reasonably be expected to occur should the Frederick Leighton Elementary School be closed? First we again examine the following table 8.5.

<b>Table 8.5</b> <b>2021-22 Sections for Each Elementary School Within the City Limits of Oswego Before and After the Closure of Frederick Leighton Elementary School (+1 Pre-K Section in Each School)</b>								
	<b>Charles Riley</b>		<b>Fitzhugh Park</b>		<b>Kingsford Park</b>		<b>Frederick Leighton</b>	
<b>Grades</b>	<b># of Sections Before Closure</b>	<b># of Sections After Closure</b>	<b># of Sections Before Closure</b>	<b># of Sections After Closure</b>	<b># of Sections Before Closure</b>	<b># of Sections After Closure</b>	<b># of Sections Before Closure</b>	<b># of Sections After Closure</b>
Pre-K	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0
K	3	4	3	3	3	4	2	0
1	3	3	4	4	3	3	2	0
2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	0
4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0
5	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	0
6	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><i>Total Number of Sections Before the Closure for the Four City Elementary Schools=85</i></b> <b><i>Total Number of Sections After the Closure for the Four City Elementary Schools=74</i></b>								

Table 8.5 above shows us that closing the Frederick Leighton Elementary School and distributing the students to the other three city school buildings would reduce the number of elementary classrooms from 85 to 74. This would result in the reduction, through attrition, of 11 teaching positions. Using the average cost of a teacher for salary and benefits of \$123,162, the elimination of 11 teaching positions would generate savings for the district of approximately \$1,354,782. Using the attrition model, not all of these savings would necessarily occur in the first year depending on teacher resignations. However, it is clear that this savings would occur within a very few years with the tradeoff being that no teacher would involuntarily lose a job.





In addition to the 11 teaching positions, it could reasonably be expected that the following full time equivalent positions could also be eliminated through attrition should the school close.

Principal (1 of 1)  
 Typist (1 of 3)  
 Cook (1 of 1)  
 Food Service Helper (2 of 3)  
 Library Aide (1 of 1)  
 School Nurse (1 of 1)  
 Custodial Worker (1 of 2)  
 Custodian (1 of 2)

Eliminating these positions would leave 2 typists, 1 food service helper, 1 custodial worker and 1 custodian to remain at the school should additional uses for the building be found or for reassignment to another building where their services might be used. Combining all of the possible positions that could be eliminated through attrition yields the following table.

<b>Table 8.6</b>			
<b>Anticipated Staff Savings from Closing Elementary School</b>			
Position	# of Positions	Average Salary	Anticipated Salary Savings
Teacher	11	\$76,498	\$841,478
Principal	1	110,418	110,418
Typist	1	40,756	40,756
Food Service Helper	2	13,788*	27,576
Library Aide	1	18,308**	18,308
School Nurse	1	45,964	45,964
Custodial Worker	1	38,022	38,022
Custodian	1	38,022	38,022
Total Salary Savings			\$1,160,544
Plus Fringe Benefit Costs @ 61%			\$707,932
Total Savings from Salary and Fringe Benefits			\$1,868,476
*Based on \$15.32/hour x 5 hours/day x 180 days			
**Based on \$14.53/hour/ x 7 hours/day x 180 days			

In addition to looking at the implications of closing a school, the district also asked if they were appropriately staffed at the district office level. Table 8.7 that follows compares district office administrative staffing with four other comparable school districts.



**Table 8.7**  
**A Comparison of District Office Positions in Addition to the Superintendent of Schools**

Title	Central Square	East Syracuse Minoa	Fulton (Eff. 7.1.22)	West Genesee	Oswego
Deputy Superintendent		X	X		
Assistant Superintendent-Instruction/Personnel	X				
Assistant Superintendent-Management Services				X	
Assistant Superintendent-Curriculum/Instruction				X	
Director of Staff Relations				X	
Exec Director Human Resources & Student Services			X		
Exec Director-Employee Engagement/Accountability		X			
School Business Manager	X				
Director-School Business Administration		X			
Exec Director-Business & Finance					X
Assistant Director-Business & Finance					X
Chief-Operations & Finance			X		
Director-Special Education		X		X	X
Assistant Director-Special Education				X	
Director-Special Instructional Programs/Pupil Services			X		
Exec Director-Pupil Personnel Services	X				
Assistant Director-Pupil Personnel Services	X				
Director-Academic Supports & Interventions	X				
Director-Student (Support) Services			X		X
Director-Counseling/Youth Development/Leadership		X			
Exec Director-Secondary Education & Personnel					X
Exec Director-Elementary Education/ Accountability					X
Director-Accountability/Instructional Support				X	
Director of Instructional Support Services			X		
Exec Director-Elementary Education	X				
Exec Director-Curriculum/Learning/Assessment		X			
Director-Teaching & Learning		X			
Director-English Language Arts					X
Director-Math					X
Director-Humanities			X		
Director-Early Childhood Education			X		
Director-Professional Learning				X	
Director-Fine Arts				X	
Director-STEAM			X		
Coordinator-Community Engagement/Data/Fine Arts		X			
Coord-Spartan Academy/College/Career Pathways		X			
Exec Director-Planning/Development/Technology	X	X			
Director-Technology/Data			X		
Director-Instructional Technology				X	
Director-Instructional Technology/Networks/Multi-Media					X
Director-Health/Physical Education/Athletics	X	X	X	X	X
TOTAL POSITIONS	8	11	11	10	10



From table 8.7, it is clear that the number of administrators who are employed at the district office in Oswego is very comparable to the other four districts. The one area that is obviously different in Oswego is that there is no position of assistant superintendent. Since the inception of this study, the district has taken steps to reorganize its district office staff.

In the tables that follow, staffing levels in the areas of facilities department, administrative/business office support, and food service are examined. Data were gathered from the same four comparative districts used in the preceding table. Due to a variety of extenuating circumstances, the Central Square School District was unable to provide the requested data within the study timeframe.

Table 8.8 details the facilities department staffing levels by position title. Facilities department work is typically divided into three areas: custodial, maintenance, and grounds. Custodial positions are usually building-specific while the maintenance and grounds employees have districtwide responsibilities. The total facilities department positions in the comparative districts ranges from 46 to 53. Three of the four districts are at 51, 52, and 53 employees demonstrating a strong similarity.





**Table 8.8**  
**A Comparison of Facilities Department Positions FTE**

Title	Central Square	East Syracuse Minoa	Fulton	West Genesee	Oswego
Cleaner	No Data Available		26		
Custodial Helper 1				5	
Custodial Worker 1		25		33	
Custodial Worker 2				1	
Custodial Worker					16
Custodian			1		17
Custodian 1		8			
Custodian 2		2		6	
Custodian 3		1		1	
Head Custodian			5		
Senior Custodian			8		4
Supervising Custodian			1		
Distribution Stores Clerk			1		
Electrician					1
HVAC Mechanic					1
Laborer 1		3			
Maintenance Mechanic			1		
Maintenance Supervisor			1		
Maintenance Worker			2		1
Maintenance Worker 1		5		3*	
Maintenance Worker 2				4	
Senior Maintenance Worker					4
Motor Equipment Operator					1
Motor Vehicle Operator					1
Warehouse Coordinator					1
Groundskeeper		2			
Groundswoker			5		3
Senior Groundswoker			1		1
<b>TOTAL POSITIONS</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>51</b>

\*Maintenance Worker 1 position performs groundskeeping duties

While the number of facilities department employees is similar across these districts, there are other factors that determine if the department is operating efficiently. National guidelines developed by the Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) suggests the following parameters: one custodial worker per 20,000 square feet, one maintenance mechanic per 100,000



square feet and one grounds worker per 50 acres. There are factors in every school district that may necessitate variation from these standards, but they provide a big-picture benchmark.

The analysis of the custodial staffing in various districts is presented in Table 8.9 below. The last column in the table indicates the number of square feet (sf) covered by each full-time custodial position. For comparative purposes, there are 11 districts from across New York State representing districts of varying size identified as Districts A-K as well as the four local districts listed in the table. The statewide average square feet per full-time custodial position (20,818) is very close to the APPA standard of 20,000 square feet. The average for the local districts is slightly less at 18,445. The Oswego data are shaded in each table below for easy identification. The Oswego square feet per custodial position is slightly above the other local districts but very close to the industry standard.

<b>Table 8.9</b>						
<b>Analysis for Cleaner/Custodian Staffing</b>						
<b>Statewide District</b>	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Area (SF)</b>	<b>FTC*</b>	<b>Avg SF/Bldg</b>	<b>FTC/Bldg</b>	<b>SF/FTC</b>
A	4	356,600	16	89,150	4	22,288
B	5	544,475	27	108,895	5	20,166
C	8	815,000	44	101,875	6	18,523
D	13	1,688,087	81	129,853	6	20,841
E	2	240,874	11	120,437	6	21,898
F	18	1,495,627	93	83,090	5	16,082
G	5	450,000	20	90,000	4	22,500
H	20	1,518,000	51	75,900	3	29,765
I	18	1,378,768	72	76,598	4	19,150
J	6	256,000	11	42,667	2	23,273
K	6	499,710	18	83,285	3	27,762
<b>Totals</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>9,243,141</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>88,030</b>	<b>4</b>	
				<b>Average SF/FTC :</b>		<b>20,818</b>
East Syracuse	8	634,824	36	79,353	5	17,634
Minoa	8	719,824	41	89,978	5	17,557
Fulton	8	880,050	46	110,006	6	19,132
<b>Oswego</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>716,448</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>102,350</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19,363</b>
West Genesee	8	880,050	46	110,006	6	19,132
<b>Totals</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3,682,520</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>96,908</b>	<b>4</b>	
			<b>Average SF/FTC of districts surveyed:</b>			<b>18,445</b>

\* FTC = Full-time equivalent cleaners, custodians and head custodians combined.



The analysis methodology for school district grounds duties is similar but, in this case, the number of acres per full-time grounds position is calculated. There can be significant variation in the number of acres of land owned by the school district compared to the number of acres actively maintained. The number of athletic fields maintained and prepared by each district is another variable. Groundskeeping duties may also be spread across different position titles which can skew the data analysis. Therefore, the range of acres per full-time grounds position among districts is usually broader than the other facilities areas. In Table 8.8, the statewide average acres per grounds position is 39 and the local average is 68. The APPA standard is 50 acres per employee. The disparity within the local districts is significant, ranging from 28 acres per employee in Fulton to 175 acres per employee in East Syracuse Minoa. Oswego is very close to the regional average. This does not necessarily mean that any specific district is understaffed or overstaffed; but rather a function of the variables noted above.

**Table 8.10**  
**Analysis for Grounds Staffing**

Statewide District	Acres	Sites	FTG*	Avg Acres/Site	Sites/FTG	Acres/FTG
A	141	4	3	35	2	56
B	49	6	2	8	3	25
C	150	8	5	19	2	30
D	328	13	14	25	1	23
E	104	2	2	52	1	52
F	106	8	7	13	1	15
G	300	8	4	38	2	75
H	398	10	6	40	2	66
I	390	18	8	22	2	49
J	100	6	1	17	6	100
K	43	7	3	6	2	14
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2109</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	
				<b>Average ACRES/FTG:</b>		<b>39</b>
East Syracuse Minoa	350	8	2	44	4	175
Fulton	167	8	6	21	1	28
Oswego	243	7	4	35	2	61
West Genesee	263	8	3	33	3	88
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>	
		<b>Average SF/FTG of districts surveyed:</b>				<b>68</b>

\* FTG = Full-time equivalent groundskeeper and grounds supervisor combined.



Lastly, the analysis relating to the district maintenance positions is considered. Employees in these positions usually have districtwide responsibilities and a higher level of knowledge about the operation of complex mechanical systems (electrical, heating, cooling, energy management, etc.) that keep the school buildings running. The recommended APPA standard is 100,000 square feet for each maintenance position. The statewide average at 109,879 in Table 8.11 is very close to the industry standard. It is interesting to note that a wide range from 72,286 square feet per employee to 225,000 square feet per employee yielded an average very close to the recommended standard. The average of 173,597 sf per maintenance employee for the local districts is greater than the national standard and statewide average but these districts are similar.

**Table 8.11**  
**Analysis for Maintenance Staffing**

<b>Statewide District</b>	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Area (SF)</b>	<b>FTM*</b>	<b>FTM/Building</b>	<b>SF/FTM</b>
A	4	356,600	3	0.6	142,640
B	5	544,475	5	1.0	108,895
C	8	815,000	7	0.9	116,429
D	13	1,688,087	15	1.2	112,539
E	2	282,536	2	1.0	141,268
F	10	1,495,627	14	1.4	106,831
G	5	450,000	2	0.4	225,000
H	19	1,518,000	21	1.1	72,286
I	19	1,378,768	11	0.6	125,343
J	6	256,000	2	0.3	128,000
K	6	499,710	3	0.5	166,570
<b>Totals</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>9,284,803</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>0.9</b>	
			<b>Average SF/FTM :</b>		<b>109,879</b>
East Syracuse	8	634,824	5	0.6	126,965
Minoa	8	719,824	4	0.5	179,956
Fulton	7	716,448	4	0.6	179,112
Oswego	8	880,050	4	0.5	220,013
West Genesee	31	2,951,146	17	0.5	
<b>Totals</b>			<b>Average SF/FTM of districts surveyed:</b>		<b>173,597</b>

\* FTM = Full-time equivalent maintenance workers, mechanics and maintenance supervisors combined.





In summary, the data analysis for the facilities department indicates that the Oswego City School District has an appropriate level of staffing in its facilities department. The district may choose to undertake a deeper analysis at the local level to determine if the department employees are being used as efficiently as possible.

The administrative/business office support positions are considered in Table 8.12 below. Districtwide positions, such as business office and personnel office employees, have been separated from building/department level positions. This can prove to be a challenging analysis since each district may be organized differently. The data indicate that the comparative districts are generally more similar than different in the number of office support employees.







**Table 8.12**  
**A Comparison of Administrative/Business Office Support Positions FTE**

Title	Central Square	East Syracuse Minoa	Fulton	West Genesee	Oswego	
Districtwide						
Account Clerk 1	No Data Available			2		
Account Clerk 2		4		2		
Account Clerk Typist					3	
Administrative Assistant						
Benefits Clerk					1	
Clerk			3			
Payroll Assistant				1		
Payroll Clerk			1			
Personnel Aide			1			
Personnel Specialist			1	1		
School Information Officer			1			
Senior Account Clerk					1	
Senior Account Clerk Typist				2	1	
Senior Payroll Clerk					1	
Senior Typist					4	
Typist				4	2	
Typist 1						
Typist 2			4		4	
TOTAL DISTRICTWIDE			12	9	10	13
Building/Department Level						
Account Clerk 1				1		
Account Clerk Typist					4	
Administrative Assistant				2		
Clerk			9		.5	
Clerk 1		1				
Clerk 2		1				
Library Clerk 1		1				
School Secretary 1		4				
School Secretary 2		2				
Senior Typist					6	
Typist			6		12	
Typist 1				13.5		
Typist 2		11		2		
TOTAL BUILDING/DEPARTMENT LEVEL		20	15	18.5	22.5	
TOTAL POSITIONS		32	24	28.5	35.5	



One benchmark frequently used when examining office support staffing levels is the number of students per office support employee. The 2021-22 Pre-K-Grade 12 enrollment for the comparative districts is:

East Syracuse Minoa:	3,406
Fulton:	3,258
Oswego:	3,577
West Genesee:	4,313

Applying the data from Table 8.10 to each district's enrollment, the number of students per office support employee can be determined and is presented in the chart below. Once again, Oswego is in the middle of the range of comparative districts.

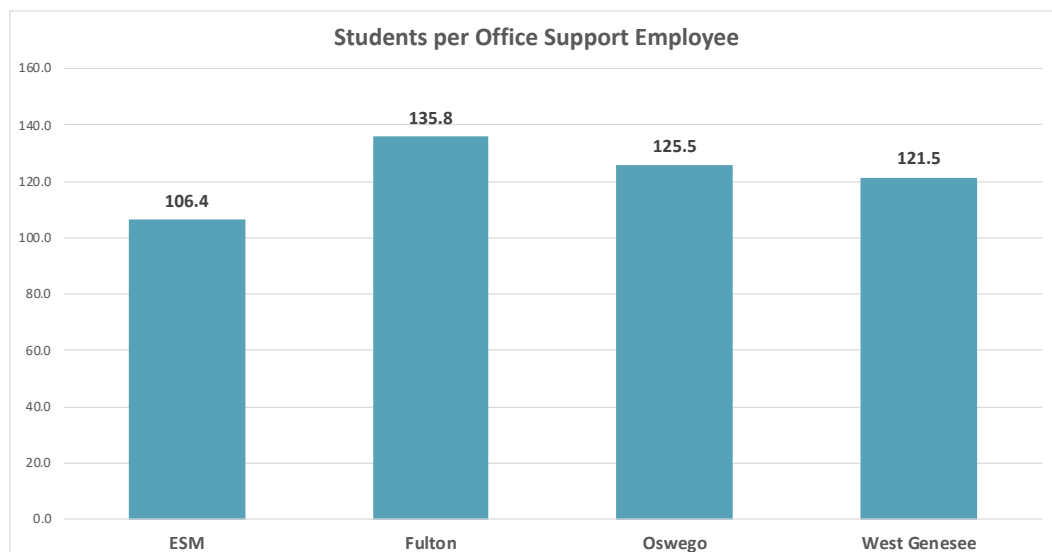


Table 8.13 reflects the food service positions within the comparative districts. East Syracuse Minoa uses a contractor to provide all food service operations and, therefore, has no district employees in this area. As noted in the table footnote, West Genesee does all food preparation for a neighboring district which impacts staffing levels. It appears that the Oswego staffing levels for the food service department is comparable to the other districts.

The standard for assessing the efficiency of school food service programs is the number of 'meals per labor hour'. Analyzing a school district program's meals per labor hour will provide insight into the fiscal and operational efficiency, appropriate staffing levels, and budget



development. The Institute of Child Nutrition defines meals per labor hour as ‘the number of meal equivalents (MEQs) served per labor hour. The ‘labor hours’ in this calculation include all managers, kitchen staff, servers, and cashiers. The industry guideline is that an efficient school food service operation should generally be between 14 and 18 meals per labor hour. The scope of this study did not include the meals per labor hour analysis but the data on the industry standards are provided should the district choose to complete a more detailed review.

<b>Table 8.13</b> <b>A Comparison of Food Service Positions FTE (FTE calculated based on 7 hour FT workday)</b>					
Title	Central Square	East Syracuse Minoa	Fulton	West Genesee*	Oswego
Cook	No Data Available	CONTRACT FOOD SERVICE			6.5
Cook-Manager			2	1	
Driver-Messenger				1.5	
Food Service Helper			9		13.5
Food Service Worker 1				11	
Food Service Worker 2				12	
Senior Food Service Helper			7		
Motor Vehicle Operator			1		
<b>TOTAL POSITIONS</b>			<b>19</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>20</b>
*West Genesee also prepares meals for another school district.					





## CHAPTER 9

### 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 recent 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 2012-13 to 2021-22. The Oswego community has supported the district's budget proposals for the past decade. The average approval percentage over this period was 66.5%. This consistent level of support from the taxpayers can 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 9.1</b>				
<b>District Budget Vote History</b>				
Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes	Approval Percentage
2021-22	1098	580	1678	65.4%
2020-21	2594	1380	3974	65.3%
2019-20	957	454	1411	67.8%
2018-19	1391	900	2291	60.7%
2017-18	1503	700	2203	68.2%
2016-17	2521	1116	3637	69.3%
2015-16	1150	1079	2229	51.6%
2014-15	1445	790	2235	64.7%
2013-14	1131	407	1538	73.5%
2012-13	1576	445	2021	78.0%

In addition, the Oswego school community has supported capital project votes in 2012 and 2017 as well as bus purchase propositions in each year they were presented to the voters.

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 9.2 shows Oswego's general fund balance sheet from this report for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2017 through June 30, 2021.



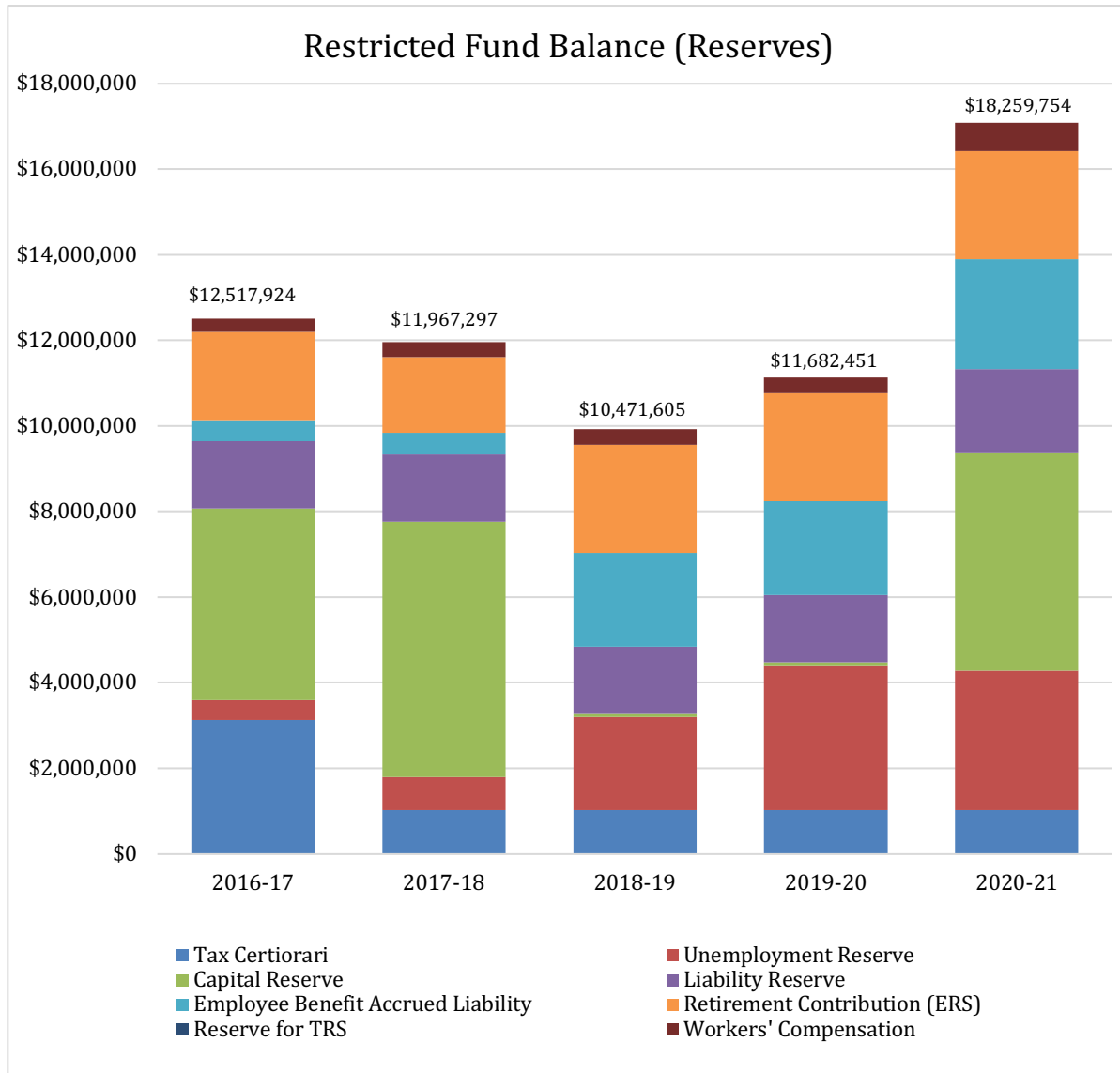
Table 9.2 Oswego City School District General Fund Balance Sheet					
	6/30/17	6/30/18	6/30/19	6/30/20	6/30/21
<b>ASSETS:</b>					
Unrestricted/Restricted Cash	\$16,992,412	\$17,171,749	\$13,535,218	\$16,211,689	\$21,585,066
Accounts receivable	\$4,440,403	\$4,915,056	\$5,537,063	\$5,669,933	\$4,680,395
Due from other funds	\$2,931,054	\$2,507,871	\$2,808,283	\$3,159,217	\$3,294,800
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$24,363,869</b>	<b>\$24,594,676</b>	<b>\$21,880,564</b>	<b>\$25,040,839</b>	<b>\$29,560,261</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND</b>					
<b>LIABILITIES:</b>					
Accounts payable	\$379,472	\$431,289	\$281,446	\$1,384,103	\$317,797
Accrued liabilities	\$1,351,398	\$1,523,250	\$1,892,412	\$1,371,908	\$1,533,772
Due to other funds	\$240,341	\$0	\$281,674	\$243,427	\$134,163
Due to Teachers' Retirement	\$3,343,060	\$3,075,297	\$3,498,692	\$3,092,010	\$3,421,396
Due to Employees' Retirement	\$262,218	\$250,888	\$258,921	\$260,677	\$310,713
Other Liabilities					\$194,588
Compensated Absences	\$84,444	\$84,444	\$84,444	\$152,457	\$150,418
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$5,660,933</b>	<b>\$5,365,168</b>	<b>\$6,297,589</b>	<b>\$6,504,582</b>	<b>\$6,062,847</b>
<b>DEFERRED INFLOWS</b>					
Deferred inflows of resources	\$914,152	\$1,181,287	\$1,011,969	\$1,377,936	\$724,673
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>					
<b>Nonspendable</b>	<b>\$505,690</b>	<b>\$508,494</b>	<b>\$417,901</b>	<b>\$295,758</b>	<b>\$516,239</b>
<b>Restricted</b>					
Worker's Compensation	\$311,028	\$355,401	\$355,401	\$355,401	\$655,401
Unemployment Reserve	\$463,819	\$763,819	\$2,163,819	\$3,374,665	\$3,251,665
Reserve for ERS	\$2,067,466	\$1,772,466	\$2,526,774	\$2,526,774	\$2,526,774
Reserve for TRS	\$0	\$0	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$1,170,120
Reserve for Tax Certiorari	\$3,134,491	\$1,034,491	\$1,034,491	\$1,034,491	\$1,034,491
Reserve for Employee Benefits	\$495,240	\$495,240	\$2,195,240	\$2,195,240	\$2,575,423
Liability Reserve	\$1,570,838	\$1,570,838	\$1,570,838	\$1,570,838	\$1,970,838
Capital Reserve	\$4,475,042	\$5,975,042	\$75,042	\$75,042	\$5,075,042
<b>Total Restricted Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$12,517,924</b>	<b>\$11,967,297</b>	<b>\$10,471,605</b>	<b>\$11,682,451</b>	<b>\$18,259,754</b>
<b>Assigned</b>					
Appropriated For Next Year's	\$1,400,000	\$1,718,616	\$0	\$1,587,811	\$0
Encumbrances	\$51,606	\$489,211	\$240,129	\$52,083	\$350,356
<b>Total Assigned Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$1,451,606</b>	<b>\$2,207,827</b>	<b>\$240,129</b>	<b>\$1,639,894</b>	<b>\$350,356</b>
<b>Unassigned</b>					
Unassigned Fund Balance	\$3,313,564	\$3,364,603	\$3,441,371	\$3,540,218	\$3,646,392
<b>Total Unassigned Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$3,313,564</b>	<b>\$3,364,603</b>	<b>\$3,441,371</b>	<b>\$3,540,218</b>	<b>\$3,646,392</b>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$17,788,784</b>	<b>\$18,048,221</b>	<b>\$14,571,006</b>	<b>\$17,158,321</b>	<b>\$22,772,741</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund</b>	<b>\$24,363,869</b>	<b>\$24,594,676</b>	<b>\$21,880,564</b>	<b>\$25,040,839</b>	<b>\$29,560,261</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, 2021, the district had \$655,401 in a reserve for workers' compensation, \$3,251,665 in a reserve for unemployment expense, \$2,526,774 in a reserve for employees' retirement system (ERS), \$1,170,120 in a reserve for teachers' retirement system (TRS), \$1,034,491 in a tax certiorari reserve (property assessment challenges), \$2,575,423 set aside for employee benefits and accrued liabilities, \$1,970,838 in a reserve for liability claims, and a \$5,075,042 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 9.3</b>					
<b>Restricted Fund Balance: A Five Year Summary</b>					
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Workers' Compensation	\$311,028	\$355,401	\$355,401	\$355,401	\$655,401
Unemployment Reserve	\$463,819	\$763,819	\$2,163,819	\$3,374,665	\$3,251,665
Retirement Contribution (ERS)	\$2,067,466	\$1,772,466	\$2,526,774	\$2,526,774	\$2,526,774
Reserve for TRS	\$0	\$0	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$1,170,120
Tax Certiorari	\$3,134,491	\$1,034,491	\$1,034,491	\$1,034,491	\$1,034,491
Employee Benefit Accrued Liability	\$495,240	\$495,240	\$2,195,240	\$2,195,240	\$2,575,423
Liability Reserve	\$1,570,838	\$1,570,838	\$1,570,838	\$1,570,838	\$1,970,838
Capital Reserve	\$4,475,042	\$5,975,042	\$75,042	\$75,042	\$5,075,042
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,517,924</b>	<b>\$11,967,297</b>	<b>\$10,471,605</b>	<b>\$11,682,451</b>	<b>\$18,259,754</b>

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 2018-19 budget year and, therefore, was not available in prior years. The total restricted fund balance increased in the 2020-21 fiscal year but was generally stable in the preceding four years; 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 2020-21 fiscal year, Oswego had \$3,646,392 set aside or 4.0% of its 2021-22 general fund budget (\$91,159,811).

Lastly, we examine the amount of money Oswego 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 2020-21 general fund budget, Oswego



applied \$350,356 to hold the 2021-22 tax rate down. There have, however, been fluctuations in the use of assigned fund balance in the past five years. This should be monitored carefully 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 9.4 that follows shows the use of assigned fund balance. Unassigned fund balance has been stable with balances at the statutory limit.

<b>Table 9.4 Five Year History of Assigned and Unassigned Fund Balance</b>		
<b>Fiscal Year Ending 6/30</b>	<b>Assigned Fund Balance*</b>	<b>Unassigned Fund Balance</b>
2021	\$350,356	\$3,646,392
2020	\$1,639,894	\$3,540,218
2019	\$240,129	\$3,441,371
2018	\$2,207,827	\$3,364,603
2017	\$1,451,606	\$3,313,564
*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 plus encumbrances from the prior year.		

Another important financial variable is the current amount of principal and interest the district carries on former capital borrowing. Regardless of any future options the district endorses concerning facilities, Oswego 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 as defined in its long range facilities plan. The following table summarizes the current capital debt obligations of the district. In addition, the table also estimates the amount of state aid the district will receive on these payments as well as the net local share taxpayers must contribute. The district has recently commenced a capital project that was approved by the voters in 2017. 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 reduce the potential for an adverse impact on the property tax cap calculation for the district.





<b>Table 9.5 Capital Debt After Aid Received</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Principal &amp; Interest</b>	<b>Estimated Aid</b>	<b>Premium Used to Offset Local Share</b>	<b>Estimated Local Share</b>
2021-22	\$6,434,267	\$5,826,325	\$243,625	\$364,317
2022-23	\$7,918,763	\$6,597,418	\$375,200	\$946,145
2023-24	\$8,081,188	\$7,135,345		\$945,843
2024-25	\$8,798,112	\$7,854,336		\$943,776
2025-26	\$5,456,450	\$4,513,037		\$943,413
2026-27	\$5,456,200	\$4,513,037		\$943,163
2027-28	\$5,986,463	\$5,007,481		\$978,982
2028-29	\$6,005,788	\$5,006,313		\$999,475
2029-30	\$5,678,700	\$4,585,602		\$1,093,098
2030-31	\$5,541,775	\$4,331,706		\$1,210,069
2031-32	\$4,650,875	\$3,331,659		\$1,319,216
2032-33	\$5,118,452	\$3,657,591		\$1,460,861
2033-34	\$5,144,650	\$3,636,026		\$1,508,624
2034-35	\$4,216,125	\$3,533,387		\$682,738
2035-36	\$4,062,375	\$3,533,387		\$528,988
2036-37	\$3,350,125	\$2,807,262		\$542,863
2037-38	\$2,573,375	\$2,081,136		\$492,239
2038-39	\$2,009,125	\$1,541,994		\$467,131
2039-40	\$962,500	\$820,713		\$141,787
2040-41	\$960,875	\$820,713		\$140,162
2041-42	\$958,750	\$820,713		\$138,037
2042-43	\$266,125	\$325,933		(\$59,808)
2043-44	\$270,250	\$325,933		(\$55,683)
2044-45	\$269,125	\$325,933		(\$56,808)
2045-46	\$267,875	\$325,933		(\$58,058)
2046-47	\$266,500	\$325,933		(\$59,433)
<i>Total</i>	\$100,704,808	\$83,584,846		\$15,903,810

An examination of the data in table 9.5 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 Oswego district for approved capital project expense is 88.2% as noted in Table 9.6 below.



<b>Table 9.6 Building Aid Ratios</b>	
<b>Oswego</b>	<b>Voter Approval Date</b>
0.782	prior to 7/1/98
0.882	on or after 7/1/1998 but prior to 6/30/2000
0.882	on or after 7/1/2000 but prior to 6/30/2005
0.882	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.

While the full property value in 2018-19 decreased from 2017-18, Table 9.7 shows that the property value of the Oswego district has increased each year since then. Local officials have been proactive in assessment practices to ensure that the property value of the district is reflected accurately.

<b>Table 9.7 Full Property Value</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Oswego</b>	<b>\$ Increase</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
2017-18	\$1,446,089,594		
2018-19	\$1,429,801,628	-\$16,287,966	-1.1%
2019-20	\$1,459,053,498	\$29,251,870	2.05%
2020-21	\$1,487,282,293	\$28,228,795	1.9%
2021-22	\$1,532,656,492	\$45,374,199	3.1%

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 9.8, the property tax levy for Oswego either decreased or increased at a rate less than 1% annually in the past five years.



<b>Table 9.8</b> <b>Property Tax Levy</b>			
Year	Oswego	\$ Increase	% Increase
2017-18	\$29,590,912		
2018-19	\$29,253,417	-\$337,495	-1.1%
2019-20	\$29,458,867	\$205,450	0.7%
2020-21	\$26,643,448	-\$2,815,419	-9.6%
2021-22	\$26,643,448	\$0	0.0%

Table 9.9 below illustrates that the full value tax rates of the Oswego City School District have decreased from \$20.46 per thousand in 2017-18 and 2018-19 to a rate of \$17.38 in 2021-22. This is a result of a decreased or flat tax levy in four of the five years and increasing district property values.

<b>Table 9.9</b> <b>History of Full Value Tax Rates</b>					
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
<b>Tax Levy</b>	\$29,590,912	\$29,253,417	\$29,458,867	\$26,643,448	\$26,643,448
<b>Full Value</b>	\$1,446,089,594	\$1,429,801,628	\$1,459,053,498	\$1,487,282,293	\$1,532,656,492
<b>FV Tax Rate</b>	\$20.46	\$20.46	\$20.19	\$17.91	\$17.38
<b>% Change</b>		0.0%	-1.3%	-11.3%	-3.0%

All financial factors reviewed in this study indicate that the Oswego City school district is in currently in excellent fiscal condition. It should be noted that all data reviewed is retrospective and does not account for conditions that may present in future years.





## CHAPTER 10

### 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, 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 additional perspective by district staff and the Oswego Board of education.

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

*Finding 1:* Live births in the Oswego City School District were used to predict kindergarten enrollment five years later. The live birth rate has generally decreased since 2007 with 2019 being the last year of actual data.

*Finding 2:* The K-12 district enrollment has declined from 3,634 in 2016-17 to 3,445 in 2021-22, or a decrease of 5.2%. In 1996-97, the district enrolled 5,370 K-12 students with decreases in each subsequent year except for 2013-14 and 2018-19.

*Finding 3:* Looking out to 2028-29, enrollment projections estimate the district will have approximately 3,033 K-12 students, a further decrease of 12.0% from 2021-22 enrollment.

*Finding 4:* Examining enrollments at the elementary schools we find that, in the past five years, enrollment has decreased at Charles Riley (-10.0%), Leighton (-2.5%), Fitzhugh Park (-14.3%), and Minetto (-12.2%) while increasing at Kingsford Park (+4.5%)

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



*Finding 6:* Oswego County population has decreased each year from 2010 (122,141) to 2020 (116,346) and the U. S. Census projects it will continue to decline through 2040 (108,231).

*Finding 7:* Like most upstate counties, the median age in Oswego County has been rising, albeit gradually, from 38.6 years in 2010 to 40.8 years in 2020. Additionally, the Oswego County childbearing age group (15-44 years) has been declining since 1990.

*Finding 8:* In 2021-22 the elementary schools have reasonable class size averages (Charles Riley, 17.4; Fitzhugh Park, 16.6; Kingsford Park, 20.3, Frederick Leighton, 18.9, Minetto, 17.2).

*Finding 9:* On the New York State grades 3-8 tests, Oswego students generally score above Oswego County students in English/Language Arts and Mathematics.

*Finding 10:* 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 11:* Class sizes in the middle and high schools are very reasonable; elective courses generally have sufficient enrollment to maintain these options for students.

*Finding 12:* Approximately 26.5% of Oswego's juniors and seniors attend a CTE program at BOCES.

*Finding 13:* Only 7.8 % of the 319 sections of courses offered at Oswego High School have fewer than 10 students.

*Finding 14:* An extensive number of interscholastic athletic and co-curricular opportunities are available to the students in Oswego.

*Finding 15:* The district educates many of its special needs students in district schools while sending only 22 students to out-of-district programs in 2021-22.

*Finding 16:* The graduation rate for Oswego students has been in the low to mid 80% range while the dropout rate has been between 8%-13%.

*Finding 17:* The district has five older elementary buildings that have all been rated as satisfactory in the 2015 Building Condition Survey.

*Finding 18:* In 2021-22, there are 85 sections of elementary classes; should the district close the Frederick Leighton school and distribute the students to the other three city elementary schools, there would be 74 sections of elementary classrooms.

*Finding 19:* There is not sufficient room in the middle school to move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to that building..



*Finding 20:* Based on the 2015 Building Condition Survey and the district's long range facilities plan, there is approximately \$17 million worth of capital work to be considered for the district's five elementary buildings.

*Finding 21:* School building utility costs are a relatively small expense.

*Finding 22:* Of the 676 district employees, 452 of them are teachers, teaching assistants, or teacher aides.

*Finding 23:* The cost of employee fringe benefits equals, on average, approximately 61% of the salary.

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

*Finding 25:* Should the district decide to close the Frederick Leighton Elementary School, staff savings of approximately \$1,868,476 could be realized.

*Finding 26:* District Office staffing levels are generally comparable to other similar districts.

*Finding 27:* Non-instructional staffing levels are generally comparable to other similar districts.

*Finding 28:* The Oswego community has 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 fluctuating over the past five years.

*Finding 31:* From July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021, unassigned fund balance has been maintained at statutory limits.

*Finding 32:* Full value tax rate is less in 2021-22 (\$17.38/\$1000) than it was in 2017-18 (\$20.46/\$1000).

*Finding 33:* Oswego has approximately \$16 million in local share of debt service (after estimated building aid at 88.2%) on its current borrowing through 2046-47.



### ***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 Oswego students 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 that the district will likely experience a decline in enrollment over the next seven years. In order to study the options contained in this report in a comprehensive and transparent fashion, 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 current buildings are necessary to ensure that buildings are equipped to provide Oswego 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.
2. It is recommended that the district consider closing the Frederick Leighton Elementary School and distribute its current students to the other three city elementary school buildings.
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 closures related to student enrollment and instructional program changes,
  - ✓ scope of work to be performed from the current and future Building Condition Surveys and the district's long range facilities plan,



- ✓ long term structure of appropriate school facilities as program needs and enrollment 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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**OSWEGO**  
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT