Utilization Study

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Education Consultants

Deb Ayers ▲ *Jen Heckathorn, PhD* ▲ *John Wisniewski, CDF*

(315) 396-9111

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CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, the North Syracuse Central School District commenced a comprehensive program and facilities study. Consultants, along with community members, district staff, and student representatives, examined district data and developed possible options for educationally and fiscally sound programs and facilities to guide the district into the next decade. The committee's focus was on the critical question developed by the district:

> *How can the North Syracuse Central School District strategically restructure its staffing, facilities, and grade-level configurations to optimize educational outcomes and emotional well-being for all students, while addressing declining enrollment, reduced state aid, and future growth opportunities like the Micron project?*

Seven meetings were held with the consultants and the advisory committee to consider a variety of options for answering the study question. In the end, the following findings, conclusions, and recommendations are made about school programs and facilities in North Syracuse.

Key Findings

Enrollment

Finding 1: Live births in the North Syracuse district were used to predict kindergarten enrollment ten years later. Prior to 2020, the live birth rates have been relatively stable; however, there is a wide variation in the last 4 years of actual data. Based on national data that have illustrated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on birth rates, it is reasonable to predict that the increase in the 2021 year data is the anomaly, but subsequent live birth data should be closely monitored as it becomes available.

Finding 2: The K-12 district enrollment has declined from 8,124 in 2019-20 to 7,360 in 2024-25, or a 9.4% decrease. During this same period of time, both elementary (-6.7%) and secondary (-7.8%) enrollment decreased. In 1999-00, the district enrolled 9,967 K-12 students with a peak enrollment of 10,041 in 2006-07.

Finding 3: Looking forward to 2034-35, enrollment projections estimate the district will have approximately 6,545 K-12 students, a decrease of 11.1% from 2024-25 enrollment of 7,360.

Finding 4: With the exception of KWS Bear Road School (+5.9%), elementary school enrollments have decreased over the past five years: Allen Road (-2.4%), Cicero (-6.5%), Lakeshore Road (-5.6%), Roxboro Road (-13.3%), Smith Road (-2.8%).

Finding 5: With the exception of the COVID–19 pandemic year 2020-21, the number of district residents that elect to home-school their children has remained constant over the past five years as has resident student enrollment in non-public schools. Resident student enrollment in charter schools and other public schools has increased.

Finding 6: Onondaga County's population has increased slightly from 2013 (473,708) to 2019 (476,256) and has declined slightly until 2023 (467,873). The U. S. Census projects it will continue to decline through 2040 (457,256).

Finding 7: Like most upstate counties, the median age in Onondaga County has been rising, albeit gradually, from 38.7 years in 2010 to 39.5 years in 2020. Additionally, the Onondaga County childbearing age group (25-44 years) has been declining since 1990.

Instructional Program

Finding 8: The district's student population has become significantly more diverse over the past decade, with increasing numbers of Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and multiracial students and a declining proportion of white students. The share of students with disabilities and those who are economically disadvantaged has also grown.

Finding 9: Chronic absenteeism is a notable concern at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Finding 10: The district operates an extensive prekindergarten program that blends state Universal Prekindergarten funding with partnerships across multiple community-based organizations and includes integrated settings for students with disabilities. Any change to the location of this program would require the district to conduct a cost/benefit analysis as it would likely trigger a review by NYSED and could change the structure of the current programming.

Finding 11: Elementary class sizes are consistently below contractual limits across all schools, supporting manageable teacher-student ratios.

Finding 12: Instructional time is clearly defined for elementary English language arts and mathematics but remains inconsistent for elementary science and social studies, making it difficult to fully implement the adopted science curriculum and limiting dedicated social studies instruction.

Finding 13: Elementary social studies content is largely addressed through the Core Knowledge Language Arts program, which is designed primarily for literacy development and provides limited opportunities for deep disciplinary inquiry.

Finding 14: Elementary performance on state English language arts and mathematics assessments is near or slightly below statewide averages, with Roxboro Road Elementary consistently performing below both district and state benchmarks.

Finding 15: Roxboro Road Elementary's performance led to a Targeted Support and Improvement designation for multiracial students, resulting in the district's classification as a Target District under state accountability requirements.

Finding 16: At the middle level, Gillette Road Middle School outperforms Roxboro Road Middle School in both English language arts and mathematics. Roxboro Road Middle School has shown improvement but continues to have achievement gaps and higher rates of chronic absenteeism.

Finding 17: Secondary outcomes show stability and strength in some areas, including graduation rates matching the state average and a higher percentage of students earning Regents Advanced Diplomas, but chronic absenteeism has increased, and subgroup performance gaps persist.

Finding 18: The district maintains strong structures such as consistent elementary schedules and broad secondary course offerings, yet uneven implementation and persistent disparities among student groups remain evident.

Facilities

Finding 19: North Syracuse has developed a long-range facilities plan based on data from the Building Condition Survey (BCS), Annual Visual Inspection (AVI), and identified district instructional needs.

Finding 20: While enrollment has been declining, rooms in most buildings are utilized due the expansion of student support services and course offerings.

Finding 21: Instructional square footage is comparable in all elementary buildings except Allen Road Elementary which is smaller.

Finding 22: The North Syracuse Early Education Program (NSEEP) is currently housed in the Main Street building. The building is not well suited for this student population and has many ongoing maintenance challenges.

Finding 23: Following an absence of any capital improvement projects from 2009-2016, North Syracuse voters have approved capital projects in October 2016, December 2019, December 2021, May 2022, and December 2022 with work targeted in various instructional buildings.

Finding 24: Based on current NYSED capacity ratings, it may be possible to add a grade level to the North Syracuse Junior High School and/or Cicero North Syracuse High School buildings.

Finance

Finding 25: The North Syracuse community has supported the district's spending plans.

Finding 26: Restricted fund balance accounts (reserves) have been established and funded by the district. Reserve balances in 2019-20 were insufficient but the district has made significant progress in building the funds to a more appropriate level over the past six years and continued growth is advised.

Finding 27: Use of assigned fund balance to support the district spending plan increased from 2021 to 2024.

Finding 28: From 7/1/19 – 6/30/25, unassigned fund balance has been maintained at statutory limits.

Finding 29: Full value tax rate is less in 2025-26 ($16.07/$1000) than it was in 2020-21 ($23.44/$1000) due to increasing property value of the district.

Finding 30: North Syracuse has approximately $72.8 million in local share of debt service (after estimated building aid at approximately 85%) on its current borrowing through 2045-46.

Finding 31: 2038-39 and 2041-42 are key transition years when there are significant reductions to the annual local existing debt service payment.

Finding 32: Capital project development is a complex, multi-year process that involves district stakeholders, NYSED, architects/engineers, and financial advisors.

Finding 33: Building aid is influenced by a variety of factors including the district's building aid ratio, Building Aid Units, district/building operating capacity, enrollment, and multi-year maximum cost allowance. Building aid accounts for approximately 85% of approved capital project costs for North Syracuse.

Staffing

Finding 34: Staffing accounts for the majority of district expenditures, underscoring the importance of regularly reviewing how personnel are allocated across schools and programs to maintain both instructional quality and fiscal responsibility.

Finding 35: Data suggest that staffing levels in certain instructional areas—such as elementary education, family and consumer sciences, languages other than English, and special education—may exceed what would typically be expected for a district of similar size, presenting an opportunity to continue to assess staffing levels in the context of programming, and to explore potential adjustments over time.

Finding 36: The district maintains a broad administrative team that provides oversight and support for instructional and operational functions. Yet, the district's total number of administrators is substantially lower to districts of similar size in the region, and the administrative to teacher ratio is substantially higher than districts of similar size in the region. Continued attention to role alignment can help ensure leadership capacity remains responsive to district needs and resources.

Finding 37: The district's workforce is not yet reflective of the growing diversity of its student population. Ongoing efforts to attract and retain a more diverse staff could strengthen student connections and support culturally responsive practices.

Finding 38: Collaborative partnerships with organizations such as Liberty Resources, the YMCA, and Promise Zone specialists enhance student support and well-being. As these programs expand, coordinated planning will be important to balance space, staffing, and service needs across schools.

Transportation

Finding 39: The district employs a three-tier (triple trip) routing plan for daily routes to and from its school buildings.

Finding 40: Average student bus riding time is 30-40 minutes. Current highway construction within the district can affect bus schedules.

Finding 41: The district transportation fleet has over 150 buses and other vehicles used to transport students to in-district and out-of-district educational locations.

Finding 42: The district currently uses a north/south attendance zone model for districting students to Gillette Road Middle School and Roxboro Road Middle School. This model contributes to the differences in demographic make-ups at each building.

Conclusions and Recommendations

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

> How can the North Syracuse Central School District strategically restructure its staffing, facilities, and grade-level configurations to optimize educational outcomes and emotional well-being for all students, while addressing declining enrollment, reduced state aid, and future growth opportunities like the Micron project?

As consultants, we have concluded, with the help of the committee, that the district will likely need to make changes to current grade, building, and instructional configurations to provide more effective, relevant, and efficient PreK - 6 (elementary) programming for students within the North Syracuse CSD over the next decade. These changes are described in detail in the recommendations listed below. However, it is important to note that these changes will take time to implement--perhaps as long as a decade--and that monitoring, and adjustments of the situations and assumptions made in this report is critical.

Recommendations

- *It is recommended that the district update enrollment projections annually to obtain the best data upon which to make decisions regarding educational programs, staffing, and facilities usage.* Current enrollment data indicate that enrollment is slightly decreasing; however, the district must pay particular attention to changing economic conditions, especially as Micron becomes established in the district.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Use annual BEDS actual enrollment data to update enrollment projections
        - Monitor the business and economic development within the school district and neighboring areas which could have student enrollment implications.
- *It is recommended that the district establish instructional coherence in science and social studies at the elementary grad levels.* The current lack of consistent instructional time and

expectations for science and social studies limits the district's ability to implement adopted curricula with fidelity. Aligning schedules and expectations across buildings will improve instructional equity and depth of learning.

- Potential Action Steps:
  - Develop and adopt districtwide minimum instructional time allocations for science and social studies at each grade level.
  - Review and revise master schedules to ensure alignment with instructional expectations for all core subjects.
  - Provide professional learning focused on inquiry-based science and disciplinary literacy in social studies.
  - Monitor implementation through routine schedule audits, classroom observations, and teacher feedback cycles.
  - Establish a cross-building curriculum team to update pacing guides and ensure vertical alignment across grade levels.

- *It is recommended that the district strengthen Tier 1 core instruction and intervention systems, as identified by the NYU Metropolitan Center study.* Variability in Tier 1 classroom instruction and intervention practices contributes to uneven student performance across schools. A stronger and more consistent MTSS framework will enhance equity and academic outcomes.
  - Potential Action Steps:
    - Provide professional development on high-impact, evidence-based instructional strategies and culturally responsive pedagogy.
    - Implement a districtwide MTSS framework with standardized procedures for data collection, progress monitoring, and intervention delivery.
    - Establish processes for using benchmark data consistently across schools to identify students needing additional support at least quarterly.
- *It is recommended that the district adjust staffing patterns to align with student needs, enrollment trends, and potential configuration changes.* Staffing patterns should reflect both current enrollment realities and future grade-span or building configuration considerations to maintain equitable class sizes and fiscal sustainability.

- Potential Action Steps:
  - Model various configuration scenarios to forecast instructional staffing implications.
  - Establish target staffing ratios for classroom teachers, interventionists, and support staff aligned to instructional priorities.
  - Engage building leaders in annual staffing reviews to ensure balanced workloads and efficient resource use.
  - Develop a transparent process for reallocation or right-sizing decisions to minimize disruption and maintain equity.
  - Investigate opportunities for grant applications and awards that could provide additional programming and staffing that can support students' mental health needs.

- *It is recommended that the district build and implement comprehensive equity and inclusion framework.* Persistent subgroup performance gaps and discipline disproportionality require a coherent, measurable approach to equity.
  - Potential Action Steps:
    - Develop, adopt, and implement t a districtwide Equity and Inclusion Plan informed by the NYU Metro Center's root cause analysis.
    - Provide annual professional learning on culturally responsive teaching, implicit bias, and restorative practices for all staff.
    - Establish an Equity Leadership Team to monitor implementation and track progress toward measurable goals.
    - Should the district retain a grade level alignment with two intermediate or middle school buildings, explore attendance zone modifications to create an east/west student distribution model as opposed to the current north/south model (as referenced in the 2024 Haber and Associates study).
- *It is recommended that the district strengthen recruitment and retention efforts to increase staff diversity across all schools.* The district's student population has become significantly more diverse over the past decade, yet staff diversity has not increased at the same pace.

Expanding recruitment pipelines and enhancing retention supports will help ensure that the district's workforce more closely reflects the students and families it serves.

- Potential Action Steps:
  - Develop targeted recruitment strategies that include partnerships with educator-preparation programs and regional organizations focused on diversifying the teaching workforce.
  - Establish grow-your-own pathways such as future educator clubs, paraprofessional-to-teacher programs, and paid student-teaching placements to attract local candidates from historically underrepresented groups.
  - Create onboarding and mentorship systems to support new hires, with specialized supports for educators from diverse backgrounds to strengthen retention.
  - Review hiring practices to ensure equity, including diverse interview committees, bias training, and consistent selection criteria.
  - Monitor workforce diversity metrics annually and report progress to the Board of Education to guide continuous improvement.

- *It is recommended that the district continue to provide support to the North Syracuse Early Education Program (NSEEP) through strategic planning and advocacy.* NSEEP is a cornerstone of the district's early childhood continuum, providing inclusive and developmentally appropriate services for young learners throughout Onondaga County. As the district evaluates potential relocation of these programs from Main Street Elementary, it will be essential to analyze the educational, logistical, and fiscal impacts of any move while ensuring continuity of high-quality services.
  - Potential Action Steps:
    - Conduct a comprehensive impact analysis of relocating NSEEP, including effects on students, staff, families, transportation, and facilities.
    - Engage key stakeholders (including families, teachers, administrators--in North Syracuse CSD and beyond, related service providers, and

community partners) in discussions about program design, location, and future growth.

- Develop a transition plan that preserves the integrity of the integrated 4410 model and maintains compliance with state regulations.
- Advocate proactively with the New York State Education Department to sustain the current structure or to secure approval for a revised model that continues to meet the needs of early learners with and without disabilities.
- Ensure that any relocation or reconfiguration includes sufficient staffing, specialized equipment, and facility supports to maintain program quality and accessibility.

- *It is recommended that the district strengthen instructional continuity and course alignment between North Syracuse Junior High School (Grades 8–9) and Cicero–North Syracuse High School (Grades 10–12).* The current separation of Grade 9 from the high school provides focused support for younger adolescents but also presents challenges in maintaining instructional continuity. Students often make course-selection decisions in Grade 9 that effectively determine their high school pathways in math and science, sometimes before they are developmentally ready to make such choices. At the same time, redundancy in course offerings between the junior high and high schools limits scheduling efficiency and dilutes access to advanced opportunities. A coordinated, systemwide review grounded in the state's Blueprint for a Graduate and the new graduation pathways will help ensure that course sequences are both flexible and purposeful.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Ensure Conduct a comprehensive audit of Grades 8–12 course sequences to identify early tracking points, redundant courses, and gaps in alignment with state graduation pathways.
        - Use the Blueprint for a Graduate as an organizing framework to map essential skills and competencies across all secondary courses, ensuring that each pathway supports readiness for college, career, and community life.

        - Convene cross-building teams of content directors, counselors, and administrators to realign course progressions so students retain flexibility through at least Grade 10 while maintaining access to rigorous options.
        - Review credit-bearing Grade 9 offerings to ensure they are directly linked to coherent sequences in Grades 10–12.
        - Integrate this review with district planning for new NYSED graduation pathways, using the process as an opportunity to modernize program structures, eliminate redundancies, and expand personalized learning options.
        - Monitor the implementation of revised pathways through enrollment data, student feedback, and postsecondary outcomes to ensure equitable access and impact.
- *It is recommended that the district actively monitor and plan for the use of fund balance. In the past fifteen years, the district has made a remarkable recovery from its precarious fiscal position and must continue to build on this progress to position the district for future years of fiscal stability.*
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Cap the future use of assigned appropriated fund balance at the current level with a goal of decreasing when possible.
        - Identify target goals for reserve fund balances and develop a plan for the funding and use of the reserves.
- *It is recommended that the district fully consider and further develop the four building configuration options presented in this report.* The Utilization Study committee developed and discussed a total of seven grade level configurations. Following an anonymous ranking of all seven possible configurations by each committee member, four options emerged as clear committee preferences (see Chapter 4 for more details on this process). Options 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B represent two core configuration models, with the A and B versions offering small variations in the structure of grades seven through twelve. All four options

are presented in the figures and tables that follow, including advantages, disadvantages, and general observations related to each scenario.

Each option provides a different pathway for meeting the priorities identified by the committee. All options bring students together into one cohort earlier (all options bring them fully together as 7th graders rather than currently as 8th graders) and either maintain or reduce current transitions, although they do so in different ways. Options 1A/1B create a clear progression by placing all students in K-3 together in five elementary buildings, followed by grades 4-6 in two intermediate buildings. This structure offers an opportunity to standardize instructional practices and address disparities in experience across buildings. Options 2A/2B reduce transitions even further by placing K-6 in seven elementary buildings. This creates longer periods of stability for students, although it may require more intensive work to ensure instructional consistency across a larger number of sites. In both options, the closure of the Main Street building and the relocation of NSEEP keeps the program intact and positioned in a host building that allows for greater access to services.

No single configuration fully resolves every priority. Options 1A/1B streamline the instructional program by centralizing grade spans, which may support improvements to climate and culture in the intermediate grades, but it also concentrates students in larger grade level cohorts that will require careful planning. Options 2A/2B minimize transitions to the greatest extent but distributes grades across more buildings, which may challenge efforts to reduce instructional disparity and maintain consistent school climate expectations. The junior high and high school variations within each option offer additional flexibility, yet each brings its own tradeoffs related to space, operations, and student experience. Thoughtful analysis, engagement with stakeholders, and a careful weighing of benefits and challenges is needed before determining which option best supports the district's long term vision.

- Potential Action Steps:
  - This work should include vetting each option with varied demographic and constituent groups, holding targeted feedback sessions, and gathering additional input to deepen the district's understanding of the strengths, tradeoffs, and potential advantages identified in the initial analysis.
  - Conduct an analysis of attendance zones for the elementary and current middle schools. The current attendance zone configuration may be contributing to imbalances in enrollment and the distribution of student needs across buildings. A zone realignment study will allow the district to determine whether the existing boundaries support equitable opportunities for students and efficient use of space. Furthermore, the four options presented here for grade level/building reconfiguration, would be enhanced by an understanding of alternative attendance zones.
  - Use the New York State Education Department building capacity data included in Appendix B to understand how each configuration uses available space. These capacity figures will help the district evaluate the long-term feasibility of each option and determine which configurations can best accommodate future enrollment patterns.
  - Consider the implementation of this recommendation alongside the realities of currently ongoing and planned capital work. Aligning these efforts will help ensure that staffing, programming, and facilities investments reflect a coherent long-term plan for the district.

Table 11.1 Option 1 Overview		
Number of Buildings	**Type of Buildings**	**Notes**
1	NSEEP @ Allen Rd. Elementary	Main St. would close
5	Kindergarten - 3rd grade elementary buildings	Located at: ● Roxboro Rd. Elementary ● KWS Bear Rd. Elementary ● Cicero Elementary ● Lakeshore Rd. Elementary ● Smith Rd. Elementary
2	4th - 6th grade intermediate buildings	Located at: ● Roxboro Rd. Middle School ● Gillette Rd. Middle School
Option 1A		
1	7th - 9th grade junior high school	Located at: NSJHS
1	10th - 12th grade high school	Located at: CNS High School
Option 1B		
1	7th - 8th grade junior high school	Located at: NSJHS District Office could also move to this building
1	9th - 12th grade high school	Located at: CNS High School

Figure 11.1: Option 1A

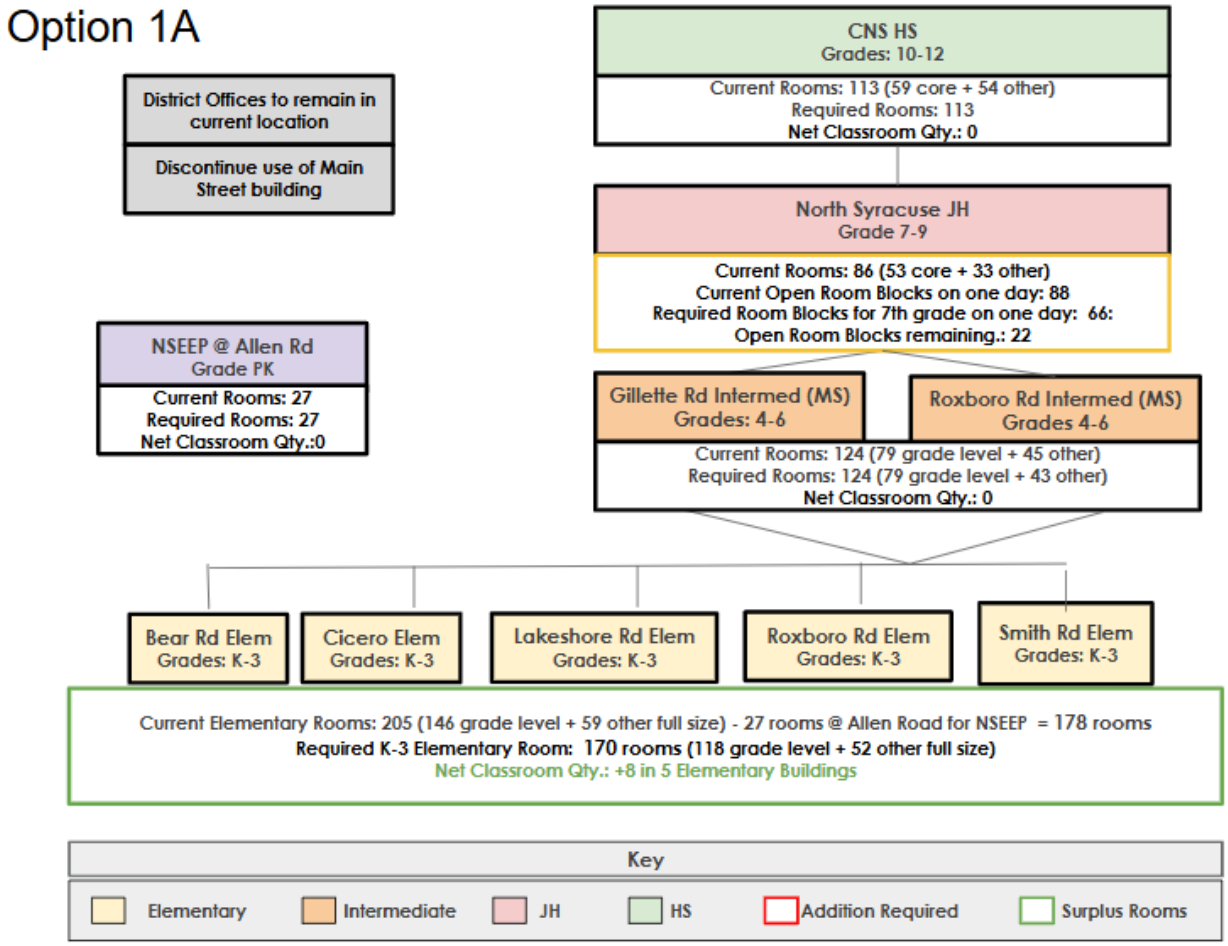


Table 11.2
Option 1A Advantages, Disadvantages, and Observations

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Only one of the JH/HS buildings is impacted • Might not see as many buildings/sections max out attendance-wise. • Students are brought together one grade sooner (7th grade) and 4th grade brought together at a mid-step one grade level sooner, too. • Certification and contract issues are lessened. • 5 elementary schools compared to 6 seems like it could be a pro. • Separating upper elementary from the middle school could be really beneficial for programming options • 7th/8th grade together for sports and extracurriculars	• 9th graders are still separate from the rest of the HS, which continues the "stuckness" and redundant course issues • 7th/8th/9th together might not be the best maturity wise • 9th graders remain separated for sports and other extracurriculars • Space at the JH may be tight • Closing a building would likely have a negative impact on the climate of that building; community concern • 8 "extra" classrooms across the elementary may not be enough given increasing services needed for students

Other Observations

- Option 1A could be viewed as a stepping stone if the ultimate desire is Option 1B (9-12 together).
- Fewer elementary schools will result in larger subgroup populations in each school building which could have an impact on accountability status. Potentially helps buildings re-focus on disproportionality.
- What do we really want in terms of elementary buildings--K-3 vs. K-6? What is really best for kids?
- Maintains the current number of building transitions

Figure 11.2: Option 1B

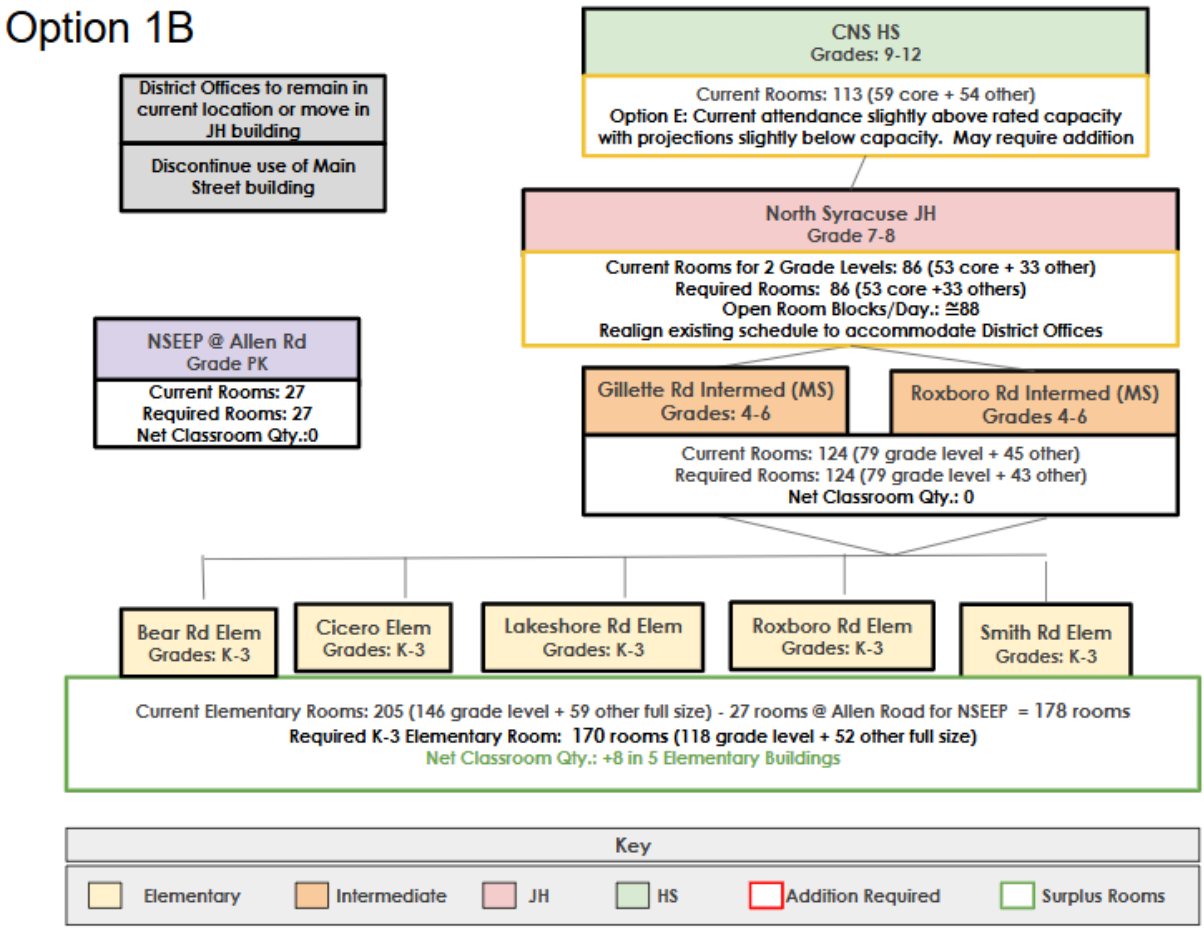


Table 11.3
Option 1B Advantages, Disadvantages, and Observations

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Moving the DO to the JH (as opposed to MS) keeps it more centrally located and accessible to more families • Students are brought together one grade sooner (7th grade) and 4th grade brought together at a mid-step one grade level sooner, too. • Certification and contract issues are lessened. • 5 elementary schools compared to 6 seems like it could be a pro. • Separating upper elementary from the middle school could be really beneficial for programming options • 7th/8th grade together for sports and extracurriculars • Majority of HS/regents classes would be at the High School--9th grade would be more "high school"--will help alleviate some of the "stuckness" and redundancies between 9th/10th grades • Brings most of the varsity sports/athletes to the HS (Some of the activities take place at the Gillette Road school but shuttles would not need to originate at the current MS schools) • 9th graders would be able to participate in more clubs • More students may continue on in music programming from 9th to 10th grades (continuity in teachers and programming).	• JH and HS may both be tight for space. • Closing a building would likely have a negative impact on the climate of that building; community concern • 8 "extra" classrooms across the elementary may not be enough given increasing services needed for students

Other Observations

- Could close 2 buildings (one instructional)
- Maintains the current number of building transitions

Table 11.4 Option 2 Overview		
Number of Buildings	**Type of Buildings**	**Notes**
1	NSEEP @ Roxboro Rd. Elementary	Main St. would close
7	Kindergarten - 6th grade elementary buildings	Located at: ● Allen Rd. Elementary ● KWS Bear Rd. Elementary ● Cicero Elementary ● Lakeshore Rd. Elementary ● Smith Rd. Elementary ● Roxboro Rd. Middle School ● Gillette Rd. Middle School
Option 2A		
1	7th - 9th grade junior high school	Located at: NSJHS
1	10th - 12th grade high school	Located at: CNS High School
Option 2B		
1	7th - 8th grade junior high school	Located at: NSJHS District Office could also move to this building
1	9th - 12th grade high school	Located at: CNS High School

Figure 11.3: Option 2A

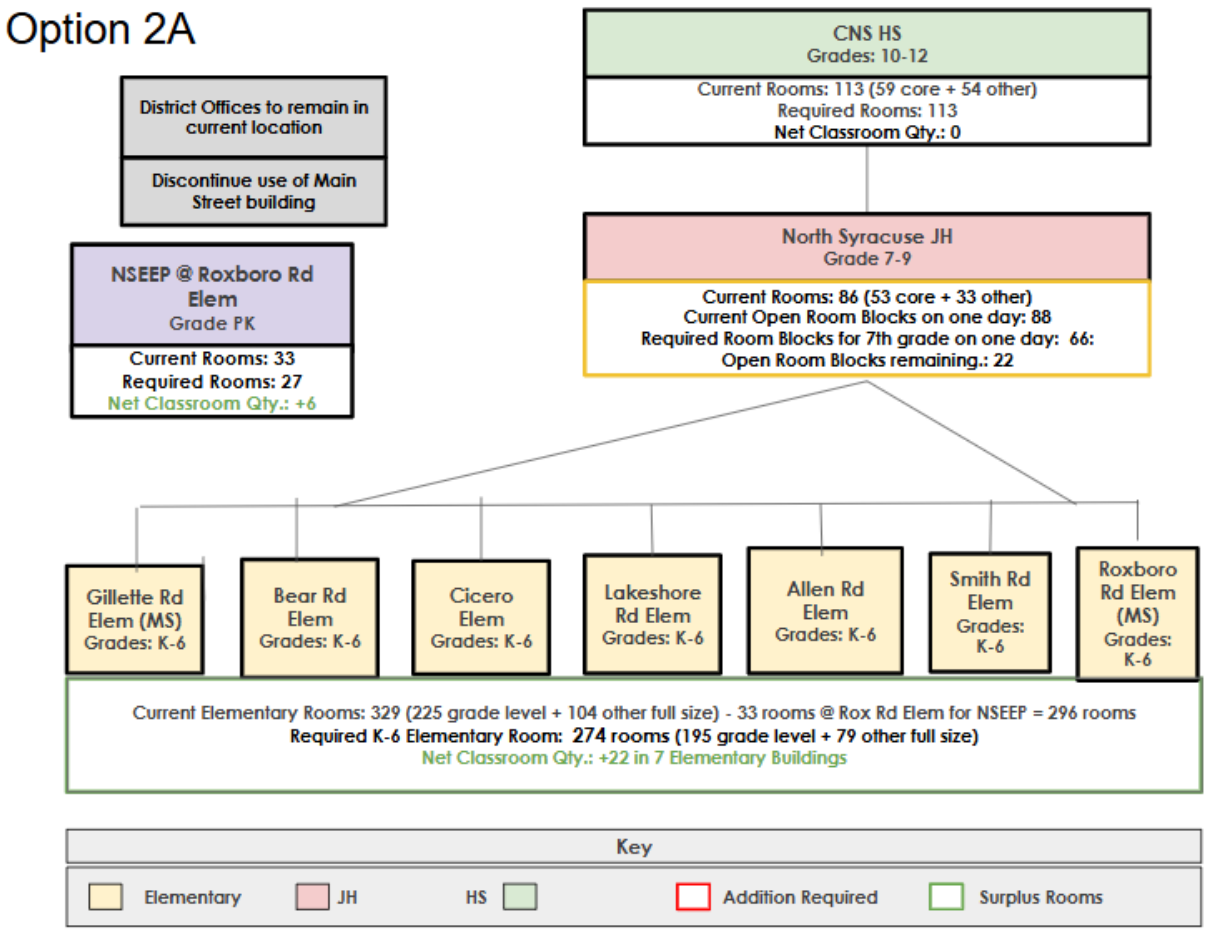


Table 11.5
Option 2A Advantages, Disadvantages, and Observations

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Students come together at 7th grade which is one year earlier than current practice. • There are no "middle schools" so students go straight from elementary to being together in one cohort. • Much more "extra" space in the elementaries	• 9th graders are still separate from the rest of the HS, which continues the "stuckness" and redundant course issues • 7th/8th/9th together might not be the best maturity wise • 9th graders remain separated for sports and other extracurriculars • Space at the JH may be tight • Closing a building would likely have a negative impact on the climate of that building; community concern • 8 "extra" classrooms across the elementary may not be enough given increasing services needed for students • K-6 in one building and on buses together might be a concern for some families about developmental appropriateness • Extensive renovations would be required to retrofit the middle schools to be appropriate for young learners. • Due to the sizes of the K-6 buildings, it's likely the number of students in each building would not be similar, which could lead to some equity issues.

Other Observations

- Would need to understand if this model can be supported by the Transportation Department (increasing number of students at elementary buildings and transporting to 7 elementary buildings instead of 6)

Figure 11.4: Option 2B

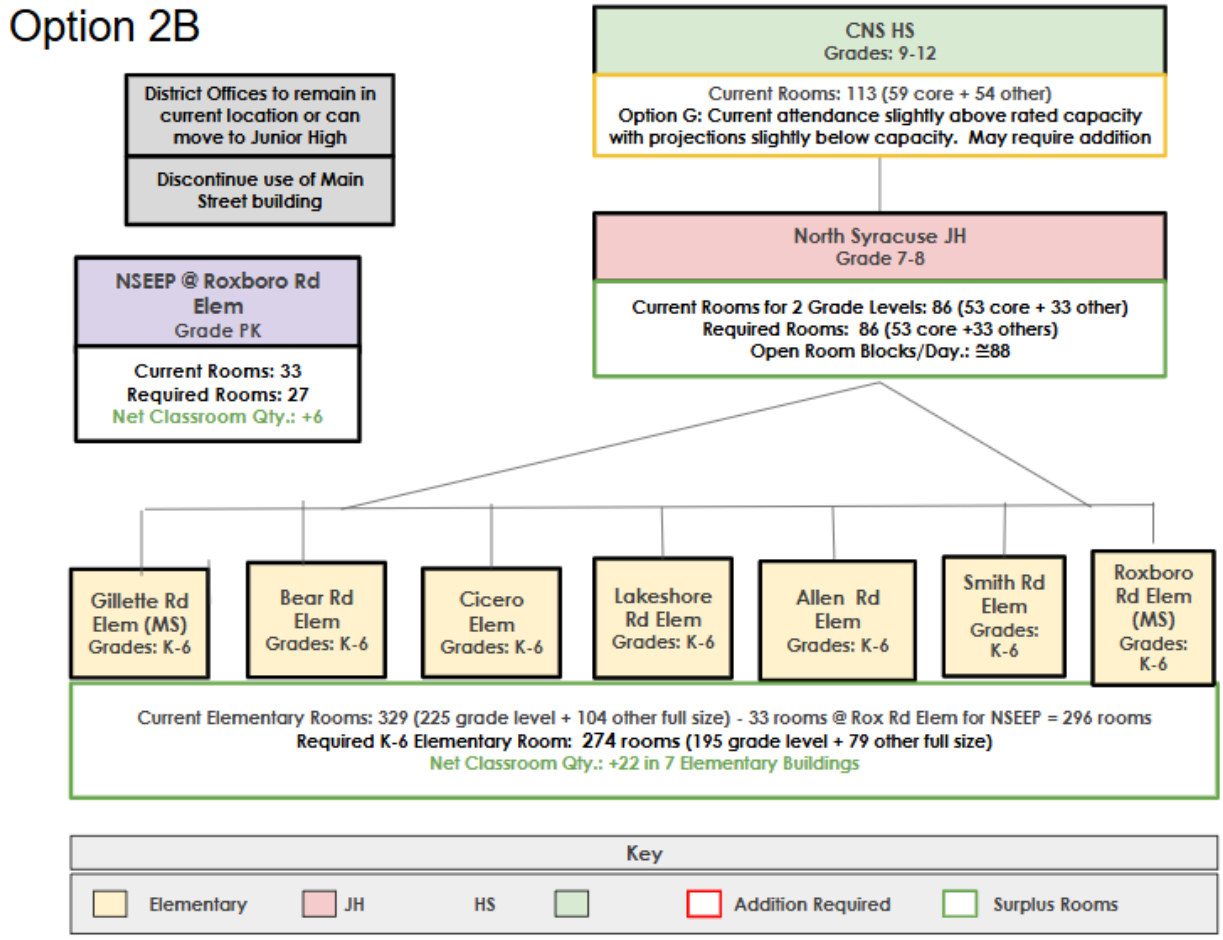


Table 11.6
Option 2B Advantages, Disadvantages, and Observations

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Brings most of the varsity sports/athletes to the HS (Some of the activities take place at the JH school but shuttles would not need to originate at the current MS schools) • 7th/8th grade together for sports and extracurriculars • Majority of HS/regents classes would be at the High School--9th grade would be more "high school"--will help alleviate some of the "stuckness" and redundancies between 9th/10th grades • 9th graders would be able to participate in more clubs • More students may continue on in music programming from 9th to 10th grades (continuity in teachers and programming). • Lots of "extra" space across the elementary buildings	• Closing a building would likely have a negative impact on the climate of that building; community concern • Space at the HS would be tight • K-6 in one building and on buses together might be a concern for some families about developmental appropriateness • Extensive renovations would be required to retrofit the middle schools to be appropriate for young learners. • Due to the sizes of the K-6 buildings, it's likely the number of students in each building would not be similar, which could lead to some equity issues.
Other Observations	
• Would need to understand if this model can be supported by the Transportation Department (increasing number of students at elementary buildings and transporting to 7 elementary buildings instead of 6)	

- *It is recommended that in developing and potentially selecting a new building configuration model, the district give thought to whether realigning attendance zones from the current north/south zoning to the east/west zoning proposed in the Haber 2024 study could provide more equitable building demographics. Additionally, it is recommended that in considering attendance zone realignments, the district also consider whether school start times should (and can) be adjusted.* The committee recognizes the demographic differences apparent in

the geographical conditions throughout the North Syracuse CSD. Working to assess the impact of grade level and building level configurations and potential changes to attendance zones could provide more demographically balanced buildings. Likewise, understanding the impacts to start times, and whether the district has interest in adjusting secondary start times similarly to the East Syracuse Minoa school district's changes could provide academic benefits for students.

- Potential Action Steps:
  - Use updated GIS mapping to visualize demographic distributions, transportation routes, and attendance zone boundaries under multiple configuration options.
  - Assess how potential attendance zone changes would interact with proposed building configuration models to ensure both equitable access and efficient building utilization.
  - Conduct a feasibility study of adjusting school start and end times, particularly at the secondary level, to determine transportation, contractual, and instructional implications.
  - Review research on later secondary start times, including case studies such as East Syracuse Minoa CSD, to evaluate potential academic and health benefits for students.
  - Use modeled scenarios, community input, and logistical analyses to inform configuration and scheduling decisions in alignment with district equity goals.

- *It is recommended that the district continue to monitor sentiment about the inclusion of 9th grade at Cicero-North Syracuse High School.* The committee identified both advantages and disadvantages with having 9th grade students with their 10th - 12th grade peers. The primary advantages are related to opening up academic program pathways for 9th graders and reducing redundant programming between the junior high school and the high school,

while the primary concern is the availability of space at the high school for four grade levels. Such monitoring could include attending to considerations like the climate/culture of 9th grade at North Syracuse Jr. High School, changes in academic achievement as indicated by the four-year dropout/graduation rate, and the number of 9th graders active in extracurriculars that involve their 10th - 12th grade peers. If there is consensus across the district that the best opportunities for students lie with a grade 9 - 12 high school, it is logistically possible to add additional classrooms to the existing building footprint.

CHAPTER 2: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A study of this scope and significance could not have been completed without the support, collaboration, and encouragement of many people. We begin by expressing our sincere gratitude to the members of the Community Advisory Committee appointed by the North Syracuse Central School District. The team's members included:

David Babikian
Taryn Bakal
Brian Berlin
Sophia Burden
Katie Burke
Elizabeth Cannella
Nancy Congdon
Kate Debottis
Andrew Dolson
Rosemary Farfaglia
Molly Gaeta
Sara Garvey
Kelly Glashauser
Sarah Jones
Jill Knapp
Cheryl McDonald
Sara Morrice
Donna Marie Norton
Phil Smith
Heather Stauffer
Sean Sullivan
Naomi Trivison
Shannan Vaillant
Emma Warren
Jamie Sullivan

The team members contributed their time and expertise to guide the process, asking thoughtful questions and helping identify clear paths to answers. Their efforts strengthened the quality of this study. Beyond participating in committee meetings, many also joined the optional building walkthroughs held before each session. A summary of the committee's observations appears in Appendix A.

The North Syracuse administrative team, under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Terry Ward, played a vital role by providing accurate, timely information that enabled the committee to move its work forward. Special appreciation goes to Elizabeth Keeley, secretary to the superintendent, whose coordination kept the many parts of this study running smoothly, and to Matthew Erwin, Director of Facilities for the district, who attended every building tour and committee meeting and provided key real-time information for the committee to consider.

We also extend our gratitude to the North Syracuse Board of Education. Its members have been deliberate and forward-thinking in exploring how to offer students and staff the best possible educational programs and facilities while remaining fiscally responsible to district residents.

CHAPTER 3: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This study is intended to respond to the critical question developed by the North Syracuse district. The information analyzed and recommendations developed will provide context and direction to 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 North Syracuse Central School District is located in Onondaga County and covers approximately 64 square miles in the townships of Cicero (approximately 51% of the tax base), Clay (approximately 40% of the tax base), and Salina (approximately 9% of the tax base). The district's instructional facilities include one early education program building (Main Street School), six elementary schools housing grades K-4 (Allen Road Elementary, Cicero Elementary, KWS Bear Road Elementary, Lakeshore Road Elementary, Roxboro Road Elementary, Smith Road Elementary), two middle schools for grades 5-7 (Gillette Road Middle, Roxboro Road Middle), one junior high school for grades 8 and 9 (North Syracuse Junior High) and a 10-12 High School (CNS High). At the time of the study, Lakeshore Road Elementary was closed due to a comprehensive building renovation. Students in kindergarten were relocated to Cicero Elementary, grades 1-3 to St. Margaret's School, and grade 4 to Gillette Road Middle. A map of the district follows.

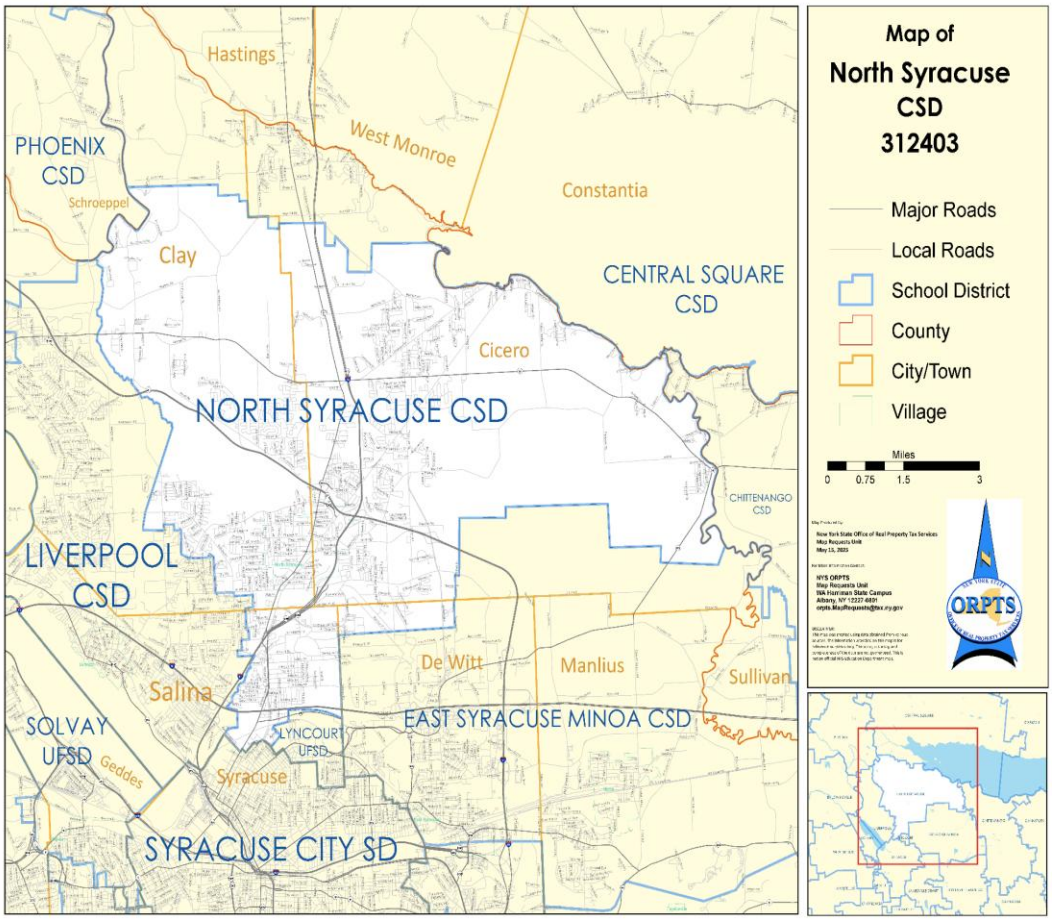


Figure 3.1: A map of the North Syracuse Central School District

The North Syracuse Central School District community has consistently shown its support for the education of its 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 capital projects in 2016, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2024 (Use of Capital Reserve).

Table 3.1 District Budget Vote History				
Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes	Approval Percentage
2025	1022	411	1433	71.3%
2024	1204	642	1846	65.2%
2023	1077	744	1821	59.1%
2022	1298	466	1764	73.6%
2021	1063	407	1470	72.3%
2020	4417	2074	6491	68.0%
2019	1423	410	1833	77.6%
2018	1545	890	2435	63.4%
2017	1378	428	1806	76.3%
2016	1636	477	2113	77.4%

Nevertheless, finding the balance between the provision of a good education in facilities conducive to the teaching and learning process and the ability of a local community to provide the financial resources is an ongoing challenge for any board of education and administrative team.

The North Syracuse School District Board of Education continues its examination of possible ways to organize grades and buildings in the district to provide optimum instructional settings for its students and staff. 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 North Syracuse Central School District strategically restructure its staffing, facilities, and grade-level configurations to optimize educational outcomes and emotional well-being for all students, while addressing declining enrollment, reduced state aid, and future growth opportunities like the Micron project?

The timeline called for initiation of this study in June 2025 with the final report completed by December 2025. The Board of Education selected Deborah Ayers and her team of consultants, Jen Heckathorn, PhD and John Wisniewski, CDF, to conduct this study. Ms. Ayers has extensive

experience in working with school districts in New York State that have examined 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 North Syracuse,
    c. be independent of special interest groups,
    d. be educationally sound, and
    e. be fiscally responsible and realistic.

The study concludes with this final report to the Board of Education. While the community utilization committee had significant input into the development of this study, the non-binding recommendations contained in this document represent the conclusions of the consultants and are presented as a vehicle for engaging the Board, the staff, the students, and the community in discussion regarding the future direction for the district to maximize opportunities for students with effectiveness, efficiency and fiscal responsibility.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study is 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 that engages stakeholders with diverse viewpoints in the review process. In this specific study, the Board of Education and district leaders posed the following question that drove this study:

> How can the North Syracuse Central School District strategically restructure its staffing, facilities, and grade-level configurations to optimize educational outcomes and emotional well-being for all students, while addressing declining enrollment, reduced state aid, and future growth opportunities like the Micron project?

Data Collection and Analysis

The consultants gathered considerable data from the district and other agencies. The data gathering was focused by the question that drove the study. These data were summarized and analyzed as they were received. Sometimes the consultants needed to engage in clarifying conversations around the data, and district leaders were helpful in facilitating those conversations.

The consultants held seven meetings with the community advisory committee to tour current building facilities, review data that had been gathered, and share thoughts and opinions. The committee set up by the North Syracuse CSD was a highly engaged and thoughtful committee that asked good questions and brought their perspectives to the meetings. Notably, attendance at the committee meetings was outstanding.

Committee Survey Results Summary

At the November 2025 committee meeting, a set of seven building configuration options (Options A through G) was presented to the committee. Committee members worked with the consultants to analyze the options, generate a list of advantages and disadvantages for each option, and provide critical feedback on the options.

Following the discussion, committee members were asked to complete a survey regarding their preferences for building configurations. The survey consisted of four questions: indicating their role in the district (e.g., parent, teacher, administrator, community member), ranking the options, sharing their most pressing concerns when ranking the possibilities, and an open-ended response to share any additional comments.

Committee members were given the following guidelines before completing the survey:

- You don't have to include all options in your ranking. If some are not at all palatable to you, discard them (don't rate them).
- You can have "ties." Some options may be equally appealing to you.
- There is no "right" or "wrong" thinking here. Your rankings are *your preferences*, but try to identify what it is about the options that is attractive or disarming to you.

A total of 23 out of 25 members of the Building Configuration Committee responded to the follow-up survey. This represents a 92 percent response rate. Two respondents were not present during the meeting where the configuration options were reviewed, but still completed the survey.

Respondent Roles

Respondents were permitted to select multiple roles. Table 4.1 summarizes the distribution across the 23 survey participants.

Table 4.1 **Respondent Roles**	
Role Category	Count
Parent of current student(s)	13
Reside in the district	10
Employee (teachers and administrators combined)	9
Educator outside N. Syracuse CSD	3
Parent of past student(s)	2
Parent of future student(s)	2
Student	1
Other	1

The group reflects a mix of district employees, parents, and residents, with a heavy representation from families currently enrolled in the district.

Preference Rankings

Respondents ranked Options A through G in order of preference. Table 4.2 shows the number of first-choice and second-choice votes each option received.

Table 4.2 First and Second Choice Rankings			
Option	1st Choice	2nd Choice	Total 1st and 2nd Choice Rankings
Option A	4	4	8
Option B	7	5	12
Option C	3	3	6
Option D	4	4	8
Option E	1	3	4
Option F	1	3	4
Option G	9	2	11

Option G received the highest number of first-place votes.

Option B was the most consistently high-ranked when combining first and second choices.

Weighted Ranking System

To develop a more nuanced understanding of preferences, rankings were converted into a weighted point structure. This approach captures both the intensity of preference and the breadth of support across the committee.

- 1st place = 7 points
- 2nd place = 6 points
- 3rd place = 5 points
- 4th place = 4 points
- 5th place = 3 points
- 6th place = 2 points
- 7th place = 1 point
- Not ranked = 0 points

Table 4.3 includes total points, average score (including non-votes), and the number of respondents who ranked each option (i.e., the number of non-blank responses per option).

Table 4.3 Total Points, Average Score, and Number Ranked			
Option	Total Points	Average Score (incl. zeros)	Number of Respondents that Ranked this Option
Option A	63	2.74	16
Option B	105	4.57	21
Option C	62	2.70	16
Option D	52	2.26	15
Option E	100	4.35	19
Option F	103	4.48	21
Option G	115	5.00	23

Interpretation of Results

Overall Trends

- Option G is the highest-scoring option, both in total points and average score.
- Options B, F, and E form a strong second tier with similar levels of broad support.
- Options A and C fall into a middle-low range.
- Option D is consistently the lowest-ranked option across all measures.

The Nuance of Option G

Option G stands out as the clear top choice in the weighting system and received the most 1st-place votes (9). It also achieved the highest average score (5.0) even when counting unranked responses as zero.

However, Option G also received a relatively high number of 5th–7th place rankings (6; no non-votes). This makes it a polarizing option:

- It was strongly preferred by many respondents
- But ranked very low by a smaller subset

This pattern suggests that Option G elicited clear enthusiasm from much of the committee but was not universally supported.

Role-Based Preference Differences

Role-linked patterns indicate that different stakeholder groups evaluated the options through distinct lenses:

Parents of Current Students

- Most supportive of Option G (5.31)
- Also supportive of E and F
- Rated Options A, C, and D lower

Employees (Teachers and Administrators)

- Option F (6.14) was the top choice
- Strong support also for G and B
- Low support for A, C, and D

Employee preference for Option F stands out as unique compared with other groups.

Residents

- Robust support for Option B (7.0)
- Moderate support for G
- Very low ratings for D and F

Residents tended to prefer options with more direct impacts on neighborhood configuration.

Overall Role Patterns

- Option G had broad appeal across roles, especially among parents.
- Option F performed best among employees.
- Option B was especially strong among residents.
- Option D was weak across all role groups.

Thematic Analysis of Priorities for Ranking and Open-Ended Comments

Comments revealed consistent themes across respondents. Table 4.4 outlines those responses.

Table 4.4
Responses to Priorities for Ranking and Open-Ended Comments

Theme	Key Points Raised by Respondents
Transportation and Travel Time	• Concern about longer bus routes • Equity implications depending on the neighborhood • Impact on student fatigue and after-school participation
Academic Continuity, Course Pathways, and Class Size	• Importance of maintaining reasonable class sizes • Desire to avoid disruptions to instructional continuity and minimize disruptive transitions between buildings • Need to preserve stable pathways, especially at the secondary level
Community Identity and School Culture	• Maintain strong building identities • Avoid abrupt merging of community groups
Equity and Access	• Ensure equal opportunities across buildings • Maintain fairness in program distribution • Avoid configurations that create “winners” and “losers”
Staffing and Logistical Considerations	• Staffing realignment concerns • Space and capacity constraints • Operational practicality across configurations
Desire for Clear, Ongoing Communication	• Appreciation for being consulted • Need for timely updates • Desire for transparency in decision-making • Clear explanations of impacts

Survey Summary

Across 23 responses representing parents, employees, and district residents, the committee's preferences demonstrated both areas of consensus and clear differentiation among options. Weighted scoring and first-choice counts indicated that Option G was the strongest overall option, though it remained somewhat polarizing. Options B, F, and E generally received high support and represented a strong secondary tier of preferences.

Role-based analysis revealed that parents heavily favored Option G, employees strongly preferred Option F, and residents expressed a clear preference for Option B. These differences suggest that the perceived benefits and trade-offs of the configuration options vary according to stakeholder perspective and day-to-day experiences within the district.

Open-ended comments emphasized the importance of transportation efficiency, academic continuity, community identity, and equitable access to education.

Draft Report

Following the analysis of the survey results, the consultants further culled the options from seven to four. The options were also renamed Option 1A, Option 1B, Option 2A, and Option 2B, to reflect the similarities in the designs. These options can be found in Chapter 11: Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

A draft of the full report was shared with the committee and the committee met one final time to review and critique tentative recommendations before the study was concluded. The consultants then integrated that feedback into the report.

The final report was presented to the North Syracuse Central School District Board of Education in a public session on January 26, 2026.

CHAPTER 5: STUDENT ENROLLMENTS AND POPULATION TRENDS IN THE AREA

This section of the report provides a picture of the current status of the North Syracuse Central School District's student enrollment and corresponding projections 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 Method. 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 homeschooled, promotion/retention policies, transfers to and from nonpublic and charter schools, 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 secondary grade levels can be projected more realistically for up to ten years into the future.

The methodology used for this study was to extrapolate kindergarten enrollment cohorts from live birth data to the extent possible. Live birth data for the North Syracuse Central Schools from 2007 to 2022 is shown in the following table:

Table 5.1 Number of Live Births 2007 - 2022	
Calendar Year	Number
2007	682
2008	692
2009	677
2010	659
2011	632
2012	632
2013	600
2014	621
2015	610
2016	622
2017	595
2018	599
2019	610
2020	535
2021	614
2022	551

2022 is the most recent year with actual live birth data available. When considering the most recent four years (2019 through 2022) of actual data, an interesting pattern emerges. National statistics reflect an increase in births during 2021 tied to the COVID-19 pandemic. The North Syracuse live birth data reflect a decrease from 2019 to 2020. 2021 births return to the 2019 level but then decline again in 2022 to a level much closer to the 2020 data. It will be important to monitor the actual data for subsequent years as soon to determine a more accurate trend.

To begin the school district enrollment projection process, live births are compared with the kindergarten enrollment five years into the future; babies born in 2015 will be in kindergarten in 2020-21, babies born in 2016 will be in kindergarten in 2021-22, and 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 reasonably predict future kindergarten enrollments, we can complete the full table of future school enrollment as shown in the following table.

Table 5.2
North Syracuse K-12 Enrollment History and Projections
2019-20 to 2034-35

Grade	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	*2028-29*	*2029-30*	*2030-31*	*2031-32*	*2032-33*	*2033-34*	*2034-35*
Year /Births	2014 /621	2015 / 610	2016 /622	2017 /595	2018 /599	2019 /610	2020 /535	2021 /614	2022 /551	*2023 /582*	*2024 /582*	*2025 /582*	*2026 /582*	*2027 /582*	*2028 /582*	*2029 /582*
K	604	568	565	598	534	510	564	494	567	509	538	538	538	538	538	538
1	576	558	563	570	571	541	499	551	484	555	498	526	526	526	526	526
2	606	553	542	574	560	585	536	495	547	480	550	494	522	522	522	522
3	634	573	541	559	564	557	577	529	488	539	473	543	487	514	514	514
4	607	623	572	551	572	574	561	582	533	492	544	477	547	491	519	519
5	662	586	602	573	543	567	564	551	571	524	483	534	468	537	482	509
6	634	641	573	609	577	560	567	563	551	571	523	483	534	468	537	482
7	617	601	638	574	596	560	548	555	551	539	559	512	473	522	458	526
8	670	625	601	650	571	606	565	553	559	556	544	564	517	477	527	462
9	648	670	640	611	632	575	608	567	555	562	558	546	566	519	479	529
10	646	621	613	599	575	620	544	576	537	525	531	528	517	535	491	453
11	620	623	574	585	564	538	585	514	544	507	496	502	499	488	505	464
12	600	618	612	564	586	567	535	582	510	540	503	493	499	496	485	502
K-12 Total	8124	7860	7636	7617	7445	7360	7253	7112	6998	6899	6801	6739	6691	6633	6582	6545
K-4 Total	3027	2875	2783	2852	2801	2767	2738	2651	2619	2575	2603	2577	2620	2591	2618	2618
5-7 Total	1913	1828	1813	1756	1716	1687	1678	1669	1674	1634	1565	1529	1474	1528	1477	1517
8-9 Total	1318	1295	1241	1261	1203	1181	1173	1120	1114	1118	1102	1110	1083	996	1005	991
10-12 Total	1866	1862	1799	1748	1725	1725	1664	1671	1591	1572	1531	1523	1514	1519	1481	1419

Notes: (1) Ungraded special needs students are not included in these totals; (2) 2028-29 to 2034-35 live births are the average of the five previous years. Consequently, from 2028-29 to 2034-35, the early grade estimates are highly speculative.

As is apparent from Table 5.2, K-12 enrollment has declined over the past six years (8,124 in 2019-20 to 7,360 in 2024-25; -764 students/-9.4%). This decline is projected to continue through 2034-35 (7,360 in 2024-25 to 6,545 in 2034-35; -815 students/-11.1%). When further segregated during

the projection period, the data suggest that the elementary school, middle school, junior high school, and high school enrollments will all decrease with small year-to-year fluctuations.

North Syracuse CSD has a long history of providing a comprehensive prekindergarten program. The program comprises both full day and half day programs providing a wide spectrum of services to meet the identified needs of students. Table 5.3 that follows documents the prekindergarten enrollment for the past six years along with projections through 2034-35.

Table 5.3
North Syracuse Resident Pre-K Enrollment History and Projections
2019-20 to 2034-35

Grade	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	*2028-29*	*2029-30*	*2030-31*	*2031-32*	*2032-33*	*2033-34*	*2034-35*
Year/ Births	2014/ 621	2015/ 610	2016/ 622	2017/ 595	2018/ 599	2019/ 610	2020/ 535	2021/ 614	2022/ 551	*2023/ 582*	*2024/ 582*	*2025/ 582*	*2026/ 582*	*2027/ 582*	*2028/ 582*	*2029/ 582*
Pre-K Full Day	61	48	248	314	339	309	307	300	299	295	293	290	295	292	295	295
Pre-K Half Day	380	271	163	160	153	172	171	167	167	164	163	162	164	162	164	164
Pre-K Total Students Served	441	319	411	474	492	481	479	467	466	459	456	452	459	454	459	459

Enrollment in the prekindergarten programs has been very consistent in the post-pandemic years and is projected to remain at similar levels for the foreseeable future. As noted in Table 5.2, the projections for 2028-29 and beyond are highly speculative due to the absence of actual live birth data beyond 2022.

The district contracted with Ross Haber and Associates several years ago to review demographic, facility and grade level trends. As part of that study, the Haber team provided enrollment projections for the 2024-25 school year. Table 5.4 compares the projection data with the actual data enrollment data illustrating that the projected decline in enrollment was substantiated. This example also illustrates the importance of routinely updating enrollment projection data.

Table 5.4 2024-25 Actual Enrollment Compared to Ross Haber & Associates Projected Enrollment			
Grades	Actual 2024-25 Enrollment	Projected 2024-25 Enrollment	Difference
K-4	2767	2759	+8
5-7	1687	1704	-17
8-9	1181	1231	-50
10-12	1725	1720	+5
Total K-12	7360	7414	-54

The longer-term enrollment history for the district found in Table 5.5 below indicates peak enrollment in 2006-07 with a steady decline in subsequent years.

Table 5.5 North Syracuse CSD K-12 Enrollment History													
Year	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
K-12 Total	9967	9922	9957	9940	9897	9975	9967	10041	9833	9600	9481	9378	9249
Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
K-12 Total	9101	8920	8804	8717	8626	8484	8383	8175	7907	7681	7660	7486	7394
NOTE: These totals include all ungraded special education students NOT included in Table 5.2.													

When considering the six elementary schools, enrollment has decreased in five of the six schools over the past five years with the greatest decline at Roxboro Road Elementary. Enrollment has increased at KWS Bear Road Elementary. These trends are summarized in the following table:

Table 5.6 Five-Year History of Elementary School Enrollments Grades K-4 2020-21 to 2024-25						
School	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	5-Year % Change
Allen Road	334	315	333	325	326	-2.4%
Cicero	558	560	541	522	522*	-6.5%
KWS Bear Road	507*	476*	521	529	537	+5.9%
Lakeshore Road	450*	460*	456	432	425*	-5.6%
Roxboro Road	453	406	437	429	400	-13.3%
Smith Road	573	566	564	564	557	-2.8
Total	2875	2783	2852	2801	2767	-6.7%
NOTE: Enrollments do NOT include Prekindergarten program * Estimated due to construction relocation						

As illustrated in Table 5.7 below, Gillette Road Middle School, Roxboro Road Middle School, North Syracuse Junior High School, and Cicero North Syracuse High School have all experienced a consistently steady decline in enrollment.

Table 5.7 Five-Year History of Secondary School Enrollments Grades 5-12 2020-21 to 2024-25						
School	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	5-Year % Change
Gillette Road Middle School (Grades 5-7)	1112	1079	1053	1025	1003	-9.8%
Roxboro Road Middle School (Grades 5-7)	737	748	715	705	697	-5.4%
North Syracuse Junior High (Grades 8-9)	1298	1252	1272	1208	1186	-8.6%
CNS High School (Grades 10-12)	1879	1813	1763	1746	1748	-7.0%
Total	5026	4892	4803	4684	4634	-7.8%
NOTE: These totals may vary slightly from those in Table 5.2 due to students in ungraded programs.						

The data presented above substantiate the likelihood of a decrease in district enrollment, with minor year-to-year fluctuations, over the next ten years as current elementary classes progress through the grade levels to the secondary school buildings.

There are factors beyond the number of students enrolled in the North Syracuse district that should be considered. Some families may choose to provide their children's education in alternate ways. These data are examined here because significant changes could affect enrollment in the district's buildings. The total number of resident students educated outside of the district's school buildings has been very consistent over the past five years. While the number of students being educated at home has decreased, the data reflect increases in resident students attending non-public, charter or other public schools resulting in little fluctuation of annual totals. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that this student population will have little bearing on future school district enrollment.

Table 5.8
Five-Year History of Grades K -12 Resident Students Educated Outside of District Buildings

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*
2020-21	303	420	40	68	831
2021-22	222	456	45	68	791
2022-23	212	441	51	70	774
2023-24	215	442	49	92	798
2024-25	225	466	53	86	830

Lastly, it is important to consider the number of non-resident students attending school in the North Syracuse district. The district generally does not accept non-resident students except under very specific circumstances as approved by the superintendent and board of education. The number of non-resident students is, therefore, a small, stable number as detailed in Table 5.9, and has no significant bearing on overall district enrollment trends.

Table 5.9 Five-Year History of Non-Resident Students Attending North Syracuse CSD	
School Year	*Non-Resident Students Attending North Syracuse CSD*
2020-21	13
2021-22	17
2022-23	19
2023-24	28
2024-25	18

When considering school district enrollment trends, regional population trends should be considered. The North Syracuse district is part of Onondaga County. As Figure 5.1 shows, the total county population has fluctuated year to year from 2013 to 2019, peaking in 2019, but was generally stable. Since 2019, the population has steadily declined.

Figure 5.1: Onondaga County Population 2013-2023

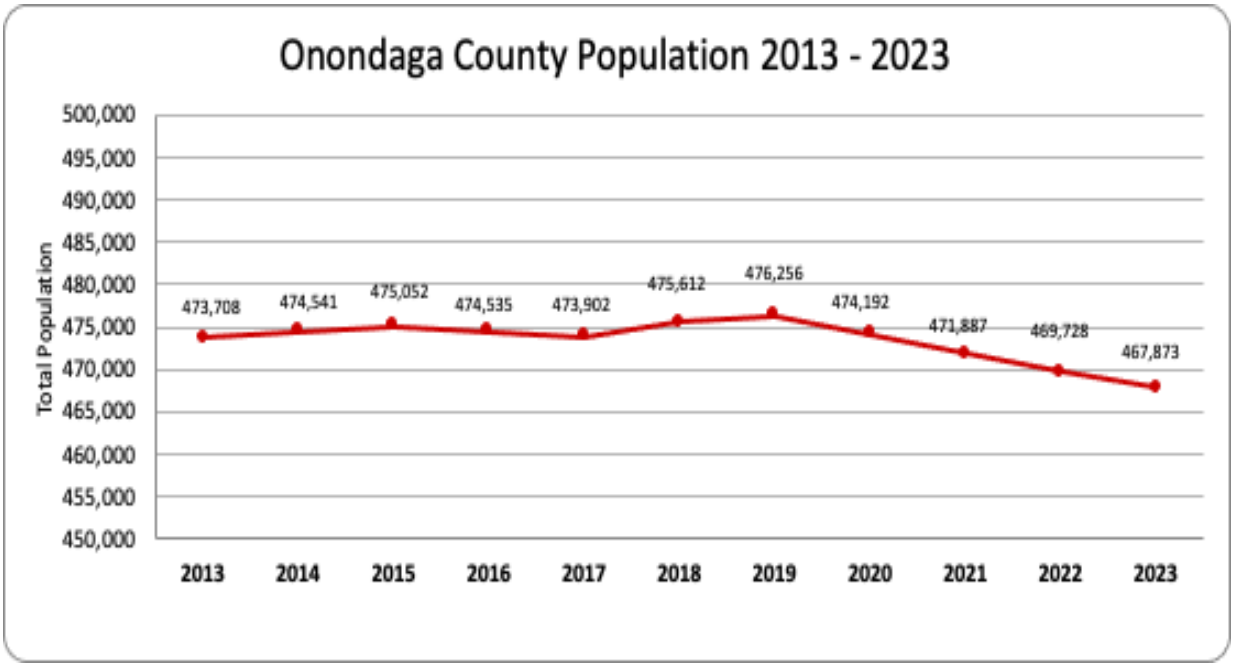
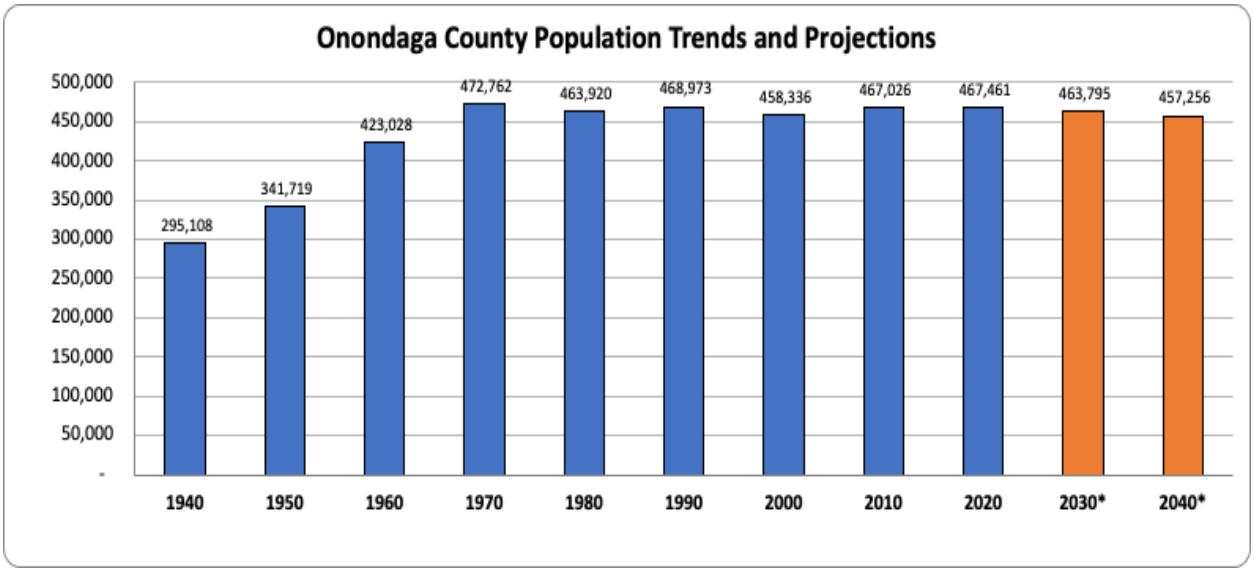


Figure 5.2 illustrates that the Onondaga County total population is projected to decline slightly through 2040. Given that the projection data is based on trends and estimates and does not

consider possible significant changes in economic factors, it is reasonable to predict that the Onondaga County population will generally be static over the next several decades.

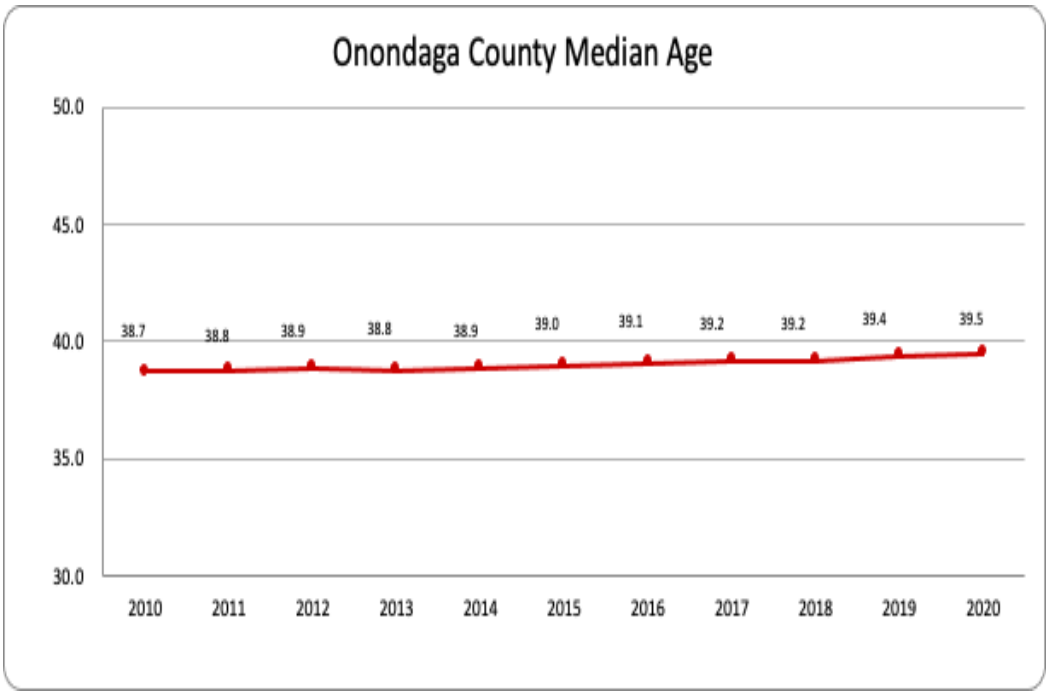
Figure 5.2: Onondaga County Total Population Trend and Projection to 2040



It is important to also examine the median age of Onondaga County residents since this may provide insight into future school enrollments. Populations that are aging could mean that, in addition to people living longer, there is an out-migration of younger residents, hence fewer families that may have children entering the school system.

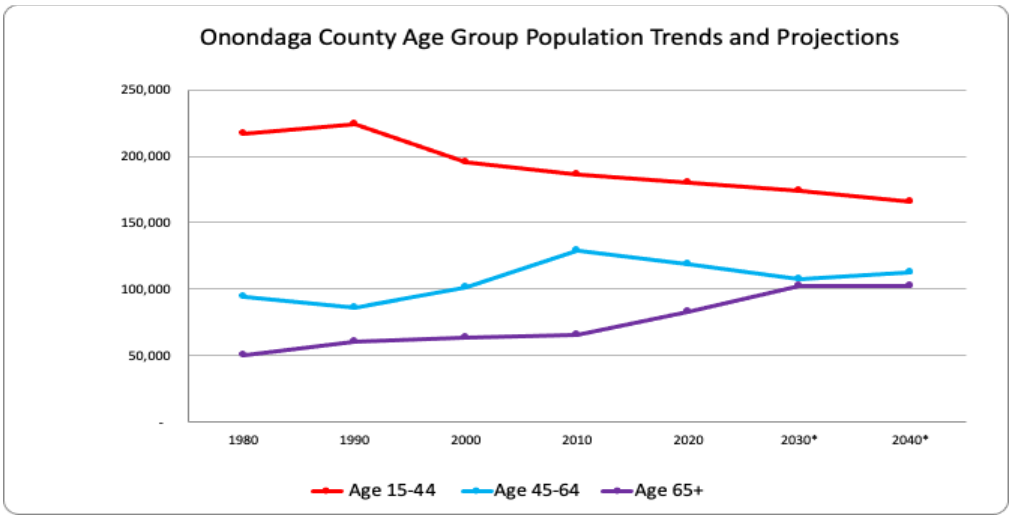
Figure 5.3 that follows presents the trend in Onondaga County's resident median age. Spanning 2010 to 2020, we can see that the median age of county residents rose very slightly from 38.7 to 39.5. The county population is slowly aging like most Upstate New York communities.

Figure 5.3: Median Age of Onondaga 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 Onondaga County residents in this critical age range has declined steadily since 1990 and is projected to continue to decline over the next several decades. Using that data, it is reasonable to predict that the total number of school children in Onondaga County will also continue to decline.

Figure 5.4: Onondaga County Age Group Trends 1980 – 2040



Another factor worthy of note in this report is the anticipated arrival of Micron in Onondaga County. In October 2022, government leaders announced that Micron will be building a semiconductor manufacturing campus in Onondaga County. Micron is a technology memory and storage manufacturer, one of the largest producers of semiconductors in the world. The Micron facility will be developed in phases over the next several decades with the first phase being constructed by the end of this decade. This initiative is projected to bring tens of thousands of jobs to the greater Onondaga County area. With jobs comes the potential for families with children that will be educated in county school districts. The Micron campus is located within the North Syracuse district. This proximity, coupled with the quality of the educational, athletic, and co-curricular opportunities for students, will make North Syracuse an attractive option when families with children choose where they will live. While it is reasonable to expect that the North Syracuse enrollment could be impacted; at this time, it is impossible to quantify this impact or determine the period during which it may occur.

Lastly, residential real estate activity in the North Syracuse district was also examined. As presented in Table 5.10 below, data from 2020 and 2021 reflect the extremely active housing market during the pandemic years. Activity in subsequent years has declined and appears to have stabilized.

Future home sales activity is very difficult to project due to the number of influencing factors including Micron and supporting businesses Activity over the next five years should provide better insight as to housing trends.

Table 5.10
Real Estate Sales Overview for North Syracuse CSD

Year	Number of Home Sales
2020	802
2021	844
2022	755
2023	580
2024	609
1/1/25 - 8/31/25	194
Projected 2025	642
Number of homes active/pending on 9/15/25	108 (63 active, 45 pending)

In summary, it appears that the district enrollment will continue to decline slightly in the foreseeable future. Live births in the district have been somewhat erratic in the past five years but the number of students enrolling in kindergarten is generally lower than the live births for the corresponding year. While the total enrollment is projected to decline slightly, it should be noted that estimated live birth rates are used for the out years so those enrollment projections are less reliable. It is important for the district to routinely update enrollment projections with an eye toward current demographic and economic trends in the county and school district.

CHAPTER 6: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Delivering a high-quality educational experience is the central responsibility of any school district. In North Syracuse, a comprehensive instructional program is in place, and while the foundation is strong, performance data indicate opportunities to further elevate the quality and consistency of student learning.

North Syracuse has eleven educational buildings. Main Street Elementary School houses the North Syracuse Early Education Program. There are six elementary schools, all educating students in grades kindergarten through 4th grade: Allen Road Elementary, Cicero Elementary, Karl W Saile Bear Road Elementary, Lakeshore Road Elementary, Roxboro Road Elementary, and Smith Road Elementary. Gillette Road Middle School and Roxboro Road Middle School are both home to students in grades 5-7. North Syracuse Junior High School houses grades 8-9, and Cicero-North Syracuse High School currently holds grades 10-12. The schools and grade level configurations can be seen in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1
North Syracuse CSD Instructional Buildings & Grade Configurations

Grade Span	*Instructional Buildings*
Prekindergarten	• North Syracuse Early Elementary Program @ Main Street Elementary
Kindergarten – Grade 4	• Allen Road Elementary • Cicero Elementary • Lakeshore Road Elementary • Karl W. Saile Bear Road Elementary • Roxboro Road Elementary • Smith Road Elementary
Grade 5 – Grade 7	• Gillette Road Middle • Roxboro Road Middle
Grade 8 – Grade 9	• North Syracuse Junior High
Grade 10 – Grade 12	• Cicero–North Syracuse High School (CNS)

Like many districts in Onondaga County, North Syracuse CSD has seen an increase in the diversity of its students over the last decade. Specifically, the district's demographic profile reflects increased racial and ethnic diversity (see Table 6.2) and a greater concentration of students with higher needs. Between 2013–2014 and 2023–2024, the proportion of Black students rose from 4% to 5%, Hispanic/Latino students doubled from 3% to 6%, and Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander students increased from 2% to 6%. The percentage of multiracial students also grew from 4% to 7%, while the proportion of White students declined from 88% to 76%. Representation of American Indian or Alaska Native students remained stable at 1%. These demographic shifts indicate a more diverse student body, which has implications for culturally responsive instruction and support services.

Table 6.2
North Syracuse CSD Student Racial Demographics

Race	2013-2014 (%)	2023-2024 (%)
Black	4	5
Hispanic, Latino	3	6
Asian, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	2	6
White	86	76
Multiracial	4	7
American Indian, Alaskan Native	1	1

Other student needs indicators have also increased (see Table 6.3). The share of students with disabilities (defined here as students with IEPs but not Section 504 plans) rose from 13% to 18%. Economically disadvantaged students, defined as those qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch or in families receiving economic assistance, increased from 34% to 46%. Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of enrolled school days, is reported separately for grades K–6 (18.8%) and grades 7–12 (25.5%) in 2023–2024, with no comparable earlier data available. The

percentage of homeless students is currently 2%, with no prior year reported. The district also saw a slight increase in English Language Learners from 1% to 2%. These changes suggest that the district is serving a more diverse and higher-need student population than it did a decade ago, underscoring the importance of equitable resource allocation and targeted intervention strategies.

Table 6.3
North Syracuse CSD Other Student Demographics

Demographic	2013-2014 (%)	2023-2024 (%)
English Language Learners	1	2
Chronic Absenteeism, K-6	--	18.8
Chronic Absenteeism, 7-12	--	25.5
Students with Disabilities	13	18
Economically Disadvantaged	34	46
Homeless	--	2

Prekindergarten Programming

The North Syracuse CSD provides prekindergarten programming to 3- and 4-year-old students through a combination of programs and funding sources. First, North Syracuse CSD receives a grant award from the NYS Education Department (NYSED) to provide half- and full-day prekindergarten to 4-year-olds living within the district through the UPK State-Funded Allocations program under Section 3602-e (10) of Education Law. In 2024-2025, this grant provided funding for up to 215 half-day 4-year-old Prekindergarten students and up to 286 full-day 4-year-old Prekindergarten students (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 North Syracuse CSD Universal Prekindergarten Grant 2024-2025	
Half-day Seats	215
Full-day Seats	286
Total Funding	$2,472,102

In New York State, Education Law §3602-e and §3602-ee require school districts to contract with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) for at least 10% of their Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) funding. These sections mandate the use of a portion of the state grant award for collaborations with CBOs that can provide high-quality prekindergarten instruction. North Syracuse CSD has chosen to work even more collaboratively with community-based prekindergarten providers. In 2024-2025, North Syracuse CSD is working with four community-based organizations to provide 13 sections of 4-year-old prekindergarten serving 257 students in both community-based classrooms and at North Syracuse CSD locations (see Table 6.5). The students in these prekindergarten classrooms are all "typically-developing students" who do not receive special education services.

Table 6.5 North Syracuse CSD Community-based UPK Partners 2024-2025			
Building Name	*Sections*	*Students per Section*	*Total Students*
Learn as You Grow - Cicero*	4	21	84
Learn as You Grow - North Syracuse*	5	21	105
Northminster Early Childhood Center	2	16	32
YMCA at Roxboro Road Elementary	2	18	36

*Learn as You Grow centers transitioned to new ownership (BrightPath) for 2025-2026

In addition to the UPK program, North Syracuse CSD also works with NYS to provide a SCIS/UPK Collaboration Site. SCIS stands for Special Class in an Integrated Setting, and the program places integrated special education services in UPK classrooms. These classrooms serve a

combination of special education prekindergarten students and typically-developing prekindergarten students in either a half-day or full-day model. Typically-developing students may be universal prekindergarten students or tuition-paying prekindergarten students. Additionally, students can enroll in these classes as 3- or 4-year-olds, and the district can accept students who are not district residents. These programs intend to collaboratively serve the needs of special education prekindergarten students alongside their typically developing peers. Main Street Elementary houses the SCIS/UPK Collaboration classrooms. Five full-day sections serve 80 students, and nine half-day sections serve 233 students. In total, 313 students receive prekindergarten programming at Main Street Elementary; 108 of those students are students with disabilities.

Elementary Program

Demographics and Class Sizes

Each elementary school enrolls students in Kindergarten through Grade 4. Additionally, in 2024-2025, Roxboro Road Elementary housed two YMCA-run Prekindergarten classrooms. The total number of K-4 students in each building is shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6
North Syracuse CSD Elementary Enrollment
2024-2025

	Allen Road	Bear Road	Cicero	Lakeshore Road	Roxboro Road	Smith Road	Total
K-4 Students	331	539	523	437*	424	570	2824

*This table demonstrates enrollment numbers if all Lakeshore Road Elementary students were currently in the Lakeshore Road building

New York State tracks specific demographic indicators of students at each school building. These indicators help us to understand the composition of the student population and ensure that all students are receiving equitable learning opportunities. Indicators of particular interest are the racial composition of the school's student body, the percentage of students with disabilities at each

school, and the percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch at each school. Table 6.7 presents the demographic information for each elementary school.

Table 6.7
North Syracuse CSD: Elementary Demographics
2023-2024

	Allen Road	Bear Road	Cicero	Lakeshore Road	Roxboro Road	Smith Road
American Indian, AN (%)	0	0	1	1	1	0
Black (%)	5	5	2	4	7	4
Latino (%)	6	3	5	4	8	5
Asian, NH, OPI (%)	4	5	8	2	10	8
White (%)	75	77	80	85	64	75
Multiracial (%)	10	11	4	5	9	7
Students with Disabilities (%)	21	24	27	25	27	32
Economically Disadvantaged (%)	42	50	32	40	73	53
Homeless	0	2	1	2	5	1
English Language Learners	0	0	5	0	6	6

Elementary class sizes in North Syracuse CSD remain within the parameters outlined in the North Syracuse Educators Association (NSEA) contract, which stipulates an average of 25 students per class and a maximum of 30 students in grades K–6 (Article 9.1). Actual class size data for 2024–2025 (see Table 6.8) suggests that most elementary classrooms fall below these thresholds, allowing for manageable student-teacher ratios and greater individual attention. Class sizes range from 20.7 to 23.4 students per classroom, with all buildings remaining under the contractual average. Maintaining class sizes within contract expectations supports the district's efforts to deliver high-quality instruction and meet diverse student needs.

Table 6.8 North Syracuse CSD Elementary Average Class Sizes 2023-2024	
Allen Road Elementary	20.7
Bear Road Elementary	22.3
Cicero Elementary	22.7
Lakeshore Road Elementary	21.9
Roxboro Road Elementary	23.4
Smith Road Elementary	21.2

To better understand instructional delivery across North Syracuse's elementary schools, we reviewed master schedules, building start and end times, and instructional expectations. Instructional time refers to the portion of the school day available for teaching core subjects, excluding time set aside for lunch, recess, and special area classes such as music or art. Instructional time is a critical component of the student experience and directly influences academic outcomes. In North Syracuse Central School District, elementary students receive a structured daily schedule that balances core content instruction with specials, wellness, and lunch.

Each school building has an official start time of 9:15 a.m. and an official end time of 3:20 p.m. for a total of 6 hours and 5 minutes, or 365 minutes, which is consistent with other school districts in the region. Daily, each school allocates:

- 30 minutes for lunch
- 40 minutes for specials
- 30 minutes for recess

North Syracuse provides all elementary school students with a typical array of special area subjects, regardless of the elementary school they attend. Table 6.9 shows the elementary school specials and frequency of experience.

Table 6.9 Schedule of Elementary Specials: 40-minute periods 2024-2025	
Art	Once per week
Library	Once per week
Music	Once per week
Physical Education	Twice per week

After accounting for minutes allocated to lunch, recess, and specials, there are 265 minutes of instructional time per day, which is consistent with state expectations for K–4 classrooms.

In terms of curriculum delivery, North Syracuse CSD has set clear expectations related to the amount of time that should be spent each day on specific content in the classrooms. Table 6.10 outlines these expectations.

Table 6.10 North Syracuse CSD Elementary Instructional Expectations 2024-2025	
Content	*Time Expectation*
ELA: Grades K-3	120 minutes
ELA: Grade 4	90 minutes
Mathematics	60 minutes
Heggerty: Phonics	10 - 15 minutes at Grades K-2
Tier 3 Support*	30 minutes for Grades 1-4
WINN (What I Need Now)	30 minutes

*Tier 3 Support is dedicated time for additional support for struggling students

As can be seen in Table 6.11, once these instructional expectations are allocated in the instructional day, there is a variable amount of time left in the school day for instruction in other content areas.

Table 6.11 North Syracuse CSD Elementary Program Instructional Minutes 2024-2025			
Grade	Instructional Time Available	Minutes Allocated to Instructional Expectations	Remaining Time
Kindergarten	265	220	45
Grade 1	265	250	15
Grade 2	265	220	15
Grade 3	265	240	25
Grade 4	265	210	55

The lack of instructional expectations related to science and social studies, combined with the intensity of instructional expectations in the other content areas, means that instructional time spent on science and social studies is inconsistent across grade levels and buildings. Table 6.12 demonstrates these inconsistencies.

Table 6.12 North Syracuse CSD Elementary Science and Social Studies Minutes in Master Schedules 2024-2025						
	Allen Rd	Cicero Elem	KWS Bear Rd.	Lakeshore Rd.	Roxboro Rd.	Smith Rd.
Kindergarten	30	In 1st and 3rd grade, combined with ELA	50	2x Weekly Each (K) 30 min (Gr 1-4) 40mins	Science 2x Weekly (40)	30
1st Grade	30		30		Science 4x Weekly (30)	30
2nd Grade	15		20		20	30
3rd Grade	15		40		20	30
4th Grade	25		40		Science 2x Weekly (50)	30

While the district has adopted Smithsonian Science for the Classroom as its elementary science curriculum, implementation with fidelity appears highly unlikely under current scheduling constraints. Each module in the Smithsonian program requires eight weeks of instruction with three to five 45-minute sessions per week, as outlined by the publisher. However, analysis of elementary master schedules reveals that the time for science and social studies instruction is incredibly variable. This structure suggests that students may receive either science or social studies on a given day, or that the limited time is split between both subjects—neither of which is sufficient for meeting the full instructional demands of the adopted science program. A closer examination of how individual grade levels are allocating and using this time in practice is needed to assess the extent of the issue.

Compounding the concern is the district's approach to elementary social studies instruction. Rather than implementing a dedicated curriculum aligned to the New York State K–12 Social Studies Framework, the district currently relies on the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program to address social studies content. While CKLA includes historical and cultural topics, its primary design is to support literacy development. As a result, social studies instruction is largely filtered through the lens of vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, rather than disciplinary inquiry and civic learning. This cross-content reliance may limit students' opportunities to engage deeply with core social studies practices such as sourcing, perspective-taking, and evidence-based reasoning.

Together, these findings highlight a systemic misalignment between curricular intent, time allocation, and instructional practice in science and social studies at the elementary level. Without sufficient time and a coherent delivery strategy, even high-quality resources like Smithsonian Science cannot realize their full potential. Similarly, the absence of a dedicated social studies curriculum risks underpreparing students for the demands of civic engagement and historical thinking expected in later grades.

Assessment Performance

The subsequent analysis examined the academic performance of North Syracuse's elementary students on the New York State English-Language Arts and Mathematics assessments. These exams are given to students in grades 3-8 throughout the state, which allows for comparisons to be made about student performance. Each student who takes the exams receives a score on each exam on a continuum from Level 1 to Level 4. The performance descriptors for these assessments are:

- NYS Level 1: Students performing at this level are well below proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate limited knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards that are considered insufficient for the expectations at this grade.
- NYS Level 2: Students performing at this level are partially proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards that are considered partial but insufficient for the expectations at this grade. Students performing at Level 2 are considered on track to meet current New York high school graduation requirements but are not yet proficient on the Common Core Learning Standards at this grade.
- NYS Level 3: Students performing at this level are proficient in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards that are considered sufficient for the expectations at this grade.
- NYS Level 4: Students performing at this level excel in standards for their grade. They demonstrate knowledge, skills, and practices embodied by the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards that are considered more than sufficient for the expectations at this grade.

Students receiving scores of Level 3 or Level 4 are performing at or above the "proficient" level for their grade level.

In North Syracuse CSD, 2023–2024 assessment results show that student performance continues to hover near or slightly below statewide averages. Across the district, 2023–2024 proficiency rates in both ELA and mathematics were below the 50% mark, with some variation by grade level. Compared to 2018-2019, student performance declined slightly in both subjects in Grades 3 and 4, consistent with patterns observed across the state and nation, as students continue to recover from pandemic-era learning disruptions.

Assessment results (see Table 6.13 and Table 6.14) reveal meaningful performance differences between elementary schools. Smith Road and Cicero Elementary generally perform at or above district averages, while Roxboro Road Elementary consistently performs below both district and state benchmarks.

The data suggest that most schools are achieving similar results, with variations of a few percentage points. However, Roxboro Road Elementary stands out for its consistently lower proficiency levels, particularly in mathematics. This underperformance at the building level has broader accountability implications for the district.

Table 6.13
NYS Assessment Performance: North Syracuse CSD Elementary Schools
English Language-Arts
Percentage (%) of Students Scoring Proficient (Level 3 or Level 4)

2023-2024								
	Allen Rd	Cicero	KWS Bear Rd	Lakeshore Rd	Roxboro Rd	Smith Rd	District	NYS
Grade 3	36	50	31	30	19	32	33	43
Grade 4	27	32	35	27	21	24	28	47
Grades 3-4	31	41	33	29	20	28	30	44
2018-2019								
	Allen Rd	Cicero	KWS Bear Rd	Lakeshore Rd	Roxboro Rd	Smith Rd	District	NYS
Grade 3	49	58	52	49	28	58	49	52
Grade 4	47	43	36	38	33	35	38	48
Grades 3-4	48	51	44	43	30	45	43	50

Table 6.14 NYS Assessment Performance: North Syracuse CSD Elementary Schools Mathematics Percentage (%) of Students Scoring Proficient (Level 3 or Level 4)								
2023-2024								
	Allen Rd	Cicero	KWS Bear Rd	Lakeshore Rd	Roxboro Rd	Smith Rd	District	NYS
Grade 3	39	61	39	48	19	36	41	54
Grade 4	37	52	64	54	35	38	47	58
Grades 3-4	38	57	52	51	26	37	44	56
2018-2019								
	Allen Rd	Cicero	KWS Bear Rd	Lakeshore Rd	Roxboro Rd	Smith Rd	District	NYS
Grade 3	50	58	35	46	25	37	43	55
Grade 4	47	57	42	35	34	29	40	50
Grades 3-4	48	58	39	40	29	33	41	53

Subgroup Achievement and Accountability Designations

In addition to overall building performance, New York State's accountability system emphasizes student subgroup performance. Subgroups include:

- Economically disadvantaged students
- Students with disabilities
- English Language Learners
- Racial and ethnic subgroups, including multiracial students

Among these, the most pressing concern is the performance of multiracial students at Roxboro Road Elementary, whose academic progress has lagged behind that of their peers. As a result,

Roxboro Road Elementary has been designated a Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school under NYSED's accountability system.

Due to the state's linked accountability model, this building-level designation results in the entire district being classified as a Target District. In contrast, all other elementary schools in North Syracuse CSD currently hold the more favorable Local Support and Improvement designation, which represents the highest accountability rating available at this time.

As a Target District, North Syracuse CSD is required to:

- Conduct root cause analyses at identified schools
- Develop and submit an improvement plan to NYSED
- Implement targeted interventions for identified subgroups
- Monitor progress through formal state oversight and internal reviews

These accountability responsibilities have influenced district planning and have led to increased support for instructional coaching, curriculum alignment, and data-driven decision-making—particularly at Roxboro Road Elementary.

Middle School Program

Demographics

North Syracuse Central School District operates two middle schools: Gillette Road Middle School and Roxboro Road Middle School, serving students in grades 5 through 7. According to district enrollment and demographic data, both schools reflect the broader diversity of the district, though with notable variation in subgroup concentrations. Students attending Gillette Road Middle School primarily matriculate from Allen Road and Cicero Elementary Schools. In contrast, students at Roxboro Road Middle School are predominantly drawn from Lakeshore Road and Roxboro Road Elementary Schools. Students who attended Bear Road or Smith Road Elementary Schools split their enrollment at the middle schools based on the address of their home. These

feeder patterns contribute to the demographic and performance differences observed between the two middle schools (see Table 6.15).

Table 6.15
North Syracuse CSD Middle School Enrollment Demographics
2023-2024

Demographic/Indicator	Roxboro Road Middle School	Gillette Road Middle School
American Indian, Alaskan Native (%)	1	1
Black (%)	8	4
Latino (%)	7	5
Asian, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander (%)	6	5
White (%)	68	79
Multiracial (%)	10	6
Students with Disabilities (%)	17	14
Economically Disadvantaged (%)	60	39
English Language Learners (%)	4	2
Homeless (%)	2	1
Chronic Absenteeism 2023-2024 (%)	27	16
Chronic Absenteeism 2018-2019 (%)	18	8
Expenditures per pupil 2023-2024 ($)	$26,249	$23,288
Total Students (n)	705	1,025

Demographic data from the 2023–2024 school year reveal meaningful distinctions between Roxboro Road Middle School (Roxboro Road MS) and Gillette Road Middle School (Gillette

Road MS), both in terms of student composition and indicators of student need. While both schools serve grades 5 through 7, their student populations differ significantly.

Roxboro Road Middle School enrolls 705 students, compared to 1,025 at Gillette Road MS. However, Roxboro Road MS serves a higher proportion of economically disadvantaged students (60% vs. 39%), a statistically significant difference ($p < .001$). In this context, *statistical significance* means the difference between the two schools is unlikely to be due to random chance; instead, it reflects a real and measurable difference in student populations. This matters because it suggests the need for targeted strategies and supports tailored to Roxboro Road MS's specific challenges and demographics.

Similarly, Roxboro Road MS enrolls significantly higher percentages of Black students (8% vs. 4%, $p = .0004$) and multiracial students (10% vs. 6%, $p = .0021$). The percentage of students classified as English Language Learners is also higher at Roxboro (4% vs. 2%), with this difference reaching statistical significance ($p = .0135$).

The data also show a significant gap in chronic absenteeism rates: 27% at Roxboro Road MS compared to 16% at Gillette Road MS, which is statistically significant at $p < .001$. These figures reflect both pre-existing differences in student need and potentially school-level variations in climate, engagement, or access to supports.

While Roxboro Road MS's per-pupil expenditures ($26,249) are somewhat higher than Gillette Road MS's ($23,288), the difference is modest and does not appear proportionate to the greater concentration of high-need students.

In contrast, demographic variables such as Latino, Asian, and homeless status, and the percentage of students with disabilities, showed differences that were not statistically significant between the two schools. However, even slight differences in subgroups can matter in educational outcomes, particularly when compounded by other risk factors.

Together, these findings suggest that Roxboro Road MS serves a more demographically and economically vulnerable student body. The statistically significant disparities underscore the importance of differentiated resource allocation, staff capacity building, and culturally responsive instructional practices in meeting the needs of students at both middle schools.

Assessment Performance

Students at both middle schools also participate in the New York State Assessments. Table 6.16 shows the results of those exams for 2023-2024 and 2018-2019 in English Language Arts, while Table 6.17 shows the results in mathematics.

The English Language Arts (ELA) data show a consistent performance gap between Roxboro Road and Gillette Road Middle Schools. In 2023–2024, only 25% of Roxboro students in grades 5–7 scored proficient compared to 46% at Gillette, aligning Gillette closely with the state average of 46%. Roxboro's proficiency rates are lower across all grades, particularly in Grade 5 (22% vs. 46%). Compared with 2018–2019, Gillette has maintained relatively stable performance, while Roxboro shows only minimal improvement, leaving the district overall below state averages in ELA proficiency.

Middle school math performance in North Syracuse CSD showed overall improvement between 2018–2019 and 2023–2024, but persistent gaps remain between Gillette Road Middle School and Roxboro Road Middle School. In 2023–2024, Gillette Road Middle School outperformed Roxboro Road Middle School by a wide margin in every grade, with the largest gap in grade 6: 68% of students at Gillette Road MS scored proficient compared to just 39% at Roxboro Road MS — a 29-point difference. Similar gaps are evident in grade 5 (48% vs. 21%) and grade 7 (58% vs. 37%), illustrating a consistent trend across the middle-level math assessments.

Despite these disparities, Roxboro Road MS has demonstrated meaningful growth, improving its overall proficiency rate from 30% in 2018–2019 to 45% in 2023–2024, a 15-point gain. In contrast, Gillette Road MS maintained a strong but steady performance, with overall proficiency

holding at 57% across grades 5–7. Districtwide, the average proficiency rate increased from 45% to 51%, narrowing the gap with the state average of 54%.

These results point to strong instructional practice and stability at Gillette Road MS, alongside encouraging momentum at Roxboro Road MS. However, the continued achievement gaps underscore the need for targeted supports, resource equity, and strategic instructional leadership to ensure consistent success for students across both schools.

Table 6.16
NYS Assessment Performance: North Syracuse CSD Middle Schools
English Language-Arts
Percentage (%) of Students Scoring Proficient (Level 3 or Level 4)

2023-2024				
	Roxboro Road MS	Gillette Road MS	District	NYS
Grade 5	22	46	36	44
Grade 6	30	48	41	44
Grade 7	24	45	36	50
Grades 5-7	25	46	37	46
2018-2019				
	Roxboro Road MS	Gillette Road MS	District	NYS
Grade 5	17	34	27	38
Grade 6	30	59	46	47
Grade 7	25	42	36	40
Grades 5-7	24	44	36	41

Table 6.17 NYS Assessment Performance: North Syracuse CSD Middle Schools Mathematics Percentage (%) of Students Scoring Proficient (Level 3 or Level 4)				
2023-2024				
	Roxboro Road MS	Gillette Road MS	District	NYS
Grade 5	21	**54**	**40**	49
Grade 6	58	**68**	**64**	**51**
Grade 7	56	62	62	57
Grades 5-7	45	**51**	**51**	**54**
2018-2019				
	Roxboro Road MS	Gillette Road MS	District	NYS
Grade 5	**12**	**40**	29	**46**
Grade 6	42	**68**	**56**	47
Grade 7	37	**62**	**52**	**43**
Grades 5-7	30	**56**	**45**	**46**

Secondary Instructional Program

At the secondary level, the North Syracuse Central School District serves students in grades 8 and 9 at North Syracuse Junior High School (North Syracuse JHS) and grades 10 through 12 at Cicero-North Syracuse High School (CNS High School). Together, these schools provide the capstone to the district's instructional program, building on the foundations established in the elementary and middle grades. The transition to the junior high school model, which separates grades 8 and 9 from the rest of the high school population, allows for a targeted focus on the academic and social needs of early adolescents. At the same time, CNS High School emphasizes college- and career-readiness through a broad course catalog and varied diploma pathways.

North Syracuse JHS serves students from both Gillette Road MS and Roxboro Road MS, so its enrollment reflects the district's full demographic mix, including higher concentrations of

economically disadvantaged and multiracial students from the Roxboro Road MS feeder pattern (see Table 6.18). In line with district trends, Grade 8 performance shows stronger ELA outcomes than mathematics, and pandemic-era effects are still evident in elevated chronic absenteeism relative to pre-2020 baselines. While North Syracuse JHS is not currently identified for state accountability intervention, subgroup gaps that begin in the middle grades (particularly for economically disadvantaged and multiracial students) remain visible in junior high results. The school's schedule and course pathways (e.g., early algebra placement, lab science sequencing, and writing-intensive ELA) are designed to bridge middle school foundations to high-school-level rigor at CNS High School. Still, continued emphasis on math intervention, attendance supports, and transition planning is warranted to ensure consistent success across feeder groups.

Table 6.18
North Syracuse Junior High School
Key Demographics, Attendance, and Academic Performance
2018-2019 vs. 2023-2024

Indicator	2023-2024	2018-2019
FRPL	46%	38%
Average Class Size	• ELA: 21 • Math: 21 • Science: 22	• ELA: 24 • Math: 22 • Science: 20
Student Attendance Rate	93%	94%
Chronic Absenteeism Rate	22%	17%
Student Suspension Rate	11%	10%
ELA Proficiency Rate (Grade 8)	48%	37%
Math Proficiency Rate (Grade 8)	54%	46%
FRPL	46%	38%
Average Class Size	• ELA: 21 • Math: 21 • Science: 22	• ELA: 24 • Math: 22 • Science: 20
Student Attendance Rate	93%	94%

At CNS High School, key indicators reflect both strengths and ongoing challenges. The percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) rose from 29% in 2018–2019 to 33% in 2023–2024, a shift consistent with the districtwide increase in economic disadvantage seen at

the earlier grade levels. Average class sizes remain within a moderate range across core subjects (see Table 6.19). Attendance is high at 92%, only slightly lower than five years earlier. Still, chronic absenteeism (students missing 10% or more of school days) has increased from 21% to 27%, mirroring the absenteeism concerns observed districtwide. Notably, the student suspension rate has declined from 8% to 6%, suggesting progress in behavioral management and discipline practices.

Table 6.19
Cicero-North Syracuse High School
Key Demographics, Attendance, and Academic Performance
2018-2019 vs. 2023-2024

Indicator	2023-2024	2018-2019
FRPL	33%	29%
Average Class Size	• ELA III: 22 • Algebra I: 17 • Geometry: 19 • Biology: 21 • Chemistry: 22	• ELA III: 21 • Algebra I: 14 • Geometry: 17 • Biology: 21 • Chemistry: 21
Student Attendance Rate	92%	93%
Chronic Absenteeism Rate	27%	21%
Student Suspension Rate	6%	8%

Graduation outcomes are a highlight of the district's secondary program (see Table 6.20). The 4-year graduation rate for the 2020 cohort stands at 86%, matching the state average. More significantly, 51% of North Syracuse graduates earn a Regents Advanced Diploma, far surpassing the New York State rate of 33%. This achievement indicates that a large proportion of students complete advanced coursework and meet rigorous state requirements, which is a positive extension of the strong Regents participation and achievement patterns that begin in the junior high years. While the percentage of students earning a Regents Diploma (34%) is lower than the state average (51%), the higher rate of advanced diplomas suggests that many students opt for more demanding

academic tracks, thereby bypassing the standard Regents diploma. Local diploma attainment (1%) and dropout rates (5%) are in line with state figures.

Table 6.20
North Syracuse CSD: 4-year Graduation Rate
2024 Graduates (2020 Cohort)

	North Syracuse CSD	New York State
Graduation Rate %	86	86
Regents Advanced Diploma %	51	33
Regents Diploma %	34	51
Local Diploma %	1	2
Dropout %	5	5

When viewed alongside the district's middle schools' performance, the high school outcomes suggest a degree of instructional continuity, particularly for students who have been successful in earlier grades. Gillette Road Middle School's stronger academic performance in both ELA and math aligns with the high proportion of students completing advanced Regents coursework at the secondary level. At the same time, Roxboro Road Middle School's lower proficiency rates highlight the importance of targeted academic interventions during the transition to junior high. Addressing the disparities in performance and chronic absenteeism that begin in the middle grades will be essential to ensuring that all students, regardless of their feeder school, have equal access to the high-level coursework and diploma options available at CNS High School.

Equitable Practices and Outcomes

In 2024–2025, North Syracuse Central School District engaged the New York University Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools to conduct a comprehensive root cause analysis of student outcomes. A 25-member team of district administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and community members studied academic and behavioral

data, reviewed district documents, and collected input through surveys and focus groups with students and families. The study's goal was to understand why persistent disparities exist across schools and student groups and to inform system-level improvement planning required under the district's Target District accountability status.

Analysis of disciplinary records revealed persistent disproportionality. Black students, particularly those with disabilities, are referred and suspended at rates far exceeding their peers. In 2023–2024, Black students were 2.39 times more likely than other students to receive a disciplinary referral, and Black females were 3.41 times more likely than white females to be referred. Black students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were 2.81 times more likely to be referred than non-Black students with IEPs. Other groups, including Latino/a and multiracial students, were also overrepresented among students receiving multiple suspensions.

Qualitative feedback added context: parents described uneven use of restorative practices, students said behavior expectations and responses felt inconsistent, and staff acknowledged limited shared definitions for referral categories such as "disruptive" or "inappropriate behavior." Data monitoring practices were described as inconsistent, and there was little routine review of referral data by race, disability status, or gender identity to guide improvement. These patterns highlight the need for more coherent, equity-focused approaches to school climate and behavioral support.

As shown in Figures 6.1–6.2, disciplinary data from 2024-2025 illustrate the degree of disproportionality in school climate outcomes. Figure 6.1 presents Out-of-School Suspensions by Race and Disability Status. While Black students represent a smaller portion of the district's population, they account for a disproportionately large share of suspensions, especially when also identified as students with disabilities. Figure 6.2 shows All Discipline Referrals by Race and Disability Status, revealing parallel patterns in less severe disciplinary actions. Together, these data demonstrate that disproportionality is visible not only in suspension outcomes but also in day-to-day behavior management decisions. The findings emphasize the need for system-wide training on equitable discipline practices and consistent data review by subgroup to inform targeted support.

Figures 6.1 and 6.2: Share of Discipline Referrals by Race Disability Status and Share of Suspensions

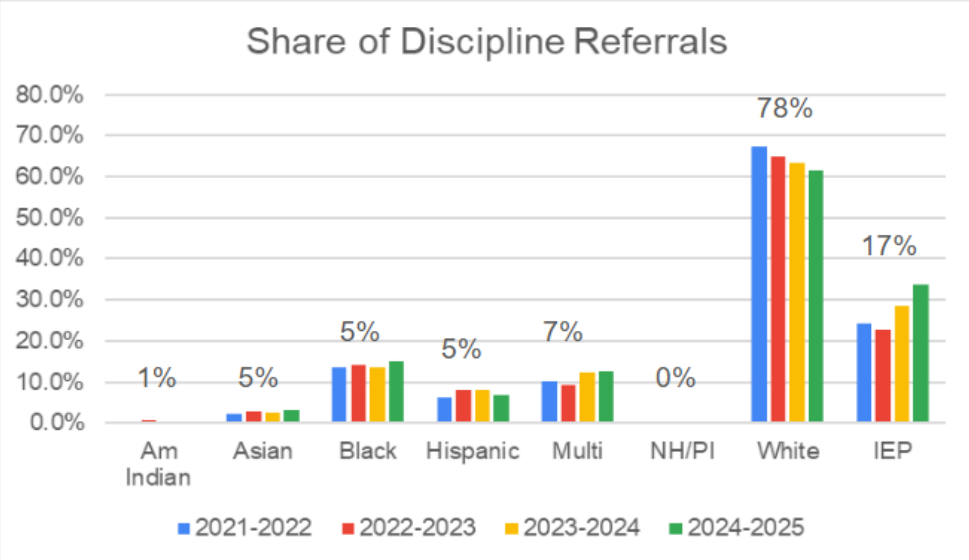


Figure 6.1

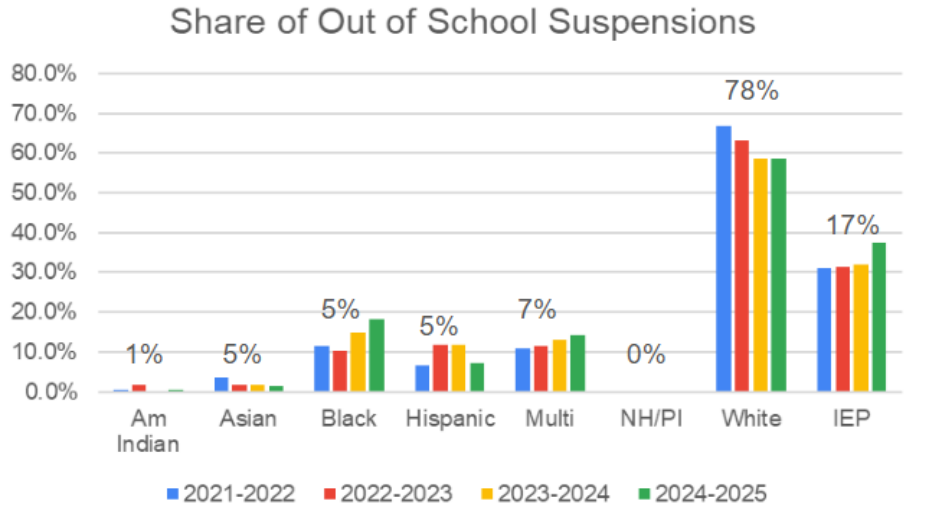


Figure 6.2

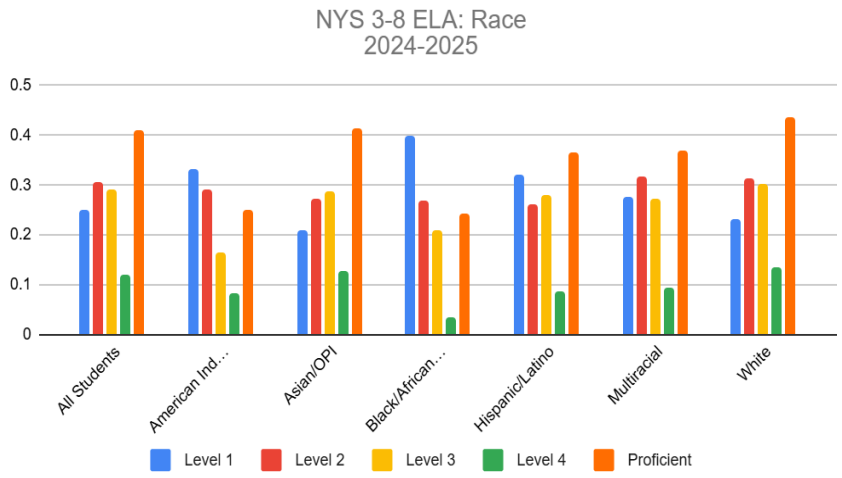
Suspensions by Race and Disability Status

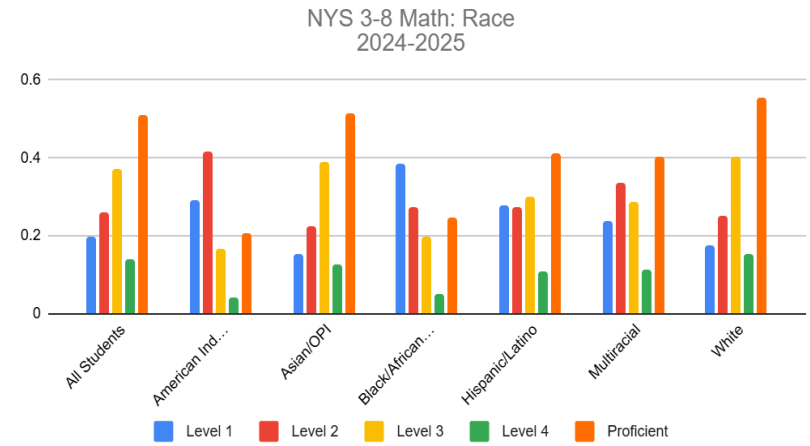
Note: % listed above the bar graphs is that group's percentage of the total population in the district (e.g., 17% of the students in the district have an IEP)

The study also examined the district's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for academics. Although most schools have intervention blocks and documented Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports, the consistency and effectiveness of these supports vary widely. AIMSWeb data show disproportionate numbers of Black, Indigenous/Native, and Latino/a students, as well as students with disabilities, scoring in the lowest performance levels. For example, Black students in 2023–2024 were about 40 percent likely to score well below average in math compared with about 15 percent of white students; students with IEPs were five to six times more likely than peers without IEPs to score at the lowest levels in both reading and math.

In the NYU study, families and students described uneven access to advanced or enriched coursework and said placement processes often relied on informal advocacy rather than clear, equitable criteria. While the district has revised course selection guidelines in recent years, the study found no comprehensive plan to monitor participation in advanced classes by race, disability, or economic status. Teachers reported needing more substantial support to provide culturally responsive, high-impact Tier 1 instruction and clear pathways for intervention before referral to special education. As shown in Figures 6.3–6.4, districtwide performance on the NYS Grades 3–8 ELA and Math Assessments by Race highlights the persistence of subgroup gaps. White and Asian students demonstrate the highest proficiency rates, while Black, Latino/a, and multiracial students remain disproportionately represented in lower performance levels. These results align with patterns seen in AIMSWeb and disciplinary data, suggesting that inequities in instruction and access begin early and compound over time.

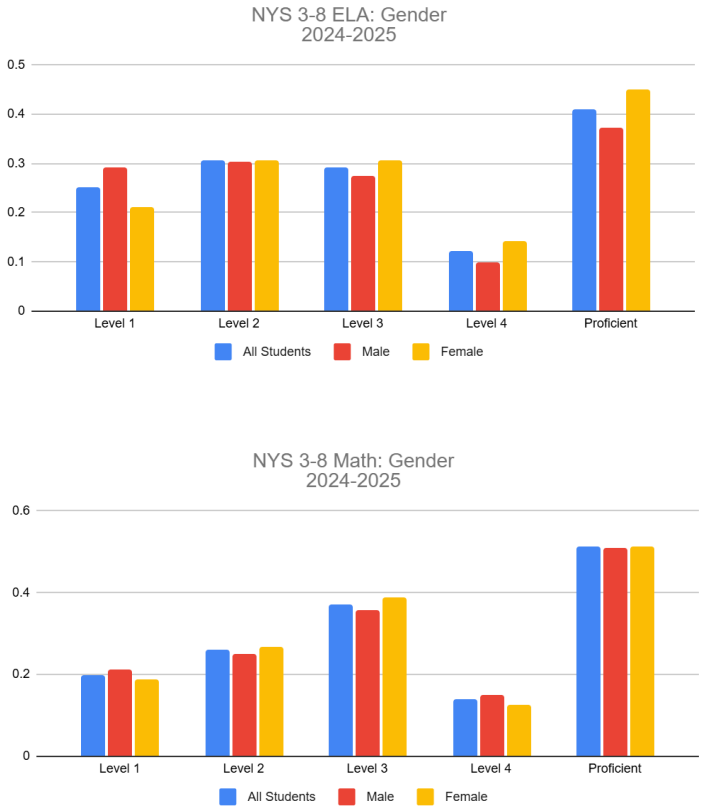
Figures 6.3 and 6.4: NYS 3-8 Assessment Results by Race





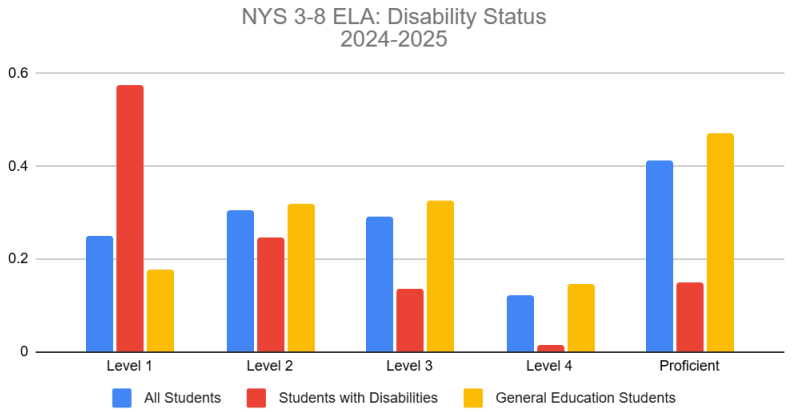
Further analysis of gender-based outcomes, shown in Figures 6.5–6.6, reveals consistent performance differences. Female students outperform male students in ELA, mirroring national trends, while math performance is more balanced but still favors female students in some grade levels. These patterns may reflect both instructional approaches and engagement factors, underscoring the importance of differentiated strategies that support literacy development among male learners.

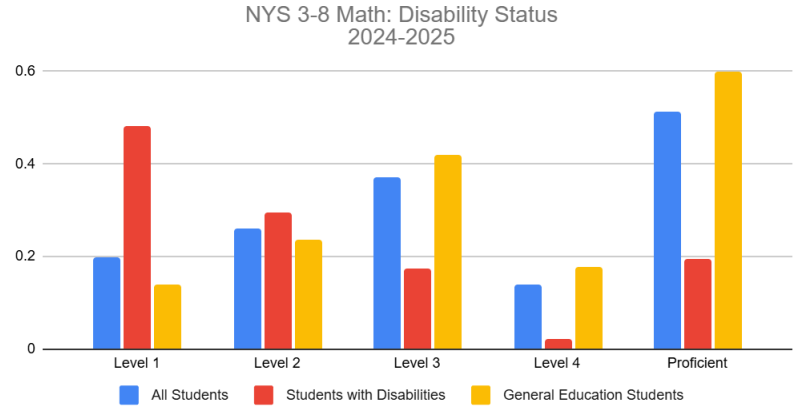
Figures 6.5 and 6.6: Share of Discipline Referrals by Gender



Performance disparities are also pronounced for students with disabilities. Figures 6.7–6.8 present the NYS Grades 3–8 ELA and Math Assessment Results by Disability Status. Across both subjects, students with disabilities consistently perform below their general-education peers. These data illustrate the ongoing need for coherent Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, targeted progress monitoring, and increased inclusion supports within general-education settings.

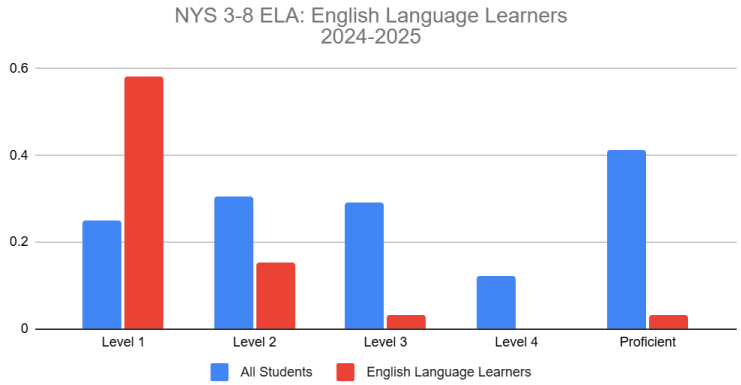
Figures 6.7 - 6.8: NYS Assessment Results, Grades 3-8, by Disability Status, ELA and Math

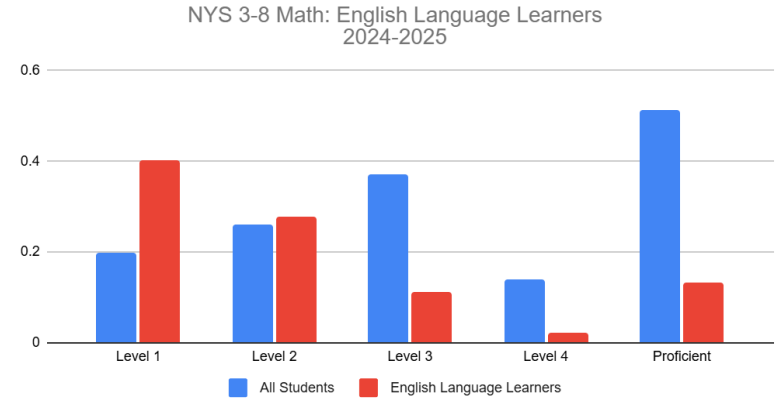




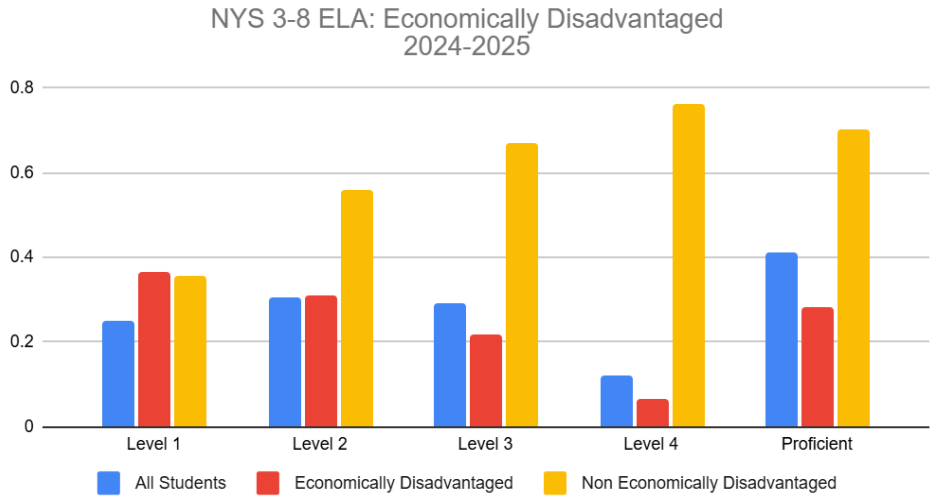
Results for English Language Learners (ELLs) and economically disadvantaged students show similar patterns. Figures 6.9–6.10 depict ELA and Math Results by ELL Status, with ELL students performing below non-ELL peers across grades. However, some schools demonstrate narrowing gaps where language supports are delivered consistently. Figures 6.11–6.12 illustrate ELA and Math Results by Economic Status (2024–2025), showing that economically disadvantaged students continue to underperform relative to non-disadvantaged peers. These trends confirm that socioeconomic and linguistic factors intersect with race and disability to influence access and achievement.

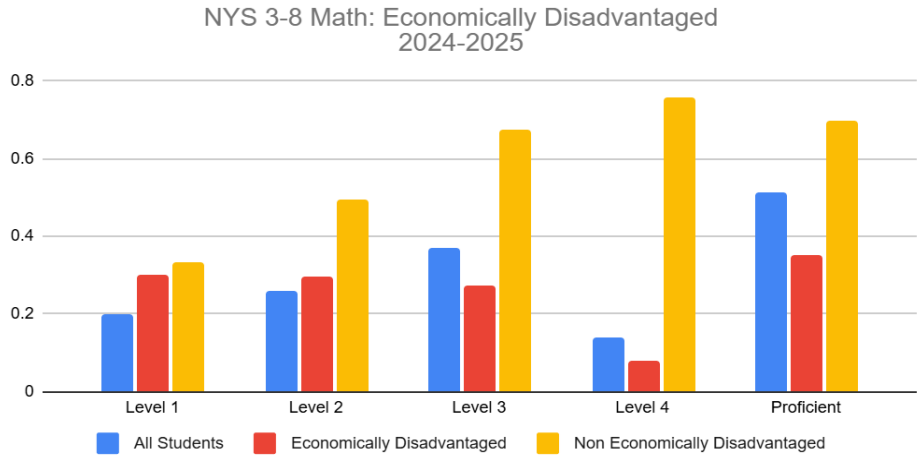
Figures 6.9 - 6.10: NYS Assessment Results, Grades 3-8, by Language Status, ELA and Math





Figures 6.11 - 6.12: NYS Assessment Results, Grades 3-8, by Economic Status, ELA and Math



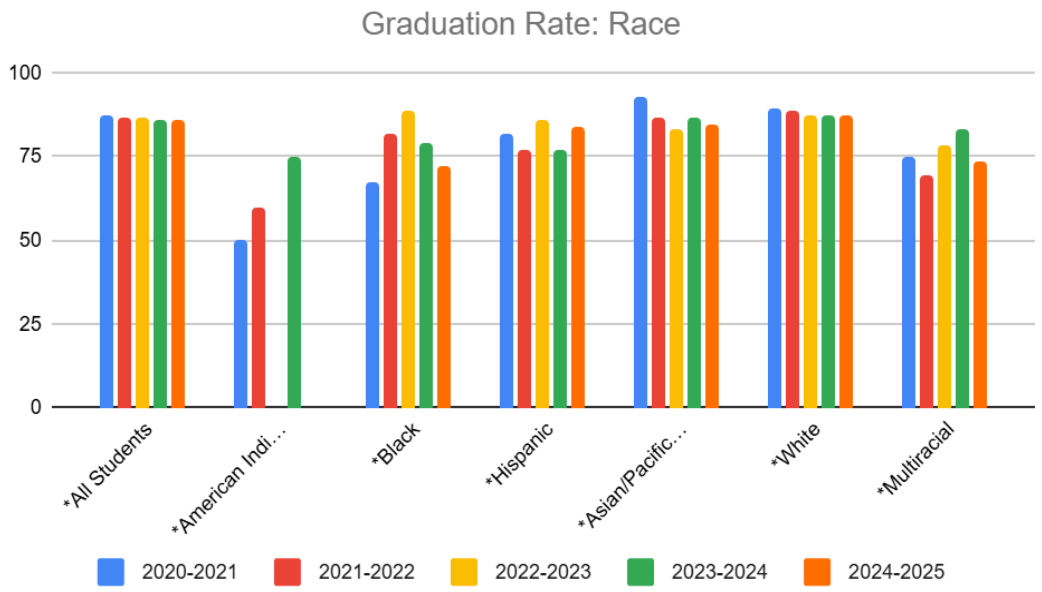


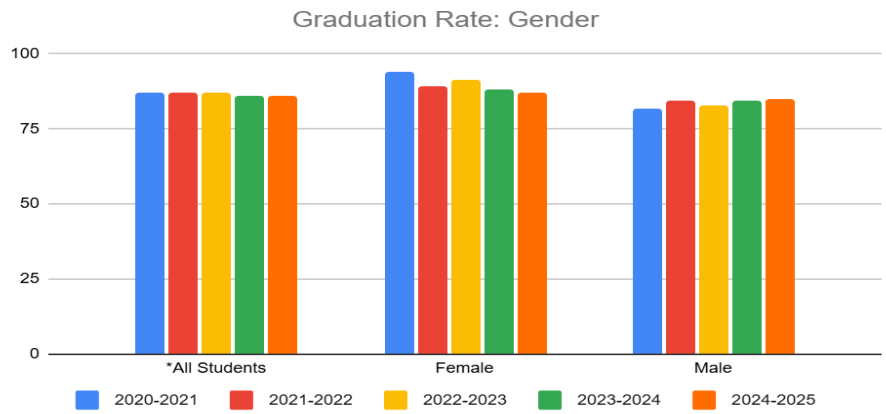
Recent NYSED data for Cicero-North Syracuse High School (2023–24 cohort) show a 90 percent four-year graduation rate. Of 646 students in that cohort, 349 (54 percent) earned a Regents with Advanced Designation, and 230 (36 percent) earned a standard Regents diploma. Among general education students, the four-year graduation rate is 92 percent; among students with disabilities, it is 71 percent. Students who are economically disadvantaged graduate at an 81 percent rate versus 95 percent for their non-disadvantaged peers. Additional subgroup variation appears by race and multiracial status. These outcomes suggest that although the district overall posts a strong rate, subgroup disparities in graduation mirror earlier gaps in instruction, supports, and attendance.

However, subgroup gaps remain: students with disabilities graduate at 71% versus 92 % for general education peers; economically disadvantaged students graduate at 81% compared with 95 % for their non-disadvantaged peers (see Figures 6.1 - 6.3).

Figures 6.13–6.14 show Graduation Rates by Race and Gender (2024–2025). While the overall graduation rate is strong, variation persists across groups. White and Asian students graduate at higher rates than Black, Latino/a, and multiracial peers. Gender analysis indicates that female students continue to outperform male students, though the gap is smaller than in academic performance measures.

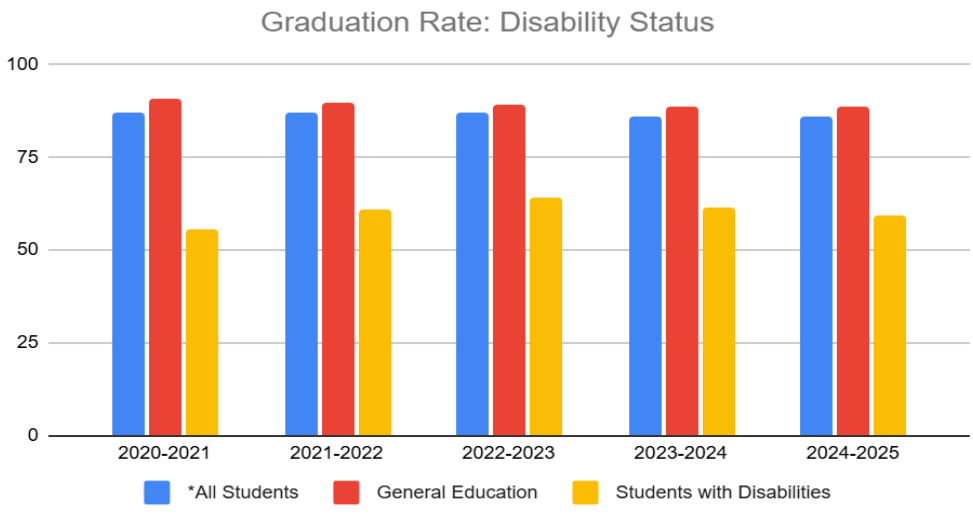
Figures 6.13 - 6.14: North Syracuse CSD Graduation Rates, by Race and Gender





Figures 6.15–6.16 illustrate Graduation Rates by Disability Status and ELL Status (2024–2025). Students with disabilities continue to graduate at substantially lower rates than their general-education peers, even as access to Regents-level coursework has expanded. Similarly, English Language Learners complete high school at lower rates than non-ELL students, suggesting that language acquisition barriers and inconsistent academic supports continue to affect persistence and graduation outcomes.

Figures 6.15 - 6.16: North Syracuse CSD Graduation Rates, by Disability and Language Status



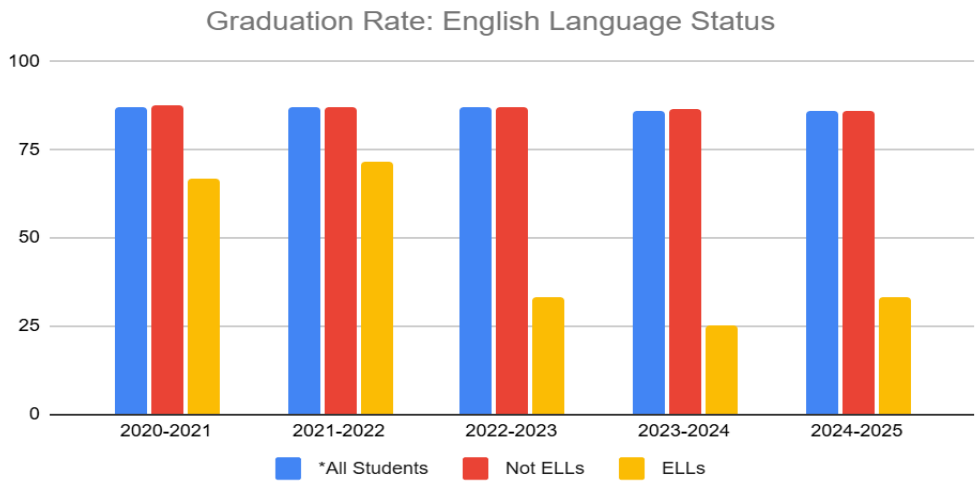
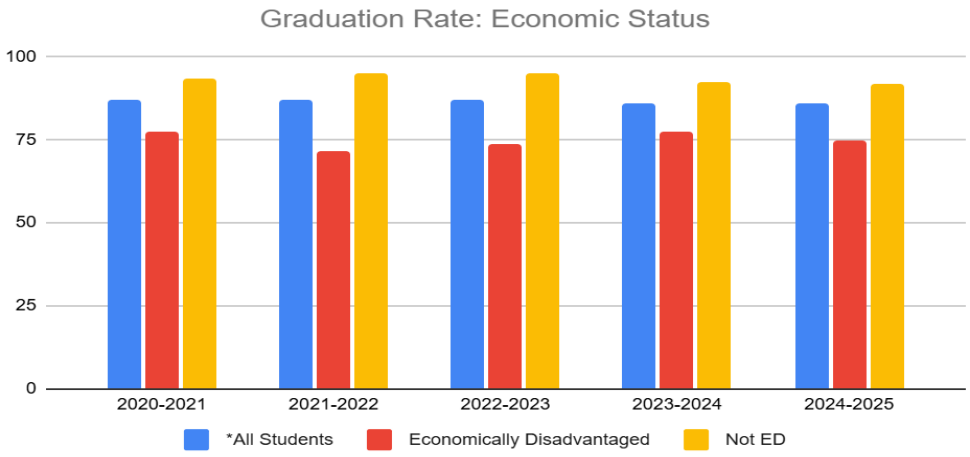


Figure 6.17 displays Graduation Rates by Economic Status (2024–2025). Economically disadvantaged students graduate at lower rates than non-disadvantaged peers, aligning with earlier performance and attendance data. These outcomes point to structural factors—including access to advanced coursework, consistent intervention, and family engagement opportunities—that collectively shape long-term success.

Figures 6.17: North Syracuse CSD Graduation Rates, by Economic Status



Because graduation is a culminating indicator, persistent inequities in discipline, academic intervention, and absenteeism may influence which students persist and in what pathways. The root cause analysis underscores that improving supports and reducing disproportionality earlier is critical to sustaining equitable graduation outcomes.

Across both behavior and academics, the root cause analysis found variability rather than uniformity. Some schools effectively use restorative practices and deploy early intervention tiers; others rely more heavily on exclusionary discipline or bypass intermediate instructional supports in favor of special education routes. Although data systems exist that could support ongoing disaggregated monitoring, they are not used consistently to guide action.

Context and Strategic Implications

It is important to note that North Syracuse CSD's performance patterns occur within a broader context of post-pandemic academic recovery, changes in student technology use, and rising chronic absenteeism. While many students have made substantial gains, others continue to face challenges that require individualized attention and robust intervention systems.

Despite the gaps and variability in performance, North Syracuse has several strengths to build upon:

- Consistency in instructional expectations across buildings
- Strong early childhood programming to support school readiness
- A growing emphasis on inclusive instructional practices and culturally responsive teaching

To make meaningful progress, the district must continue:

- Analyzing assessment data by grade, building, and subgroup
- Supporting targeted schools with additional instructional resources
- Ensuring high-quality core instruction is delivered equitably
- Engaging in continuous improvement through accountability planning

Overall, while districtwide results are close to state norms, the presence of building-level disparities and subgroup-specific gaps emphasizes the need for sustained instructional coherence, strategic use of data, and strong school-level leadership to accelerate student achievement in the years ahead.

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 2024-25 academic year, and to gauge how enrollments may impact them in the future. Tables 7.1 and 7.2 that follow provide an overview of the district's schools.

Table 7.1
Overview of North Syracuse Elementary School Buildings

School	Allen	Bear	Cicero	Lakeshore	Roxboro	Smith Road
Address	803 Allen Road North Syracuse	5590 Bear Road North Syracuse	5979 Route 31 North Syracuse	7180 Lakeshore Road Cicero	200 Bernard St North Syracuse	5959 Smith Road North Syracuse
Year of Original Building	1954	1956	1951	1958	1956	1956
Sq. Ft. in Building	49,355	66,084	57,194	60,910	62,620	71,841
Instructional Sq. Ft. in Building	21,560	26,200	28,340	25,400	27,010	29,300
Number of Floors	1	1	1	1	1	1
Grades Housed	K-4	K-4	K-4	K-4	K-4	K-4
Students Served	326	537	522	425	400	557
Overall Building Rating	Satisfactory	Excellent	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Architect	King & King					

NOTE: All information was taken from the NYS Building Conditions Survey completed in 2020 except the enrollments that were drawn from the 2024-25 academic year.

Table 7.2 Overview of North Syracuse Secondary School Buildings				
Schools	Gillette Road Middle	Roxboro Road Middle	North Syracuse Jr High	CNS High School
Address	6150 South Bay Road Cicero, NY	300 Bernard St Syracuse, NY	5353 Taft Road North Syracuse, NY	6002 Route 31 Cicero, NY
Year of Original Building	1962	1961	1953	1967
Sq. Ft. in Building	164,410	161,400	233,900	320,635
Instructional Sq. Ft. in Building	40,810	54,670	128,230	257,923
Number of Floors	2	2	3	3
Grades Housed	5-7	5-7	8-9	10-12
Students Served	1,003	697	1,186	1,748
Overall Building Rating	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Architect	King & King			
NOTE: Information was taken from the NYS Building Conditions Survey completed in 2020 except the enrollments that were drawn from the 2024-25 academic year.				

As can be seen in tables 7.1 and 7.2, all of the district's buildings were constructed between the early-50's to the late-60's. Allen Road is the smallest of the elementary schools, as well as having the smallest site, limiting growth at that location. The remaining five elementary schools are of similar size with Smith Road being the largest. The Bear Road elementary school recently completed a comprehensive building renovation capital project that has set the standard for the district's elementary school building design. North Syracuse generally employs a neighborhood model for its elementary schools.

In addition to looking at the overall structure of the buildings in the district, it is important to determine how each of the district's current buildings is currently being utilized.

Tables 7.3 through 7.10 that follow show the 2024-25 school year utilization of the district's six elementary schools, NSEEP and the Melvin Administrative Office building because of its viability as an elementary school building.

Table 7.3 **Allen Road Elementary School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 49,355 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes Gym, Cafeteria/Stage, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (20)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (7)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Allen	27	K - 4 1 - 4 2 - 4 2/3 -1 3 - 3 3/4 - 1 4 - 3	AIS - 2 Sensory Room - 1 Social Worker/ADAPEP/Promise Zone - 1 OT/PT - 1 Art - 1 Music - 1	Speech - 2 Psychologist - 1 SRO - 1

Table 7.4 **Bear Road Elementary School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 66,084 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (28)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (6)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Bear	34	K - 6 1 - 5 2 - 7 3 - 5 4 - 5	Art - 1 Music - 1 Special Education -2 AIS - 2	Speech - 2 Band - 1 OT/PT - 3 Special Education - 3 Instructional Coach - 1 SRO - 1

Table 7.5 **Cicero Elementary School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 57,194 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (30)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (7)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Cicero	37	K (LKS) - 5 K - 5 1 - 5 2 - 5 3 - 5 4 - 5	Art - 1 Music - 1 AIS - 1 OT/PT/Speech - 1 Instructional Coaches - 1 Teachers' Room/SRO - 1 ENL - 1	Promise Zone - 1 Counselor - 1 Instrumental Music - 1 AM Speech (Stage) - 1 Speech - 2

Table 7.6 **Lakeshore Elementary School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 60,910 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (25)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (10)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Lakeshore	35	K - 5 1 - 5 2 - 5 3 - 5 4 - 5	Special Education - 3 Science Room - 2 Technology - 1 OT/PT - 1 Speech - 1 Music - 1 Art - 1	Instructional Coach - 1 AIS - 2 Staff Room - 1 Instrument Storage - 1

Table 7.7 **Roxboro Elementary School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 62,620 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (20)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (13)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Roxboro	33	K - 4 1 - 4 2 - 4 3 -4 4 - 4	Art - 1 Music - 1 OT/PT - 1 Special Education - 1 Orchestra/Band - 1 ENL - 1 UPK - 2 AIS - 2 Teachers' Room - 1 Rising Rox Stars - 1 Classroom- 1	Speech - 2 Psychologist - 1

Table 7.8 **Smith Road Elementary School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 71,841 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (28)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (11)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Smith	39	K - 6 1 - 6 2 - 6 3 - 5 4 - 5	Art - 1 Band - 1 ENL - 1 AIS - 2 OT/PT - 1 Multipurpose Room - 1+ Special Education - 3 Teachers' Room - 1	Speech - 2 SRO/Promise Zone - 1

Table 7.9 **NSEEP @ Main Street Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 49,969 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes Gym, Cafeteria, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (14)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (13)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
NSEEP	27	Pre-K - 14	CPSE Office - 1 Business Office - 1 Therapy - 6 Kids' Corner - 1+ Zoom Room - 1+ CTS - 1 Toy Literacy - 1 Staff Room - 1	PTO/Teachers' Room - 1 Therapy - 3 Social Worker - 1 Psychologist - 2 TVI - 1 Mindful Space -1

Table 7.10 **Jerome F. Melvin Administrative Office Building 2024-25 - 29,185 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes Gym & Cafeteria)**			
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Comments	No. of Small Rooms including potential office spaces
Current Administrative Office Building	13	Full-size rooms are currently divided into smaller office spaces to accommodate district administrative services	6

In looking at tables 7.3 through 7.8, the following table shows a comparative summary of the six elementary schools room usage.

Table 7.11 Summary of Elementary Class Sections by Building				
School	Square Footage	# of Students (does not include Pre-K enrollment)	# of K - 4 grade level sections	# of Full-Size Classrooms used for classes other than K - 4 grade level sections
Allen	49.355	326	20	7
Bear	66,084	537	28	6
Cicero	57,194	522	30	7
Lakeshore	60,910	425	25	10
Roxboro	62,620	400	20	13
Smith	71,841	557	28	11

In analyzing the data about the size and utilization of the district's six elementary schools, several observations can be made: some full-size classrooms are utilized for small group instruction, Cicero Elementary is currently using 5 rooms for Lakeshore Elementary kindergarteners during building renovation, several full-size classrooms are used for adult staff, and Roxboro Elementary has two classrooms designated for community-based organization UPK.

The NSEEP program is located in the former North Syracuse High School building, constructed in 1923. The building has been modified to the extent within building constraints to accommodate the three and four year old pre-kindergarten population. The building presents many challenges from a facility maintenance perspective such as ADA compliance, original electrical infrastructure with obsolete equipment, ongoing site issues, spaces inadequate for the student population, dated lavatories, and multiple elevator concerns.

The Jerome F. Melvin Administrative Office Building is a converted 1950s-style elementary school building. Originally housing students, the building was built in 1955 and eventually converted to administrative office space. Many of the original elementary building features are still intact.

Tables 7.12 - 7.15 shows how the spaces in the middle and secondary schools are currently being used.

Table 7.12 **Gillette Road Middle School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 164,410 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes 2 Gyms, 2 Cafeterias, Phys Ed/Weight Room, Auditorium, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (49)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (16)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Gillette	65	4 (Lakeshore) - 5 5 - 14 6 - 14 7 - 16	Technology - 1 Family/Con Science - 1 Art - 3 Music - 2 Special Education - 7 Grade 4 Academic Services - 1 AIS - 1	Speech - 2 Special Education - 2 Liberty Resources - 2 Music Lesson - 2 AIS - 4 ENL - 1 OT/PT - 2

Table 7.13 **Roxboro Road Middle School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 161,400 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes 2 Gyms, Phys Ed area, 2 Cafeterias, Auditorium, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Grade Level Classrooms (35)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (24)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Roxboro Middle	59	5 - 11 6 - 10 7 - 14	Special Education - 9 OT/PT - 1 AIS - 2 ISS - 1 ENL - 2 Orchestra (stage) - 1 Technology - 1 Music - 1 Art - 2 Family/Con Science - 1 Health - 1 Flex - 1 Storage - 1	Music - 1 Liberty Resources - 2 Special Education - 1 Panic Zone - 1 Staff Room - 1 Studio - 1 AIS - 3 ENL - 1 Speech - 2

Table 7.14 **North Syracuse Junior High School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 233,900 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes 2 Gyms, Cafeteria, Large Group Instruction Room, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Core Academic Classrooms (53)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (33)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
North Syracuse Junior High	86	53	Art – 5 FACS – 5 AIS – 4 Music – 3 Tech – 10 Health – 2 ISS – 1 Business – 2 Special Education - 1	AIS – 1 ENL – 1 APE – 1 Special Education – 2 AV/Print – 1 TV Studio – 1

Table 7.15 **Cicero North Syracuse High School Classroom Usage 2024-25 - 320,635 Sq. Ft.** **(Includes 2 Gyms, Cafeteria, Large Group Instruction Room, & Library)**				
School Building	No. of Full-Size Rooms	Core Academic Classrooms (59)	Other Usage of Full-Size Rooms (54)	Usage of Small Rooms, Not Full-Size, Other Than Administration
Cicero North Syracuse High	113	59	Special Education – 8 Staff – 6 Tech – 5 Art – 5 FACS – 5 Health – 4 Business – 4 Classroom – 3 Computer Lab – 2 Music – 3 Bookstore – 1 Multipurpose Room – 1 Storage – 1 ENL – 1 ISS – 1 AIS – 1 Career Center – 1 Trainer -1 Tech – Other - 1	Counseling – 7 Social Worker – 2 Psychologist – 2 Special Education - 2 Spec Education Office – 2 PT – 1 AIS- 1 APE/PT – 1 Speech – 1 Service Provider – 1 Green Closet – 1 Liberty Resources – 1 Athletic Dir – 1 Conference Room - 1 Yearbook/Staff – 1 Performing Arts – 1 Computer Lab – 1 Staff – 1 Tech Asst – 1 SRO – 1 ELA Bookroom – 1 Test Center - 1

As the above tables illustrate, there are several full-size classrooms utilized for small group instruction, some full-size rooms are designated as 'flex' or 'storage', and a significant number of full-size rooms are used for 'other' instructional purposes. In Gillette Middle School, 6 classrooms are currently used to house the fourth graders from Lakeshore Elementary while building renovations are completed.

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.

Like a home, school buildings require ongoing upkeep, maintenance, and improvement. This is an expensive undertaking for any school district. Not all of the items in the Building Condition Survey listed are urgent. Conversely, there are items associated with each of the buildings that require attention in the near future and other items that are nearing the end of their useful life. It is just a matter of time before some of these matters become critical, requiring immediate attention, resulting in significant expense. In this planning, it is important to remember that New York State will reimburse North Syracuse at the rate of approximately 84.9% of all approved building expenses.

In any study of a district's facilities, it is important to identify the issues noted in the Building Condition Survey. 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 corresponding costs that are detailed in the Building Condition Survey must be considered in those planning efforts.

The Building Condition Surveys for all school districts were required to be updated in 2020. Based on the Building Condition Survey and an ongoing assessment of the district's facilities' needs, the district developed a facilities master plan that encompassed many of the items noted in the BCS along with identified instructional needs. Table 7.16 that follows summarizes the most significant suggested improvements not addressed by current capital projects and the related estimated costs for each of

North Syracuse's schools. It should be noted that the district has updated the 2020 BCS estimated costs to current construction values.

Table 7.16
Summary of 2024 District Master Plan

Building	Estimated Capital Construction Costs	Examples of Cost Items
NSEEP	$14,000,000	Pavement and drainage renovations (recurring sinkhole), flooring replacement, complete electrical system replacement, HVAC replacement (chillers, boilers, piping), restroom renovation. NOTE: Does not address current elevator concerns.
Allen	$10,200,000	Pavement & sidewalks. Convert steam heat to hot water, classroom flooring, HVAC (add AC), exterior canopy, classroom updates,
Bear	$0	Excellent condition from recent renovation
Cicero	$39, 200,000	Complete renovation for 50% of building (similar to Lakeshore), roof replacement, Pavement upgrades, correct water migration issue in utility room, drainage improvement. HVAC infrastructure upgrade
Lakeshore	$30,000,000	Current Phase I capital construction project to be completed in 2025-26. Phase 2 to include new boilers, roof replacement, complete renovation of remaining classroom wings.
Roxboro Elementary	$20,000,000	Roof replacement, complete HVAC upgrade. NOTE: District has applied for additional outside grant funding.
Smith	$1,850,000	Pavement, site lighting.
Gillette	$11,200,000	Pavement upgrades, remaining athletic field upgrades, flooring, gym and auditorium improvements, renovation of STEM spaces throughout building
Roxboro Middle	$27,000,000	Roof replacement, complete HVAC upgrade NOTE: District has applied for additional outside grant funding.
Junior High School	$40,000,000	Stadium renovations, HVAC upgrades, pavement and site lighting, renovations to building facade, flooring, gym and auditorium renovations, general interior finishes, main electrical service improvements, installation of backup generator, plumbing improvements
High School	$36,500,000	Pavement improvements, field and storm draining, facade improvements, ADA accessibility, flooring, ceiling, plumbing upgrades, kitchen AC upgrades, installation of backup generator, roofing renovations, improvements to STEM spaces
TOTAL	$229,950,000	

The focus of this study is on the district's instructional buildings, but it should be noted that the Building Condition Survey also identified improvements that should be addressed in the non-school buildings including the transportation center, bus storage building, maintenance office building, and

Melvin administrative office building. The district is currently assessing all district buildings in collaboration with its architectural firm which will result in the development of a long-range facilities plan in alignment with the district strategic plan and vision.

From 2009 to 2016, there were a number of years where a variety of factors did not allow district leaders to pursue needed infrastructure repairs and improvements. In recent years, the North Syracuse school district has been diligent and purposeful in its development of capital projects that support instruction and maintain the investment that the community has made in its buildings over the years. It is important that the district and community continue to support ongoing facility maintenance and improvements to provide students and staff with quality learning environments and preserve taxpayers' investment in district buildings and property. The tables below summarize the capital projects that have been approved by district residents 2016.

Table 7.17 **Capital Project Work - Approved by voters 10/18/2016**	
Bear Road	Reconstruction and renovation at KWS Bear Road Elementary School, including some additions, replacement windows, original furnishings, equipment and machinery
Transportation Facility	Construction of a transportation facility fueling station

Table 7.18 **Capital Project Work - Approved by voters 12/17/2019**	
Bear Road	Funding for to allow completion of original scope of work as presented to voters in 2016 project vote
Purchase of land near CNS	Purchase of land near C-NS to provide expanded access for emergency responders, improved ability to evacuate the campus, and additional parking during special events

Table 7.19 Capital Project Work - Approved by voters 12/8/2021	
Cicero	Renovation to older part of building. NOTE: Project currently on hold due to inflationary factors, etc. resulting in insufficient authorized funding by voters
Lakeshore Road	Partial renovation of aging building; currently under construction
Smith Road	PA/fire alarm improvements, playground replacement, repaving of areas in poor condition
CNS	Repairs to HVAC, PA, fire alarm systems, upgrade select electrical panels, select areas of roof replacement, gym/locker room renovations, auditorium renovations, road/driveway repaving, construction of community swimming pool; currently under construction

Table 7.20 Capital Project Work - Approved by voters 5/17/2022	
North Syracuse Junior High	HVAC improvements (chiller pump replacements, air handling units, building automation controls)
Districtwide	Interior and exterior lighting upgrades (LED, dimmers)

Table 7.21 Capital Project Work - Approved by voters 12/6/2022	
Gillette Road	HVAC upgrades including air conditioning installation, multi-sport turf field, pavement improvements to athletic complex reconstruction
NSEEP	Roof replacement, water main replacement
North Syracuse Junior High	Lavatory renovations
Districtwide	Create/upgrade secure building entries and access control, security film at exterior doors and group gathering areas, replace aging PA systems with campus notification system, replace aging fire alarm systems, exterior and directional signage, districtwide radio system, districtwide replacement of lock cores, interior and exterior door replacement

In 2023, the North Syracuse Board of Education commissioned Ross Haber and Associates to conduct a study to begin the process of examining the impact of declining enrollment and the impending arrival of Micron to the community. The Haber report was reviewed with the current Utilization Study community committee and the recommendations were used to inform the current committee's work. Implementation of changes to grade level organization is typically a multi-year process that requires a comprehensive planning process and, in all likelihood, some amount of renovation to school buildings. Of particular note in the Haber study report is the option presented regarding the distribution of students in the two middle school buildings. Students are currently assigned to a building using a north/south distribution with Route 481 as the dividing line. Haber suggested an east/west distribution model using Route 81 as the dividing line which results in a more equitable distribution of both total number of enrolled students and economically disadvantaged students. This concept may warrant further exploration by the district in the short term to begin to address identified concerns with efficient staff and space utilization, disproportionality, and student outcomes as its work continues to establish grade level alignment to best support the district's strategic plan and vision.

CHAPTER 8: FINANCE

Effective management of finances is an important requirement for any school district. 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 2016 to 2025. The North Syracuse community has strongly supported the district's budget proposals for the past decade. This consistent level of support from the taxpayers should be viewed as one indicator of community satisfaction with the educational experience provided for its students for a reasonable cost.

Table 8.1
District Budget Vote History

Year	Yes Votes	No Votes	Total Votes	% Yes
2025	1022	411	1433	71.3%
2024	1204	642	1846	65.2%
2023	1077	744	1821	59.1%
2022	1298	466	1764	73.6%
2021	1063	407	1470	72.3%
2020	4417	2074	6491	68.0%
2019	1423	410	1833	77.6%
2018	1545	890	2435	63.4%
2017	1378	428	1806	76.3%
2016	1636	477	2113	77.4%

In addition, the North Syracuse school community has supported capital project votes in 2016, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2022, and 2024 (Use of Capital Reserve).

A second window into the district's current fiscal condition considers the current general fund balance sheet. At the end of each fiscal year (June 30th), all school districts have to file a year-end

financial report. The following table 8.2 shows North Syracuse's general fund balance sheet from this report for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2021, through June 30, 2025.

Table 8.2
North Syracuse Central School District General Fund Balance Sheet

	6/30/2021	6/30/2022	6/30/2023	6/30/2024	6/30/2025
ASSETS:					
Cash - Unrestricted	$33,381,635	$36,909,266	$32,709,367	$42,691,459	$34,803,028
Cash - Restricted	$15,753,377	$18,768,033	$21,628,595	$30,015,945	$27,145,676
Receivables - State and Federal aid	$3,985,372	$3,469,541	$3,239,055	$2,407,870	$3,978,121
Receivables - Due from other funds	$5,748,544	$6,021,615	$8,354,345	$6,070,286	$6,278,747
Receivables - Due from other governments	$2,647,115	$2,608,302	$3,070,084	$3,283,556	$3,554,398
Other	$61,247	$84,649	$699,524	$169,501	$135,803
Total Assets	$61,577,290	$67,861,406	$69,700,970	$84,638,617	$75,895,773
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE					
LIABILITIES:					
Accounts payable	$62,539	$712,941	$739,168	$965,881	$1,006,851
Accrued liabilities	$17,068,756	$18,345,380	$18,943,940	$19,870,933	$20,787,020
Due to other funds	$176,028	$6,653,325	$3,668,166	$6,475,304	$241,323
Due to TRS	$6,792,883	$7,481,742	$8,385,986	$8,416,567	$9,211,189
Due to ERS	$822,428	$595,591	$730,580	$921,035	$1,041,594
Total Liabilities	$24,922,634	$33,788,979	$32,467,840	$36,649,720	$32,287,977
FUND BALANCES					
Nonspendable			$610,730	$68,624	$13,818
Restricted					

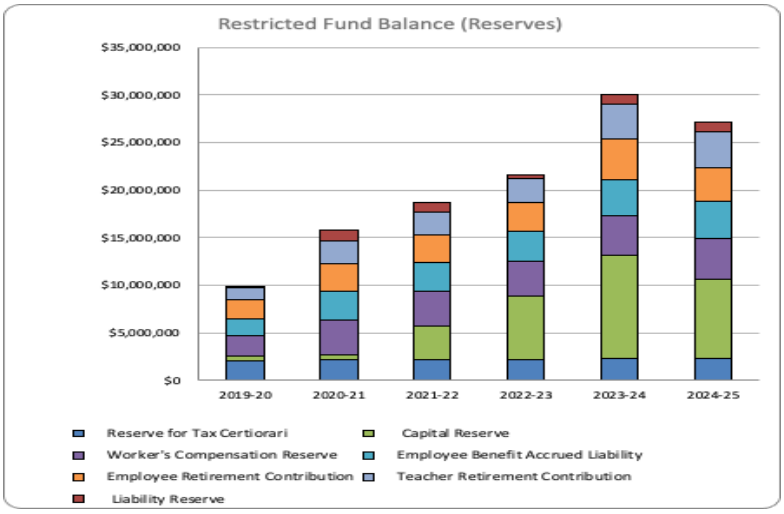
Table 8.2 continued on following page

Table 8.2 North Syracuse Central School District General Fund Balance Sheet					
Workers' Compensation Reserve	$3,648,938	$3,649,608	$3,706,444	$4,136,883	$4,252,262
Employee Retirement Contribution	$3,000,060	$3,004,826	$3,114,079	$4,281,126	$3,464,253
Teacher Retirement Contribution	$2,400,036	$2,403,834	$2,491,235	$3,624,872	$3,777,732
Reserve for Tax Certiorari	$2,165,131	$2,165,551	$2,199,276	$2,276,674	$2,341,720
Liability	$1,019,975	$1,020,145	$386,032	$1,004,164	$1,027,224
Capital Reserves	$519,183	$3,519,257	$6,617,464	$10,911,114	$8,334,147
Employee Benefit Accrued Liability	$3,000,054	$3,004,812	$3,114,065	$3,781,112	$3,948,338
Assigned Fund Balance					
Appropriated Fund Balance	$5,000,000	$5,250,000	$5,650,000	$7,450,000	$7,450,000
Unappropriated Fund Balance	$1,650,051	$726,365	$1,348,314	$437,482	$584,595
Unassigned Fund Balance	$14,251,228	$9,328,029	$7,995,491	$10,016,846	$8,413,707
Total Fund Balance	$36,654,656	$34,072,427	$37,233,130	$47,988,897	$43,607,796
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	$61,577,290	$67,861,406	$69,700,970	$84,638,617	$75,895,773

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. Reserve funds provide a mechanism for school districts to set aside funds for specific future needs to aid in fiscal stability. Provisions for reserve funds are defined in statute. Table 8.3 that follows includes the 2024-25 year-end balances for the district's reserve funds in addition to data presented above. On June 30, 2025, the district had $4,252,262 reserves for workers' compensation claims, $3,464,253 in a reserve for retirement contribution to the Employees' Retirement System (ERS), $3,777,732 in a reserve for Teachers' Retirement System (TRS), $2,341,720 reserved for tax certiorari claims (property assessment challenges), $1,027,224 in a liability reserve, $3,948,338 set aside for employee benefits and accrued liabilities upon separation of service from the district, and a $8,334,147 capital reserve.

Table 8.3 Restricted Fund Balance (Reserves)						
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Workers' Compensation Reserve	$2,147,240	$3,648,938	$3,649,608	$3,706,444	$4,136,883	$4,252,262
Employee Retirement Contribution	$2,000,000	$3,000,060	$3,004,826	$3,114,079	$4,281,126	$3,464,253
Teacher Retirement Contribution	$1,200,000	$2,400,036	$2,403,834	$2,491,235	$3,624,872	$3,777,732
Reserve for Tax Certiorari	$2,038,519	$2,165,131	$2,165,551	$2,199,276	$2,276,674	$2,341,720
Liability	$19,184	$1,019,975	$1,020,145	$386,032	$1,004,164	$1,027,224
Capital Reserves	$518,951	$519,183	$3,519,257	$6,617,464	$10,911,114	$8,334,147
Employee Benefit Accrued Liability	$1,800,000	$3,000,054	$3,004,812	$3,114,065	$3,781,112	$3,948,338
Total	$9,723,894	$15,753,377	$18,768,033	$21,628,595	$30,015,945	$27,145,676

The graph below provides a visual illustration of the restricted fund balance (reserves) of the district. In 2019-20, the total reserve funds balance was insufficient for a district of North Syracuse's size. The district has been diligent in building reserve balances to appropriate levels in the past five years, placing the district in a much stronger position for fiscal stability. Continued efforts to be strategic and intentional about increasing reserve fund balances will further the district's financial security.



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 2024-25 fiscal year, North Syracuse had $8,413,708 set aside or 3.8% of its 2025-26 general fund budget ($224,048,589).

Lastly, we examine the amount of money a school district uses to hold down the tax rate each year; that is, money the district has on hand at the end of the previous year that it applies to the revenue side of the ledger for the coming year (assigned appropriated fund balance). From the 2024-25 general fund budget, North Syracuse applied $7,450,000 to hold the 2025-26 tax rate down. There has been a notable increase in the use of assigned appropriated fund balance since 2020. While stable the past two years, this use of fund balance should be carefully monitored going forward. Excessive use of fund balance to control the tax levy places the district in a position that may result in fiscal instability in future years. Therefore, it would serve the district well to seek to reduce the reliance on fund balance to support future budgets. Excessive 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 six-year history, as illustrated in Table 8.4 that follows, shows that the use of assigned fund balance has increased from $5,000,000 to $7,450,000 over the past six years. This is a fiscal health indicator that should be carefully monitored to ensure that the district does not become too reliant on funds from the previous budget year to provide a comprehensive educational program with a reasonable tax increase. Unassigned fund balance has been relatively stable with balances close to the statutory limit.

Table 8.4 History of Assigned and Unassigned Fund Balance		
Fiscal Year Ending 6/30	Assigned Fund Balance* (Assigned Appropriated Fund Balance)	Unassigned Fund Balance
2020	$5,731,792 ($5,000,000)	$9,768,821
2021	$6,650,051 ($5,000,000)	$14,251,228
2022	$5,976,365 ($5,250,000)	$9,328,029
2023	$6,998,314 ($5,650,000)	$7,995,491
2024	$7,887,482 ($7,450,000)	$10,016,846
2025	$8,034,595 ($7,450,000)	$8,413,707
*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 carried over from the previous year.		

Another important financial variable, particularly relevant to this study, is the current amount of principal and interest the district carries on former capital borrowing. Regardless of any future options the district endorses concerning grade alignment and facilities, North Syracuse will have to engage in future borrowing to accomplish some amount of capital work as identified in the Building Condition Survey or for the district's programmatic needs. The following table summarizes the current capital debt obligations of the district. In addition, the table also estimates the amount of state aid the district will receive on these payments as well as the net local share taxpayers must contribute. There are two years in which the district will have significant changes in the debt service payments and resulting local share: 2038-39 and 2041-42. 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. Capital reserve monies can also be used to fund the local share of construction projects, eliminating the need for long-term borrowing.

Table 8.5
Capital Debt After Aid Received

Year	*Principal & Interest*	*Estimated Aid*	*Estimated Local Share*
2025-26	$12,507,284	$8,458,057	$4,049,227
2026-27	$15,782,790	$11,713,062	$4,069,728
2027-28	$16,627,971	$11,888,493	$4,739,478
2028-29	$16,805,319	$11,888,493	$4,916,826
2029-30	$16,687,269	$11,777,461	$4,909,808
2030-31	$16,478,919	$11,530,488	$4,948,431
2031-32	$16,463,969	$11,530,488	$4,933,481
2032-33	$16,375,119	$11,470,705	$4,904,414
2033-34	$16,337,619	$11,470,705	$4,866,914
2034-35	$16,232,556	$11,419,616	$4,812,940
2035-36	$15,792,613	$11,155,187	$4,637,426
2036-37	$15,678,388	$11,043,236	$4,635,152
2037-38	$14,238,600	$10,234,039	$4,004,561
2038-39	$13,080,675	$10,195,943	$2,884,732
2039-40	$12,300,425	$9,066,210	$3,234,215
2040-41	$7,437,100	$4,778,770	$2,658,330
2041-42	$1,039,975	$302,959	$737,016
2042-43	$1,037,400	$302,959	$734,441
2043-44	$1,038,250	$302,959	$735,291
2044-45	$1,037,300	$302,959	$734,341
2045-46	$1,034,550	$302,959	$731,591
Total	$244,014,091	$171,135,748	$72,878,343

An examination of the data in Table 8.6 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 North Syracuse district for approved capital project expense is 84.9%.

Table 8.6
Building Aid Ratios

North Syracuse	Voter Approval Date
0.777	prior to 7/1/98
0.877	on or after 7/1/1998 but prior to 6/30/2000
0.849	on or after 7/1/2000 but prior to 6/30/2005
0.849	on or after 7/1/2005

The table below provides information critical to the district's capital project planning. The NYS Education Department (NYSED) determines the maximum cost allowance for each school building based on a variety of factors including NYSED-rated building capacity, enrollment, and regional construction cost indexes. The maximum cost allowance is the maximum project cost upon which the State will pay building aid for approved expenditures. As districts complete capital projects, the maximum cost allowance will be temporarily reduced. Five years following the completion of a capital project, the building's maximum cost allowance will reset (increase) by the amount of the capital project completed five years prior. A district is permitted to develop a capital project that exceeds the maximum cost allowance, but any costs exceeding that number would not be eligible for building aid and must be funded entirely by local tax dollars and reserves.

Table 8.7
NYSED Maximum Cost Allowance Estimates

Building	*Total NYSED Maximum Cost Allowance*	*Maximum Cost Allowance Available 9/2025*	*Building Condition Survey Estimates*	*SED Reset Dates*
Allen Road Elem	$9,709,359	$7,116,440	$10,200,000	$650,000 - 9/2026 $300,000 - 10/2029 $1,730,000 - 1/2030
Bear Road Elem	$14,973,804	$14,973,804	$0	
Cicero Elem	$17,421,238	$16,340,875	$39,200,000	$1,000,000 - 2/2028 $29,000 - 10/2029
Lakeshore Road Elem	$18,352,402	$0	$30,000,000	$18,352,402 - 5/2028
Roxboro Road Elem	$17,921,857	$15,730,148	$20,000,000	$350,000 - 10/2029 $1,834,000 - 1/2030
Smith Road Elem	$22,069,230	$20,007,868	$1,850,000	$1,042,000 - 8/2027 $223,000 - 10/2029 $800,000 - 1/2030
Gillette Road MS	$43,865,697	$11,394,527	$11,200,000	$675,000 - 10/2029 $31,798,000 - 5/2030
Roxboro Road MS	$28,880,104	$23,865,696	$27,000,000	$440,000 - 10/2029 $4,573,000 - 1/2030
North Syracuse JH	$44,558,945	$30,306,905	$40,000,000	$1,350,000 - 8/2027 $1,000,000 - 2/2029 $1,900,000 - 10/2029 $9,996,000 - TBD
CNS HS	$62,213,340	$8,880,384	$36,500,000	$99,000 - 8/2026 $1,280,000 - 9/2026 $9,000,000 - 5/2027 $1,280,000 - 8/2028 $28,400,000 - 8/2028 $100,000 - 10/2028 $3,830,000 - 8/2029 $1,382,000 - 10/2029 $100,000 - 12/2029 $7,861,000 - 1/2030

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 within the school district.

In Table 8.8, it is clear that the property value of the North Syracuse district has steadily increased over the past 5 years with significant increases in 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2025-26, reflective of the current property value trends.

Table 8.8
Full Property Value

Year	North Syracuse	$ Increase	% Increase
2020-21	$3,947,938,753	$126,071,571	3.3%
2021-22	$4,219,354,922	$271,416,169	6.9%
2022-23	$4,706,508,668	$487,153,746	11.55%
2023-24	$5,504,905,327	$798,396,659	17.0%
2024-25	$5,823,853,064	$318,947,737	5.8%
2025-26	$6,710,690,456	$886,837,392	15.2%

Another factor used to determine the 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 8.9, the property tax levy for North Syracuse has steadily increased at an average rate of 3% annually.

Table 8.9 Property Tax Levy			
Year	North Syracuse	$ Increase	% Increase
2020-21	$92,544,955	$2,335,623	2.6%
2021-22	$95,365,432	$2,820,477	3.0%
2022-23	$98,574,564	$3,209,132	3.4%
2023-24	$101,747,931	$3,173,367	3.2%
2024-25	$104,778,733	$3,030,802	3.0%
2025-26	$107,813,284	$3,034,551	2.9%

Table 8.10 below illustrates that the full value tax rates of the North Syracuse school district have decreased annually from $23.44 per thousand in 2020-21 to a rate of $16.07 in 2025-26. This is a result of the total property value of the district increasing at a rate greater than the total tax levy.

Table 8.10 History of Full Value Tax Rates						
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Tax Levy	$92,544,955	$95,365,432	$98,574,564	$101,747,931	$104,778,733	$107,813,284
Full Value	$3,947,938,753	$4,219,354,922	$4,706,508,668	$5,504,905,327	$5,823,853,064	$6,710,690,456
Full Value Tax Rate	$23.44	$22.60	$20.94	$18.48	$17.99	$16.07
% Change		-3.6%	-7.3%	-11.8%	-2.7%	-10.7%

The financial factors examined in this study indicate that the North Syracuse school district is in generally good financial condition. Increased funding of reserves and decreased reliance on assigned appropriated fund balance as a revenue source in annual budget development are two areas of focus that would further enhance the fiscal stability of the district. It should be noted that all data reviewed are retrospective and do not account for conditions that may present in future years

CHAPTER 9: STAFFING

Staffing costs comprise a majority of a school district's fiscal outlays, routinely accounting for 70-75% of a school district's operating budget and consisting of the costs of salaries and fringe benefits for a wide array of employees. Understanding how staff are allocated within a school district and the associated costs is a crucial component in answering the critical question of this study. Therefore, this chapter will take up the question of staffing in considering how the North Syracuse Central School District (North Syracuse CSD) can strategically restructure its staffing, facilities, and grade-level configurations to optimize educational outcomes and emotional well-being for all students, while addressing declining enrollment, reduced state aid, and future growth opportunities like the Micron project.

During the 2024-2025 school year, North Syracuse CSD employed approximately 1,600 regular faculty and staff members. This did not include temporary, summer, or seasonal staff members. The 1,500 positions were spread across the school district's instructional and operations buildings, with most employees having a "home" building. Table 9.1 reports the number of employees at each location.

Table 9.1 District Positions by Location* 2024-2025	
Number of Positions	Location
7	Maintenance & Operations - Night
18	Maintenance & Operations - Day
49	District Office
53	Lakeshore Road Elementary School
71	Allen Road Elementary School
89	Cicero Elementary School
90	KWS Bear Road Elementary School
92	Roxboro Road Elementary School
96	NSEEP @ Main Street School
104	Smith Road Elementary School
129	Roxboro Road Middle School
159	Gillette Road Middle School
169	Transportation Center
179	North Syracuse Junior High School

*32 staff members did not have a central location

North Syracuse CSD employs faculty and staff in a variety of positions. In 2024-2025, North Syracuse CSD employed 700 teachers, 181 teaching assistants, and 49 teacher aides. These positions are distributed across the instructional buildings as seen in Table 9.2. Taken together, these positions, which provide direct instructional services to students, are the largest group of employees in the district. The average salary for a teacher in North Syracuse CSD is $82,401 (average cost with benefits: $131,842), while the average salary for a teacher assistant is $36,788 (average cost with benefits: $58,861), and the average salary for a teacher's aide is $18,678 (average cost with benefits: $29,8845).

Table 9.2 Instructional Positions by Location 2024-2025			
Location	Teachers	Teacher Assistants	Teacher Aides
Allen Road Elementary School	34	14	3
Cicero Elementary School	49	16	4
Cicero North Syracuse High School	147	15	5
Gillette Road Middle School	94	19	6
KWS Bear Road Elementary School	46	13	4
Lakeshore Elementary School	24	5	4
NSEEP @ Main St.	23	44	0
North Syracuse Junior High School	107	8	6
Roxboro Road Elementary School	44	14	5
Roxboro Road Middle School	66	17	8
Smith Road Elementary School	57	21	4

The staff category of teachers can be broken down and assessed based on the content areas of their appointments, which are determined by their certifications. The New York State Education Department holds sole certification authority for all teachers in the state. There are multiple types of certificates, with each type dictating the instructional area in which teachers are authorized to instruct. Table 9.3 sets out these certification types and instructional areas. It is important to remember that teachers are not allowed to teach outside of the area in which they are certified, except in rare cases as dictated by the New York State Education Department. Typically, the exception allows any teacher to teach outside their certification area for no more than 5 hours per week (which is analogous to approximately one course); however, the New York State Education Department has temporarily increased that exception to ten hours per week through the 2025-2026 school year. North Syracuse CSD, though, only had one teacher teaching one course out of their certification area during the 2023-2024 school year.

Table 9.3 New York State Certification Areas		
Certification Type	Content Areas	Grade Levels
Early Childhood Education	Common areas (math, science, English-Language Arts, social studies)	Birth - Grade 2
Childhood Education	Common areas (math, science, English-Language Arts, social studies)	Grades 1 -6
Secondary Education in the Content Areas	Separate certification required for: math, English-Language Arts, social studies, Earth Science, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Languages other than English	Grades 7- 12
Special Areas	Separate certification required for: health, physical education, art, music, family and consumer sciences, technology, business, English as a New Language, Literacy	Grades K-12
Special Education	Separate certification is required for each grade band or all grades	Birth - Grade 2 Grades 1 -6 Grades 7 -12 All Grades

Understanding the different types of certifications and the limitations on teachers' ability to instruct in various grade levels and content areas, as determined by their certification, can help decision-makers consider the strengths and weaknesses of proposed instructional and programmatic changes. It can also provide a lens for assessing current teacher staffing levels in the district. Table 9.4 shows the number of teachers in each content area for the North Syracuse CSD during the 2024-2025 school year. It appears that in some of the content areas, the number of teachers employed by the North Syracuse CSD is higher than would be expected in a district of its size. While some of these increased numbers can be explained by robust course offerings at North

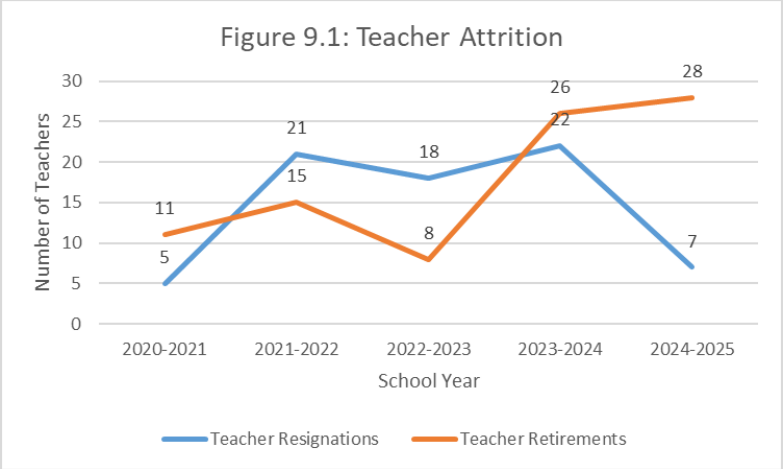
Syracuse Junior High School and Cicero North Syracuse High School, that is not the case for all of the content areas. The areas where it appears North Syracuse CSD may be the most overstaffed are in elementary (grades K-6), family and consumer sciences, languages other than English (foreign languages), and special education.

Table 9.4
Teacher Positions by Content Areas
2024-2025

Number of Positions	Content Area
4	ADAPEP Counselor
4	AIS Elementary
6	Consultant Teacher
7	Health
9	Business
11	Technology
11	Librarian
13	Family and Consumer Sciences
17	ESL/ENL
22	Art
23	Foreign Language
28	Music
29	Reading
28	Speech/Language
33	English
34	Social Studies
37	Physical Education
37	Science
40	Math
124*	Special Education
191	Elementary (Grades K-6)

*Note: 14 of the special education teacher positions are prekindergarten teachers

One variable that can impact staffing levels is the number of retirements/resignations each year and the district's ability to fill those positions. As shown in Figure 9.1, the number of teacher resignations and retirements over the last five years has been inconsistent, with retirements peaking at 26 in 2023-2024 and then declining to a low of 2 in 2024-2025.



Another category of employees within the instructional buildings is Related Service Providers. Related Service Providers provide direct support to students in the form of occupational therapy and physical therapy. Also included in this category are school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and nurses. Although these workers are often assigned a primary location, some of them are split between buildings. (Note: North Syracuse CSD hires speech/language teachers, not speech therapists, so they are included in the teacher category.) For that reason, the numbers for these positions are reported in the aggregate in Table 9.5. School districts are also responsible for paying fringe benefits for employees. These benefits can include health insurance costs, separate costs for vision and dental insurance, employee retirement plans, workman's compensation, and social security, for example. Fringe benefits vary in the percentage costs of each employee group. Typically, the percentage cost of fringe benefits is higher for employees with lower salaries. Employees with higher salaries may have overall higher fringe benefit costs, but they are a lower percentage of costs for the district. For this study, a fringe benefit cost of 60% was used for all salary costs.

Table 9.5 Related Service Providers 2024-2025			
Title	Number of Positions	Average Salary	Average Salary and Benefits (1.6x salary)
Physical Therapists	9	$84,222	$134,755.20
Social Workers	12	$81,876	$131,001.60
Occupational Therapists	18	$82,775	$132,440.00
School Psychologists	19	$81,448	$130,316.80
School Counselors/Guidance	23	$87,856	$140,569.60
Nurses (RNs and LPNs)	30	$59,188	$94,700.80

The district also employs a large number of administrators to oversee and support faculty, staff, and students. The largest type of administrator is principals, of which there were 22 during the 2024-2025 school year. This includes all individuals with principal in their title, and they were paid an average of $117,410. Other supervisors/managers are included in Table 9.6 and include: Deans, Supervisors and assistant supervisors of operations (e.g., transportation, food service, maintenance), directors, executive directors, and coordinators of academic programs, directors and assistant directors of extracurricular programs, and individuals with a superintendent level title, including assistants and associates.

Table 9.6 Administrators 2024-2025			
Title	Number of Positions	Average Salary	Average Salary and Benefits (1.6x salary)
Deans	3	$95,751	$153,201
"Extracurriculars" Supervisors (including Directors and Assistants)	3	$128,847	$206,155
Superintendents (including Assistants and Associates)	4	$187,570	$300,112
"Operations" Supervisors (including Assistants)	8	$112,507	$180,011
"Academic" Supervisors (including Directors, Executive Directors, and Coordinators)	11	$141,709	$226,734
Principals	22	$117,410	$187,856

A review of comparative administrative staffing data via NYSED reports shows that North Syracuse CSD is not overstaffed at the administrative level (see Figures 9.2 and 9.3). In that data, he district reports 32 FTE administrators, which is proportional to districts of similar size in the region and well within expected ranges. When examining workload indicators, North Syracuse has one of the highest student-to-administrator ratios in the comparison group (approximately 238 students per administrator), meaning each administrator supervises more students than their peers in neighboring districts. North Syracuse also has the highest number of teachers per administrator among the comparison districts at 19.9, further demonstrating that administrative responsibility is distributed across a larger instructional workforce. Together, these metrics show that North Syracuse operates with a lean administrative structure relative to regional peers, and current staffing levels do not suggest administrative excess.

Figure 9.3: Administrative Staffing Ratios: North Syracuse CSD with Comparable Districts

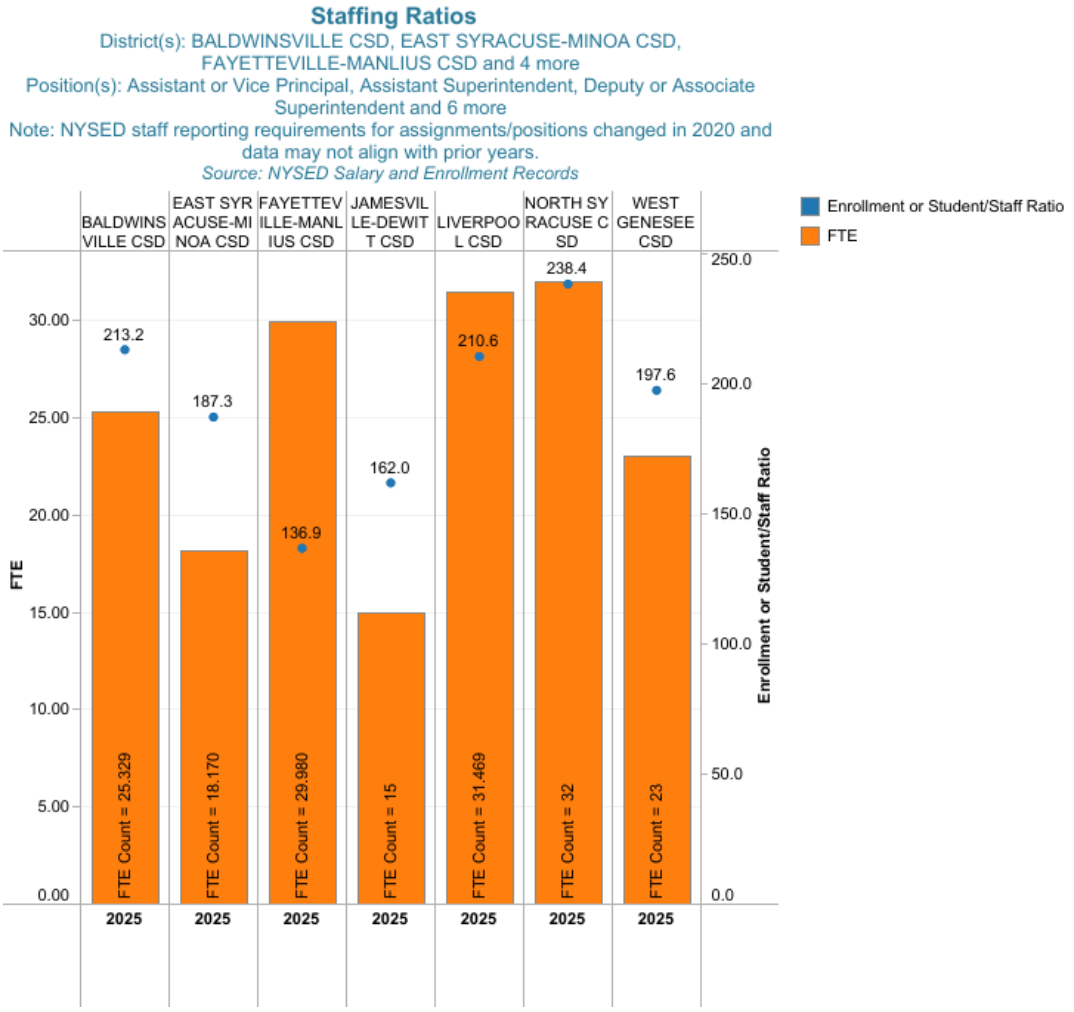
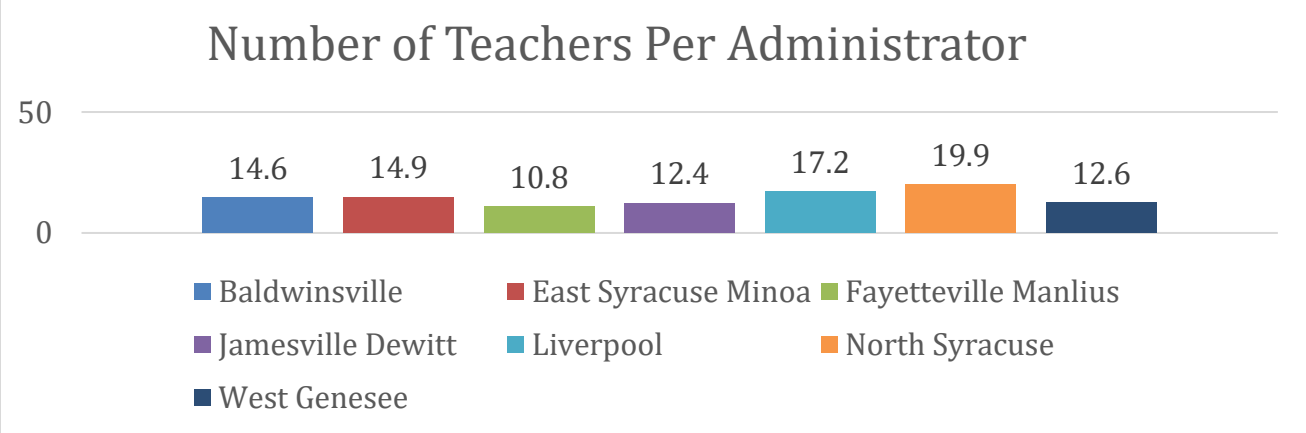


Figure 9.5: Number of Teachers per Administrator, North Syracuse CSD vs. Comparables



Non-instructional positions within the district include a variety of roles, most of which are governed by Civil Service regulations. These roles and associated average salaries are shown in Table 9.7. To protect salary information and anonymity, staffing titles with fewer than three employees have their average salary excluded from the table. Also of note is that many of these positions are hourly, part-time, and/or less than 12 months.

Table 9.7
District Staff by Title
2024-2025

Title	Number of Staff	Average Salary	Average Salary and Benefits (1.6x salary)
Accountant	2	excluded	excluded
Athletic Trainer	2	excluded	excluded
Bus Dispatcher	4	$84,796	$135,673
Cook	4	$27.70/hr.	n/a
Account Clerk	8	$75,224	$120,358
Guard	12	$31,513	$50,420
Auto Mechanics/Repair Workers	15	$95,127	$152,203
Maintenance	18	$76,095	$121,752
Typist	20	$49,182	$78,691
Bus Attendant	31	$23.51/hr.	n/a
Secretary	34	$69,134	$110,614
Food Service Helper	54	$19.60/hr.	n/a
Custodial	77	$64,152	$102,643
Bus Driver	118	$35.98/hr.	n/a

Staff diversity remains a critical component of fostering equitable learning environments and ensuring that students see themselves reflected in their schools. At the state level, significant gaps persist between the racial and ethnic composition of students and the educators who serve them.

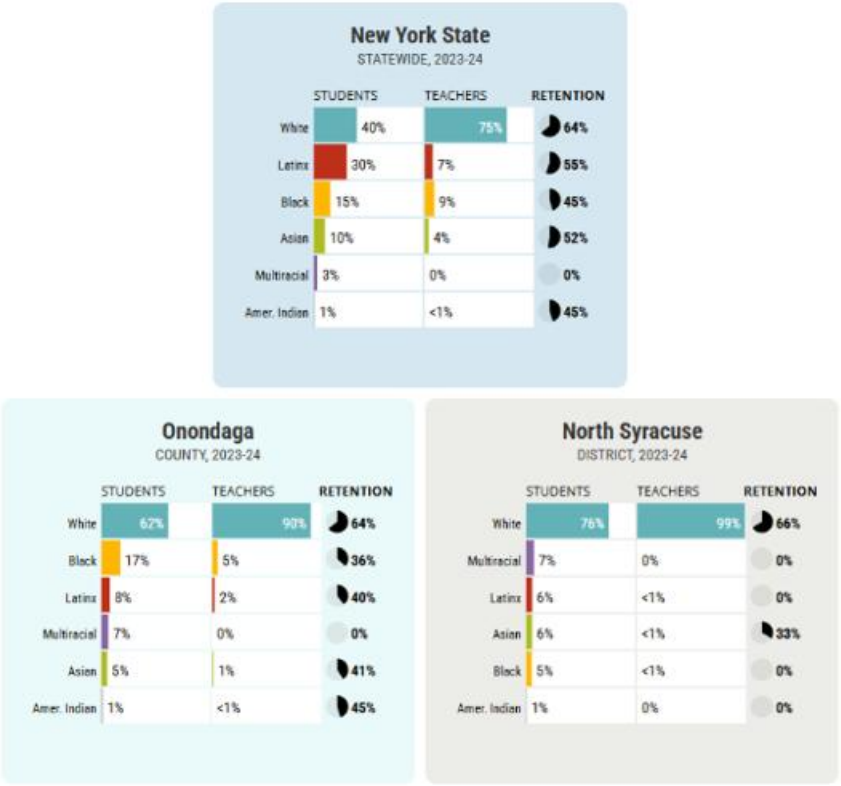
While students of color now comprise approximately 60% of enrollment in New York's public schools, 75% of teachers identify as white, and only 20% identify as teachers of color. These disparities are most pronounced for Latino/Latina students, who make up 30% of the student body but just 7% of the teaching workforce. Retention challenges compound the issue: 64% of white teachers remain in their positions after five years, compared to only 50% of teachers of color.

Tables 9.8 and 9.9 demonstrate the self-identified racial makeup of district staff, and district instructional staff, respectively. In both instances, the vast majority of district staff self-identify as white. Figures 9.4-9.5, sourced from edtrust New York (https://newyork.edtrust.org/interactive-data-tools/), demonstrate how the racial composition of North Syracuse CSD's students and teachers compares to New York State's, Onondaga County's, and some specific Central New York district.

Table 9.8 District Staff by Self-Identified Race 2024-2025	
White	97.4%
Black/African-American	1.8%
Asian	0.5%
Hispanic/Latino	0.2%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.1%

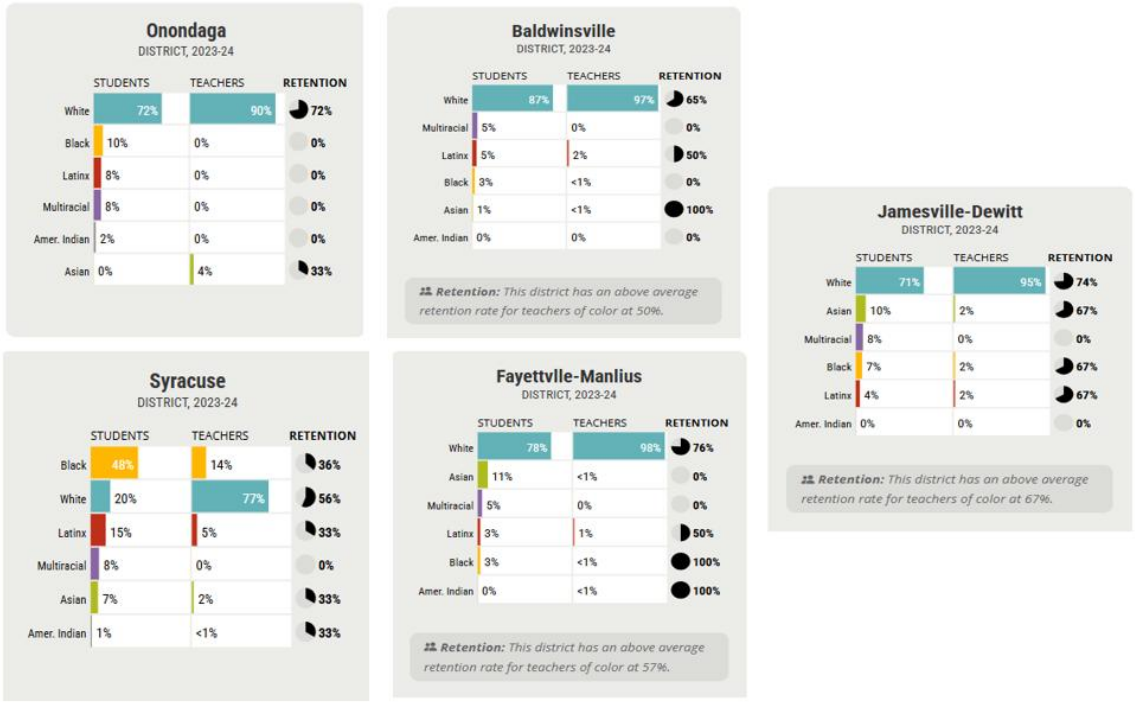
Table 9.9 Instructional Staff by Self-Identified Race 2024-2025	
White	98.5%
Black/African-American	0.9%
Asian	0.6%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.1%

Figure 9.4: Student and Teacher Racial Distributions, NYS, Onondaga County, & North Syracuse CSD



Source: edtrust New York

Figure 9.5: Student and Teacher Racial Distributions, Central NY Schools



Source: edtrust New York

Within Onondaga County, the imbalance between student and teacher demographics mirrors these statewide patterns. The county's urban and suburban districts enroll increasingly diverse student populations, while their teaching workforces remain predominantly white. In North Syracuse Central School District specifically, students of color represent a growing share of enrollment, yet the district's workforce is not reflective of these changing demographics. This lack of representation has implications for both student engagement and achievement, as research consistently demonstrates the benefits of a diverse and stable educator workforce. Addressing these disparities in North Syracuse will require deliberate strategies not only to recruit teachers of color but also to retain them, ensuring that students experience continuity of instruction from educators who are positioned to build strong, culturally responsive relationships over time.

In addition to staff employed directly by North Syracuse CSD, the district relies on a range of community partners to provide student support personnel in its elementary buildings, reflecting

recognition of the need for expanded services that address both academic and social-emotional needs (Table 9.10). Additionally, in the 2025-2026 school year, Head Start is operating the two UPK classrooms at Roxboro Road Elementary, and the YMCA has added an additional classroom at Allen Road Elementary. These expanded partnerships provide important support for the district's youngest learners. At Allen Road Elementary, students benefit from Liberty Resources, a Promise Zone Specialist, a School Resource Officer, and YMCA before- and after-school care. Bear Road Elementary has Liberty Resources, a School Resource Officer, and YMCA programming, while Cicero Elementary hosts a School Resource Officer and YMCA services. At Lakeshore Elementary, a Promise Zone Specialist and a School Resource Officer provide additional support. Roxboro Road Elementary has the most extensive partnerships, with Rising Rox Stars (21st Century Community Learning Center grant), Contact Community Services, Liberty Resources, a Promise Zone Specialist, a School Resource Officer, and YMCA-run UPK classrooms. Smith Road Elementary also houses Liberty Resources, a Promise Zone Specialist, and a School Resource Officer. These partnerships ensure that students have access to counseling, mentoring, safety personnel, and enrichment opportunities beyond what the district can provide on its own, responding to the high level of need for mental health services, family engagement, extended learning, and safe school environments. North Syracuse CSD also hosts BOCES-employed staff and BOCES special education programs within its buildings, including nine staff members supporting the SKATE Program at Bear Road Elementary and seven staff members working in the SKATE Program at Cicero-North Syracuse High School.

Table 9.10 Elementary School Partnerships 2024-2025						
Service / Partner	**Allen Road Elementary**	**Bear Road Elementary**	**Cicero Elementary**	**Lakeshore Road Elementary**	**Roxboro Road Elementary**	**Smith Road Elementary**
Liberty Resources	✔	✔			✔	✔
Promise Zone Specialist	✔			✔	✔	✔
School Resource Officer	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
YMCA (Before & After School)	✔	✔	✔			
YMCA (UPK classrooms)					✔	
21st Century (Rising Rox Stars)					✔	
Contact Community Services					✔	

In summary, staffing in the North Syracuse Central School District represents both the district's most significant investment and its most critical resource for meeting student needs. With approximately 1,600 employees, including teachers, teaching assistants, aides, related service providers, administrators, and non-instructional staff, the district must continually balance instructional quality, operational efficiency, and fiscal responsibility. Patterns in certification, staffing distribution, and areas of over- or under-allocation underscore the importance of careful planning as the district prepares for shifts in enrollment, state aid, and opportunities such as the Micron project. At the same time, partnerships with community organizations expand the reach of student support services, particularly in areas such as mental health, family engagement, and extended learning. Still, they also place additional strain on district facilities as schools work to accommodate the space needs of these programs and partners, which sometimes require specialized areas to comply with regulations such as HIPAA for confidentiality or OCFS standards for childcare programming. Importantly, data on the racial and ethnic composition of staff highlight

that the district's workforce does not yet reflect the diversity of its student population, underscoring the need to prioritize recruitment and retention of staff of color. Greater staff diversity can strengthen relationships with students and families, support culturally responsive practices, and enhance the district's capacity to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse community. Taken together, the district's staffing and partnerships form a comprehensive system designed to support student learning, safety, and well-being, while underscoring the need for ongoing evaluation to ensure sustainability and alignment with district priorities.

CHAPTER 10: TRANSPORTATION

Like most upstate school districts, North Syracuse Central School District operates its own transportation system and transports many children to school on a daily basis. All buses are owned by the district. The district encompasses over 64 square miles and buses travel over 2.2 million miles annually.

North Syracuse's transportation fleet is comprised of 152 DOT-approved vehicles including one hundred twenty-five (125) 66-passenger buses, five (5) 48-passenger buses, twenty (20) 42-passenger buses with capacity for three wheelchairs, and two (2) 7-passenger Chevrolet Suburbans. The district will receive ten (10) new 65-passenger buses and two (2) new 59-passenger buses with capacity for three wheelchairs within the next few weeks at which time twelve of the older buses will be taken out of service. The cost for a new 65/66-passenger bus is approximately $174,000. A similarly sized bus equipped with a wheelchair lift would cost approximately $211,000. The district typically replaces its buses every ten years however high mileage and/or mechanical issues with particular vehicles also factor into replacement decision-making. In 2022, New York State approved a mandate requiring all school buses purchased after 2027 be battery/electric powered. The cost for a full-size electric bus is currently estimated at $460,000 - $500,000.

North Syracuse has an excellent record of vehicle maintenance completed by a thirteen-member bus garage team of mechanics. Each vehicle used for student transportation is subject to an extremely comprehensive and detailed inspection by New York State Department of Transportation inspectors at least once every six months. In recent years, the district's rate of passage on the first inspection attempt is 97%.

The district employs a triple trip (or three-tier) daily routing plan to get in-district students to and from school. The junior high school and high school students ride to and from school on one bus run (designated in Table 10.2 below by -1), the middle school students are transported on the second run (designated by -2) and the elementary students are picked up and returned home on the

third run (designated by -3). There are several routes in the table below that vary slightly due to out of district transportation needs, shuttle requirements, etc.

There are 92 routes that transport students to and from the six elementary schools daily, 69 routes serving the middle schools, 39 routes for the junior high school, and 47 routes that transport students to the high school. The bus runs, from the time of the first student pick up until the final drop off point, average between 30-35 minutes. This is well within the State Education Department's general guideline that no student should be on a bus longer than one hour when feasible. It is important to note, however, that there are a small number of routes that may exceed the 60 minutes recommended riding time largely due to an out-of-district educational location. North Syracuse has over 200 transportation department employees including 110 bus drivers, 34 substitute drivers, 31 bus attendants, and 10 substitute bus attendants.

The start and release times for each building are documented in Table 10.1 below.

Table 10.1 Instructional Day Times for North Syracuse Schools				
School Building	Grades	Start Time	Release Time	Length of Day
NSEEP	PK	8:30 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	6 hr. (some half day programs)
Allen Road Elementary	K-4	9:20 a.m.	3:15 p.m.	5 hr. 55 min
KWS Bear Road Elementary	K-4	9:15 a.m.	3:15 p.m.	6 hr.
Cicero Elementary	K-4	9:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.	5 hr. 45 min
Lakeshore Road Elementary	K-4	9:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.	5 hr. 45 min
Roxboro Road Elementary	K-4	9:20 a.m.	3:20 p.m.	6 hr.
Smith Road Elementary	K-4	9:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.	5 hr. 45 min
Gillette Road Middle School	5-7	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	6 hr. 35 min
Roxboro Road Middle School	5-7	8:10 a.m.	2:45 p.m.	6 hr. 35 min
North Syracuse Junior High School	8-9	7:30 a.m.	2:00 p.m.	6 hr. 30 min
Cicero North Syracuse High School	10-12	7:35 a.m.	2:00 p.m.	6 hr. 25 min

The elementary and middle school building of attendance for students in the North Syracuse district is determined by the attendance zone in which the student resides. The attendance zones are determined by the district and can be modified should there be significant changes in the location of the student population. School building attendance information can be found on the district's website https://www.nscsd.org/districtpage.cfm?pageid=1365.

Approximately 95% of the students in the North Syracuse district are eligible for busing to their school of attendance although some families opt not to utilize district transportation. The table below provides an overview of most routes.

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
Bus Route #	First Student Pickup	AM Run Ends	Longest AM Riding Time (minutes)	PM Run Starts	Last Student Dropoff	Longest PM Riding Time (minutes)	# of Assigned Riders	Miles Covered
598-1	6:46	7:10	24	2:00	2:25	25	48	24
598-2	7:45	8:05	20	2:45	2:59	14	39	7
598-3	8:30	9:00	30	3:30	3:54	24	43	13
599-1	6:46	7:04	18	2:00	2:27	27	28/50	21
599-2	7:26	8:00	34	2:45	3:19	34	15	37
599-3	8:14	9:00	46	3:30	4:13	43	49	34
600-1	6:37	7:06	29	2:00	2:28	28	26	31
600-2	7:25	7:58	33	2:45	3:12	27	46	18
600-3	8:13	9:15	62	3:30	4:30	60	22	51
601-1	6:47	7:15	28	2:00	2:26	26	47	25
601-2	7:27	7:58	31	2:45	3:11	24	32	21
601-3	8:10	8:20	10	NA	NA	NA	1/Shuttle	22
604-1	6:43	7:10	27	2:00	2:25	25	42	26
604-2	7:27	7:55	28	2:45	3:14	29	31	27
604-3	8:33	8:58	25	3:29	3:59	30	40	20
605-1	6:40	7:10	30	2:00	2:33	33	52	39
605-2	7:25	8:08	43	3:00	3:27	27	8/1	35
605-3	8:42	9:00	18	3:30	4:09	39	33/44	24
606-1	6:43	7:11	28	2:00	2:28	28	50	22
606-2	7:34	8:00	26	2:45	3:21	37	34	20
606-3	8:23	9:13	50	3:30	4:21	51	39	25

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
607-1	6:33	7:10	37	2:00	2:38	38	57	38
607-2	7:33	7:55	22	2:45	3:07	22	43	30
607-3	8:18	9:00	42	3:34	4:13	39	25/34	48
608-1	6:51	7:11	20	2:00	2:21	21	37/45	28
608-2	7:31	8:00	29	2:45	3:10	25	29	27
608-3	8:31	8:55	24	3:29	3:54	25	30	22
609-1	6:28	7:07	39	2:00	2:29	29	26	56
609-2	7:29	varies	-	2:50 (Grimes)	4:18	88	8/35	79
612-1	6:39	7:11	32	2:00	2:42	42	53	39
612-2	7:34	8:20	46	2:50 (Grimes)	4:14	84	12/29	63
612-3	8:39	9:00	21	NA	NA	-	3	9
613-1	6:33	7:15	42	2:00	2:31	31	35	28
613-2	7:35	7:55 (BOCES)	20	3:00	3:15	15	Transfer/ 25	19
613-3	7:57	8:19	22	3:30	4:28	58	Transfer/ 46	52
613-4	8:33	8:59	26	NA	NA	-	42	15
614-1	6:33	7:13	40	2:00	2:35	35	3	34
614-2	7:34	8:05	31	2:45	3:31	46	4	50
614-3	8:25	9:00	35	3:30	4:01	31	5	47
615-1	7:17	8:15	58	2:20	3:19	59	16	47
615-3	8:42	9:00	18	3:30	4:14	44	9	38
616-1	6:44	7:09	25	2:00	2:26	26	41	39
616-2	7:24	8:15	51	2:35	3:30	55	13	60
616-3	8:30	9:00	30	3:41	4:24	43	21/38	40
617-1	6:45	7:12	27	2:00	2:31	31	60	28

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
617-2	7:29	8:00	31	2:45	3:17	32	11	38
617-3	8:20	9:00	40	3:28	4:11	43	58	32
618-1	6:37	7:08	31	2:00	2:30	30	21	44
618-2	7:21	8:00	39	2:45	3:25	40	58	34
618-3	8:29	9:00	31	NA	NA	-	1	43
619-1	6:40	7:05	25	2:00	2:23	23	38	20
619-2	7:26	8:16	50	2:30	3:37	67	11/21	38
619-3	8:20	9:00	40	3:30	4:15	45	37	26
620-1	6:49	7:06	17	2:00	2:30	30	36	23
620-2	7:20 (transfer)	7:55	35	2:50	3:29	39	52/21	31
620-3	8:33	9:00	27	3:30	4:02	32	45	25
621-1	6:38	7:03	25	2:00	2:37	37	31/37	31
621-2	7:25	7:58	33	2:45	3:21	36	48	25
621-3	8:33	8:58	25	3:29	3:59	30	52	25
622-1	6:45	7:10	25	2:00	2:34	34	63	31
622-2	7:32	8:00	28	2:45	3:15	30	22	33
622-3	8:19	8:58	39	3:29	4:09	40	45	28
623-1	6:33	7:11	38	2:00	2:40	40	41	29
623-2	7:29	8:00	31	2:45	3:18	33	36	27
623-3	8:18	9:00	42	3:30	4:36	66	34/42	51
624-1	6:19	7:10	51	2:00	2:52	52	40	55
624-2	7:21	8:15	54	NA	NA	-	16	17
624-3	8:36	9:00	24	3:30	TBD	-	2/shuttle	48
627-1	6:29	7:10	41	2:00	2:37	37	5	28
627-2	7:19	8:05	46	2:45	3:32	47	6	51

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
627-3	8:13	9:05	52	3:30	4:31	61	14	32
628-1	6:40	7:04	24	2:00	2:23	23	16	34
628-2	7:32	8:05	33	2:45	3:16	31	34	32
628-3	8:01	8:41	40	3:30	4:57	87	Shuttle to worksites /27	56
629-1	6:25	7:11	46	2:10	3:07	57	51	65
629-2	7:34	8:05	31	NA	NA	-	Out of district	28
629-3	8:25	9:02	37	3:37	4:13	36	29	45
630-1	6:46	7:13	27	2:00	2:31	31	44	33
630-2	7:30	7:59	29	2:45	3:12	27	24	26
630-3	8:23	9:05	42	3:30	4:16	46	35	35
631-1	6:11	7:15	64	2:01	3:09	68	43	61
631-2	7:32	7:44	12	3:30	4:03	33	11/52	12
631-3	8:18	9:00	42	4:15	5:54	99	53/shuttle	15/44
632-1	6:35	7:08	33	2:00	2:28	28	24	37
632-2	7:33	8:00	27	2:45	3:13	28	39	19
632-3	8:39	8:59	20	3:30	4:15	45	46	32
633-1	6:44	7:04	20	2:00	2:23	23	37	23
633-2	7:32	7:55	23	2:45	3:12	27	38	18
633-3	8:27	8:58	31	3:30	4:22	52	44	31
634-1	6:34	7:09	35	2:00	2:25	25	35	26
634-2	7:38	8:00	22	2:45	3:04	19	42	15
634-3	8:16	9:00	44	3:30	4:46	76	40/48	13/27
634-4	9:04	9:16	8	NA	NA	-	3	6
635-1	6:42	7:00	18	2:00	2:44	44	18	46
635-2	7:28	8:15	47	3:15	3:26	11	9/29 transfer	29

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
635-3	8:25	8:58	33	3:29	4:23	54	50	26
635-4	9:06	9:15	9	NA	NA	-	29 AM transfer	5
636-1	6:55	7:13	18	2:00	2:14	14	60	26
636-2	7:27	8:00	33	2:45	3:30	45	40	33
636-3	8:20	9:00	40	3:30	4:20	50	2/shuttle	20/30
637-1	6:47	7:05	18	2:10	2:42	32	29/9	24
637-2	7:29	8:00	31	2:45	3:18	33	44	28
637-3	8:10	8:48	38	3:30	4:16	46	46	22
638-1	6:32	7:00	28	2:00	2:31	31	33	49
638-2	7:34	8:00	26	2:45	3:16	31	47	20
638-3	8:09	9:02	53	3:30	4:12	42	20	53
639-1	6:36	7:06	30	2:00	2:33	33	32	35
639-2	7:35	8:00	25	3:15	3:20	5	1/27 PM transfer	34
639-3	8:25	8:56	31	3:30	4:09	39	20	48
639-4	9:06	9:15	9	NA	NA	-	47 AM transfer	7
640-1	6:27	7:12	45	2:00	2:36	36	5	65
640-2	7:21	8:05	44	2:45	3:34	49	11	29
640-3	8:20	9:00	40	3:35	4:12	37	5	55
641-1	NA	NA	-	2:00	2:20	20	3	15
641-2	7:26	8:05	39	2:45	3:30	45	9	23
641-3	8:29	8:58	29	3:30	4:08	38	4	48
642-1	6:24	7:10	46	2:00	2:41	41	8	27
642-2	7:19	8:05	46	2:45	3:27	42	7	28
642-3	8:14	9:05	51	3:30	4:17	47	14	36
643-1	6:53	7:10	17	1:59	2:19	20	27	13
643-2	7:28	8:00	32	2:45	3:11	26	35	19

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
643-3	8:18	9:00	42	3:30	4:24	54	42	40
644-1	6:42	7:08	26	2:00	2:34	34	24/55	21
644-2	7:26	8:05	29	2:45	3:19	34	37	23
644-3	8:20	9:05	45	3:29	4:13	44	53	33
645-1	6:43	7:14	31	2:00	2:33	33	37	25
645-2	7:20	7:57	37	2:45	3:27	42	36	27
645-3	8:20	9:00	40	3:29	4:12	43	52	43
648-1	6:23	7:06	43	2:00	2:25	25	40	27
648-2	7:24	8:00	36	2:45	3:16	31	38	26
648-3	8:27	8:57	30	3:30	4:06	36	50	21
649-1	6:38	7:11	33	2:00	2:30	30	43	27
649-2	7:27	8:00	33	2:45	3:17	32	32	24
649-3	8:30	9:00	30	3:30	4:07	37	41	18
651-1	6:38	7:06	28	2:00	2:31	31	44	22
651-2	7:29	8:10	41	Transfer	Transfer	-	25	12
651-3	8:37	8:53	16	Shuttle	Shuttle	-	1	20
652-1	6:48	7:11	23	2:00	2:23	23	36	21
652-2	7:46	8:30	44	3:04	3:30	26	5/15	41
652-3	8:36	9:05	29	3:30	4:37	67	3/15	55
655-1	6:38	7:07	29	2:00	2:43	43	43	40
655-2	7:35	8:00	25	3:15	3:21	6	2/19	25
655-3	8:15	9:00	45	3:30	4:11	41	45	24
656-1	6:37	7:09	32	2:00	2:35	35	52	36
656-2	7:37	7:59	22	2:45	3:09	24	46	25
656-3	8:20	8:52	32	3:29	4:15	46	49	33
657-1	6:49	7:08	19	2:04	2:32	28	47	14
657-2	7:30	8:04	34	2:45	3:22	37	33	23

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
657-3	8:34	9:00	26	3:30	3:59	29	51	26
658-1	6:39	7:15	36	2:00	2:35	36	49	35
658-2	7:15	8:05	50	2:45	3:13	28	28	36
658-3	8:32	9:00	28	3:29	3:58	29	40	25
659-1	6:42	7:13	31	2:00	2:27	27	45	27
659-2	7:38	8:00	22	2:45	3:10	25	31	27
659-3	8:37	9:00	23	3:30	3:55	25	42	27
660-1	6:40	7:08	28	2:00	2:35	35	27	29
660-2	7:35	7:59	24	2:45	3:18	33	26	17
660-3	8:29	9:00	31	3:30	4:13	43	45	28
661-1	6:49	7:12	23	2:00	2:19	19	35	28
661-2	7:28	7:56	28	2:45	3:21	36	32	24
661-3	8:29	9:00	31	3:30	4:00	30	11	28
662-1	6:50	7:07	17	2:07	2:27	20	39	19
662-2	7:20	8:01	41	2:40	3:13	33	9/22	50
662-3	8:40	8:55	15	3:40	5:15 Shuttle	95	5/28	100
663-1	6:45	7:10	25	2:00	2:27	27	29	35
663-2	7:25	7:59	34	2:45	3:19	35	38	16
663-3	8:22	9:00	38	3:31	4:12	41	44	44
664-1	6:23	7:18	55	1:55	2:57	62	19	53
664-2	7:23	8:05	42	3:30	4:00	30	11/40	39
664-3	8:25	9:00	35	NA	NA	-	47	15
665-1	6:30	7:10	40	2:00	2:43	43	11	34
665-2	7:20	8:05	45	2:45	3:42	57	9	33
665-3	8:29	9:00	31	3:30	4:02	32	7	41
668-1	6:45	7:06	21	2:00	2:23	23	32	28

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
668-2	7:30	8:00	30	2:45	3:14	29	20	24
668-3	8:32	8:58	26	3:29	4:13	44	51	27
669-1	6:54	7:14	20	1:56	2:14	18	48	14
669-2	7:29	7:58	29	2:45	3:15	30	31	26
669-3	8:28	8:58	30	3:29	3:53	24	37	17
670-1	6:44	7:10	26	2:00	2:28	28	31	26
670-2	7:14	7:45	31	2:50	3:23	33	48/15	34
670-3	8:10	9:00	50	3:29	4:07	38	56	33
671-1	6:44	7:10	26	2:00	2:24	24	19	24
671-2	7:34	7:58	24	2:45	3:09	24	33	23
671-3	8:15	8:51	36	3:37	4:17	40	20	42
672-1	6:42	7:11	29	2:00	2:31	31	47	33
672-2	7:28	8:00	32	2:45	3:21	36	37	36
672-3	8:25	9:00	35	3:30	4:11	41	26	71
673-1	6:42	7:10	28	2:00	2:25	25	56	26
673-2	7:28	8:10	42	2:35	3:33	58	13	40
673-3	8:42	9:00	18	3:29	3:51	22	34	25
674-1	6:27	7:12	45	2:00	2:49	49	41	58
674-3	8:12	9:00	48	3:30	4:25	55	48	60
675-1	6:40	7:07	27	2:00	2:28	28	29	22
675-2	7:32	8:00	28	2:45	3:12	27	27	22
675-3	8:20	9:00	40	3:30	4:14	44	40	27
676-1	6:41	7:06	25	2:00	2:29	29	46	32
676-2	7:35	8:00	25	2:46	3:13	27	35	30
676-3	8:27	9:00	33	3:30	3:54	24	67	24
677-1	6:34	7:20	46	2:10	3:03	53	25/12	62
677-2	7:25	7:50	25	3:29	4:00	31	29/50	38

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
677-3	8:32	8:58	26	NA	NA	-	56	20
681-1	6:40	7:05	25	2:00	2:24	24	37	28
681-2	7:37	8:04	27	2:45	3:15	30	55	19
681-3	8:27	9:00	33	3:30	4:07	37	44	21
682-1	6:49	7:08	19	2:00	2:25	25	46	25
682-2	7:30	8:00	28	2:45	3:18	33	28	29
682-3	8:15	9:00	45	3:29	3:58	29	41	25
683-1	6:37	7:06	29	2:00	2:32	32	41	27
683-2	7:30	8:00	30	2:45	3:14	29	31	27
683-3	8:24	9:00	36	3:30	4:29	59	17	58
684-1	6:46	7:10	24	2:00	2:24	24	36	19
684-2	7:37	8:00	23	2:45	3:10	25	56	17
684-3	8:25	8:59	34	3:30	4:07	37	47	33
685-1	6:44	7:08	24	2:00	2:25	25	38	21
685-2	7:28	8:12	44	2:35	3:25	50	21	33
685-3	8:18	8:54	36	3:30	4:12	42	42	24
687-1	6:42	7:12	30	2:45	3:38	53	40/18	46
687-2	7:25	7:53	28	3:30	4:30	60	15/8	55
687-3	8:20	9:05	45	NA	NA	-	14	29
688-1	6:15	7:07	52	2:00	2:30	30	46	46
688-2	7:22	8:00	38	2:45	3:21	36	37	41
688-3	8:30	9:00	30	3:40	4:24	44	14	54
689-1	6:29	7:00	31	2:10	2:37	27	3/19	33
689-2	7:36	8:00	24	2:45	3:13	28	30	30
689-3	8:30	8:56	26	3:34	4:08	34	34	18
689-4	9:00	9:15 Shuttle	15	NA	NA	-	18	4

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
692-1	6:41	7:10	29	2:01	2:23	22	28	26
692-2	7:32	8:00	28	2:45	3:08	23	35	22
692-3	8:18	8:50	32	3:30	4:28	58	43	41
693-1	6:38	7:05	27	2:00	2:31	31	40	22
693-2	7:33	8:00	27	2:45	3:14	29	39	30
693-3	8:15	8:55	40	3:30	4:07	37	25	42
694-1	6:20	7:08	48	2:14	2:40	26	32/Shuttle	33
694-2	7:14	8:30	76	3:30	4:10	40	9/Shuttle	65
695-1	6:29	7:12	43	2:00	2:26	26	36	38
695-2	7:32	7:57	25	2:45	3:10	25	41	20
695-3	8:18	9:00	42	3:39	4:20	41	21	53
696-1	6:39	7:04	25	2:00	2:29	29	32	39
696-2	7:38	8:05	27	2:45	3:07	22	61	19
696-3	8:31	8:54	23	3:30	3:55	25	36	13
698-1	6:24	7:11	47	2:20	2:58	38	35/10	35
698-2	7:29	8:20	51	NA	NA	-	13	21
698-3	8:35	9:05	30	3:30	3:53	38/3	5	37
699-1	6:29	7:07	38	2:00	2:33	33	45	39
699-2	7:25	8:00	35	2:45	3:16	31	25	44
699-3	8:31	9:00	29	3:29	3:53	24	49	24
700-1	6:23	7:06	43	2:00	2:43	43	41	39
700-2	7:26	8:30	64	2:55	3:00	5	9/Shuttle	35
700-3	8:52	9:15	23	3:30	5:36	126	Shuttle	17
701-1	6:43	7:10	27	2:00	2:33	33	35	19
701-2	7:22	8:05	43	2:45	3:27	42	10	34
701-3	8:17	8:50	33	3:29	4:15	46	40	31

Table 10.2 Bus Routes for North Syracuse Schools								
702-1	6:36	7:10	34	1:30/ 2:20	1:46/ 2:37	16/17	4	34
702-2	7:27	8:10	43	3:00/ 3:53	3:15/ 4:08	15/15	2	64
702-3	8:20	8:45	25	NA	NA	-	1	31

North Syracuse also provides transportation for North Syracuse district resident students whose respective educational program is located outside of the district. Approximately sixteen different schools at nearly thirty different locations are supported by the North Syracuse transportation system. These locations include All Saints Elementary of Tipperary Hill, Baldwinsville Christian Academy, Batavia NYS School for the Blind, Bishop Ludden-Grimes School, Blessed Sacrament School, Christian Brothers Academy, Faith Heritage School, Hillside School, Holy Cross School, Holy Family School, Ihsan School, Immaculate Conception School, Living Word Academy, Manlius Pebble Hill School, Mater Dei Academy, Montessori School, Most Holy Rosary School, OCM BOCES (multiple sites throughout Onondaga and Cortland counties), Onondaga Community College, Parkview Junior Academy, St. Rose of Lima School, Southside Charter School, Syracuse STEAM High School, Syracuse Academy of Science, and Word of Life Christian Academy. When logistically possible, multiple sites are combined on one bus route to improve efficiency.

The process of scheduling bus routes to safely deliver students to and from home and school is complex and multi-faceted. The district uses Traversa™ bus routing software to assist in the development of routes and tracking of students assigned to each route. Routes are adjusted as needed to ensure that no bus is transporting more students than its approved capacity.

All school district bus routes are in a near-constant state of flux. Students move into the district and leave the district, educational placements change, attendance zones are modified if building enrollments dictate, and bus capacity limits may necessitate route changes. As the North Syracuse

district continues with its building renovation plans, construction work requires students to be temporarily relocated to other buildings. All of these variables impact bus routing. The Traversa™ system is an important resource when modifications to bus routes are necessary. Additionally, the system can model bus routing to illustrate the impact that changes to students' school building placements are considered. As the district continues to examine possible grade realignment within its buildings and other potential operational efficiencies, it is important to include the transportation department leaders in the discussions at the ground level as virtually any change will impact pupil transportation.

CHAPTER 11:

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A comprehensive study of this nature requires attention to multiple district and school factors, including enrollment trends, instructional programs, facilities, finances, staffing, and transportation. While quantitative data such as enrollment numbers and facility configurations provide essential insights, community perspectives also play a meaningful role in shaping the findings. Schools and communities are deeply interconnected, and the values and expectations of residents influence both. The recommendations offered here reflect a careful balance of data analysis and the thoughtful input shared by members of the community advisory committee.

Key Findings

Enrollment

Finding 1: Live births in the North Syracuse district were used to predict kindergarten enrollment ten years later. Prior to 2020, the live birth rates have been relatively stable; however, there is a wide variation in the last 4 years of actual data. Based on national data that have illustrated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on birth rates, it is reasonable to predict that the increase in the 2021 year data is the anomaly, but subsequent live birth data should be closely monitored as it becomes available.

Finding 2: The K-12 district enrollment has declined from 8,124 in 2019-20 to 7,360 in 2024-25, or a 9.4% decrease. During this same period of time, both elementary (-6.7%) and secondary (-7.8%) enrollment decreased. In 1999-00, the district enrolled 9,967 K-12 students with a peak enrollment of 10,041 in 2006-07.

Finding 3: Looking forward to 2034-35, enrollment projections estimate the district will have approximately 6,545 K-12 students, a decrease of 11.1% from 2024-25 enrollment of 7,360.

Finding 4: With the exception of KWS Bear Road School (+5.9%), elementary school enrollments have decreased over the past five years: Allen Road (-2.4%), Cicero (-6.5%), Lakeshore Road (-5.6%), Roxboro Road (-13.3%), Smith Road (-2.8%).

Finding 5: With the exception of the COVID–19 pandemic year 2020-21, the number of district residents that elect to home-school their children has remained constant over the past five years as has resident student enrollment in non-public schools. Resident student enrollment in charter schools and other public schools has increased.

Finding 6: Onondaga County's population has increased slightly from 2013 (473,708) to 2019 (476,256) and has declined slightly until 2023 (467,873). The U. S. Census projects it will continue to decline through 2040 (457,256).

Finding 7: Like most upstate counties, the median age in Onondaga County has been rising, albeit gradually, from 38.7 years in 2010 to 39.5 years in 2020. Additionally, the Onondaga County childbearing age group (25-44 years) has been declining since 1990.

Instructional Program

Finding 8: The district's student population has become significantly more diverse over the past decade, with increasing numbers of Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and multiracial students and a declining proportion of white students. The share of students with disabilities and those who are economically disadvantaged has also grown.

Finding 9: Chronic absenteeism is a notable concern at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Finding 10: The district operates an extensive prekindergarten program that blends state Universal Prekindergarten funding with partnerships across multiple community-based organizations and includes integrated settings for students with disabilities. Any change to the location of this program would require the district to conduct a cost/benefit analysis as it would likely trigger a review by NYSED and could change the structure of the current programming.

Finding 11: Elementary class sizes are consistently below contractual limits across all schools, supporting manageable teacher-student ratios.

Finding 12: Instructional time is clearly defined for elementary English language arts and mathematics but remains inconsistent for elementary science and social studies, making it difficult to fully implement the adopted science curriculum and limiting dedicated social studies instruction.

Finding 13: Elementary social studies content is largely addressed through the Core Knowledge Language Arts program, which is designed primarily for literacy development and provides limited opportunities for deep disciplinary inquiry.

Finding 14: Elementary performance on state English language arts and mathematics assessments is near or slightly below statewide averages, with Roxboro Road Elementary consistently performing below both district and state benchmarks.

Finding 15: Roxboro Road Elementary's performance led to a Targeted Support and Improvement designation for multiracial students, resulting in the district's classification as a Target District under state accountability requirements.

Finding 16: At the middle level, Gillette Road Middle School outperforms Roxboro Road Middle School in both English language arts and mathematics. Roxboro Road Middle School has shown improvement but continues to have achievement gaps and higher rates of chronic absenteeism.

Finding 17: Secondary outcomes show stability and strength in some areas, including graduation rates matching the state average and a higher percentage of students earning Regents Advanced Diplomas, but chronic absenteeism has increased and subgroup performance gaps persist.

Finding 18: The district maintains strong structures such as consistent elementary schedules and broad secondary course offerings, yet uneven implementation and persistent disparities among student groups remain evident.

Facilities

Finding 19: North Syracuse has developed a long-range facilities plan based on data from the Building Condition Survey (BCS), Annual Visual Inspection (AVI), and identified district instructional needs.

Finding 20: While enrollment has been declining, rooms in most buildings are utilized due the expansion of student support services and course offerings.

Finding 21: Instructional square footage is comparable in all elementary buildings except Allen Road Elementary which is smaller.

Finding 22: The North Syracuse Early Education Program (NSEEP) is currently housed in the Main Street building. The building is not well suited for this student population and has many ongoing maintenance challenges.

Finding 23: Following an absence of any capital improvement projects from 2009-2016, North Syracuse voters have approved capital projects in October 2016, December 2019, December 2021, May 2022, and December 2022 with work targeted in various instructional buildings.

Finding 24: Based on current NYSED capacity ratings, it may be possible to add a grade level to the North Syracuse Junior High School and/or Cicero North Syracuse High School buildings.

Finance

Finding 25: The North Syracuse community has supported the district's spending plans.

Finding 26: Restricted fund balance accounts (reserves) have been established and funded by the district. Reserve balances in 2019-20 were insufficient but the district has made significant progress in building the funds to a more appropriate level over the past six years and continued growth is advised.

Finding 27: Use of assigned fund balance to support the district spending plan increased from 2021 to 2024.

Finding 28: From 7/1/19 – 6/30/25, unassigned fund balance has been maintained at statutory limits.

Finding 29: Full value tax rate is less in 2025-26 ($16.07/$1000) than it was in 2020-21 ($23.44/$1000) due to increasing property value of the district.

Finding 30: North Syracuse has approximately $72.8 million in local share of debt service (after estimated building aid at approximately 85%) on its current borrowing through 2045-46.

Finding 31: 2038-39 and 2041-42 are key transition years when there are significant reductions to the annual local existing debt service payment.

Finding 32: Capital project development is a complex, multi-year process that involves district stakeholders, NYSED, architects/engineers, and financial advisors.

Finding 33: Building aid is influenced by a variety of factors including the district's building aid ratio, Building Aid Units, district/building operating capacity, enrollment, and multi-year maximum cost allowance. Building aid accounts for approximately 85% of approved capital project costs for North Syracuse.

Staffing

Finding 34: Staffing accounts for the majority of district expenditures, underscoring the importance of regularly reviewing how personnel are allocated across schools and programs to maintain both instructional quality and fiscal responsibility.

Finding 35: Data suggest that staffing levels in certain instructional areas—such as elementary education, family and consumer sciences, languages other than English, and special education—may exceed what would typically be expected for a district of similar size, presenting an

opportunity to continue to assess staffing levels in the context of programming, and to explore potential adjustments over time.

Finding 36: The district maintains a broad administrative team that provides oversight and support for instructional and operational functions. Yet, the district's total number of administrators is substantially lower to districts of similar size in the region, and the administrative to teacher ratio is substantially higher than districts of similar size in the region. Continued attention to role alignment can help ensure leadership capacity remains responsive to district needs and resources.

Finding 37: The district's workforce is not yet reflective of the growing diversity of its student population. Ongoing efforts to attract and retain a more diverse staff could strengthen student connections and support culturally responsive practices.

Finding 38: Collaborative partnerships with organizations such as Liberty Resources, the YMCA, and Promise Zone specialists enhance student support and well-being. As these programs expand, coordinated planning will be important to balance space, staffing, and service needs across schools.

Transportation

Finding 39: The district employs a three-tier (triple trip) routing plan for daily routes to and from its school buildings.

Finding 40: Average student bus riding time is 30-40 minutes. Current highway construction within the district can affect bus schedules.

Finding 41: The district transportation fleet has over 150 buses and other vehicles used to transport students to in-district and out-of-district educational locations.

Finding 42: The district currently uses a north/south attendance zone model for districting students to Gillette Road Middle School and Roxboro Road Middle School. This model contributes to the differences in demographic make-ups at each building.

Conclusions and Recommendations

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

> How can the North Syracuse Central School District strategically restructure its staffing, facilities, and grade-level configurations to optimize educational outcomes and emotional well-being for all students, while addressing declining enrollment, reduced state aid, and future growth opportunities like the Micron project?

As consultants, we have concluded, with the help of the committee, that the district will likely need to make changes to current grade, building, and instructional configurations to provide more effective, relevant, and efficient programming for students within the North Syracuse CSD over the next decade. These changes are described in detail in the recommendations listed below. However, it is important to note that these changes will take time to implement--perhaps as long as a decade--and that monitoring and adjustments of the situations and assumptions made in this report is critical.

Recommendations

- *It is recommended that the district update enrollment projections annually to obtain the best data upon which to make decisions regarding educational programs, staffing, and facilities usage.* Current enrollment data indicate that enrollment is slightly decreasing; however, the district must pay particular attention to changing economic conditions, especially as Micron becomes established in the district.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Use annual BEDS actual enrollment data to update enrollment projections
        - Monitor the business and economic development within the school district and neighboring areas which could have student enrollment implications.

- *It is recommended that the district establish instructional coherence in science and social studies at the elementary grad levels.* The current lack of consistent instructional time and expectations for science and social studies limits the district's ability to implement adopted curricula with fidelity. Aligning schedules and expectations across buildings will improve instructional equity and depth of learning.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Develop and adopt districtwide minimum instructional time allocations for science and social studies at each grade level.
        - Review and revise master schedules to ensure alignment with instructional expectations for all core subjects.
        - Provide professional learning focused on inquiry-based science and disciplinary literacy in social studies.
        - Monitor implementation through routine schedule audits, classroom observations, and teacher feedback cycles.
        - Establish a cross-building curriculum team to update pacing guides and ensure vertical alignment across grade levels.

- *It is recommended that the district strengthen Tier 1 core instruction and intervention systems, as identified by the NYU Metropolitan Center study.* Variability in Tier 1 classroom instruction and intervention practices contributes to uneven student performance across schools. A stronger and more consistent MTSS framework will enhance equity and academic outcomes.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Provide professional development on high-impact, evidence-based instructional strategies and culturally responsive pedagogy.
        - Implement a districtwide MTSS framework with standardized procedures for data collection, progress monitoring, and intervention delivery.
        - Establish processes for using benchmark data consistently across schools to identify students needing additional support at least quarterly.

- *It is recommended that the district adjust staffing patterns to align with student needs, enrollment trends, and potential configuration changes.* Staffing patterns should reflect both current enrollment realities and future grade-span or building configuration considerations to maintain equitable class sizes and fiscal sustainability.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Model various configuration scenarios to forecast instructional staffing implications.
        - Establish target staffing ratios for classroom teachers, interventionists, and support staff aligned to instructional priorities.
        - Engage building leaders in annual staffing reviews to ensure balanced workloads and efficient resource use.
        - Develop a transparent process for reallocation or right-sizing decisions to minimize disruption and maintain equity.
        - Investigate opportunities for grant applications and awards that could provide additional programming and staffing that can support students' mental health needs.

- *It is recommended that the district build and implement comprehensive equity and inclusion framework.* Persistent subgroup performance gaps and discipline disproportionality require a coherent, measurable approach to equity.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Develop, adopt, and implement t a districtwide Equity and Inclusion Plan informed by the NYU Metro Center's root cause analysis.
        - Provide annual professional learning on culturally responsive teaching, implicit bias, and restorative practices for all staff.
        - Establish an Equity Leadership Team to monitor implementation and track progress toward measurable goals.
        - Should the district retain a grade level alignment with two intermediate or middle school buildings, explore attendance zone modifications to create an east/west student distribution model as opposed to the current north/south model (as referenced in the 2024 Haber and Associates study).

- *It is recommended that the district strengthen recruitment and retention efforts to increase staff diversity across all schools.* The district's student population has become significantly more diverse over the past decade, yet staff diversity has not increased at the same pace. Expanding recruitment pipelines and enhancing retention supports will help ensure that the district's workforce more closely reflects the students and families it serves.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Develop targeted recruitment strategies that include partnerships with educator-preparation programs and regional organizations focused on diversifying the teaching workforce.
        - Establish grow-your-own pathways such as future educator clubs, paraprofessional-to-teacher programs, and paid student-teaching placements to attract local candidates from historically underrepresented groups.
        - Create onboarding and mentorship systems to support new hires, with specialized supports for educators from diverse backgrounds to strengthen retention.
        - Review hiring practices to ensure equity, including diverse interview committees, bias training, and consistent selection criteria.
        - Monitor workforce diversity metrics annually and report progress to the Board of Education to guide continuous improvement.

- *It is recommended that the district continue to provide support to the North Syracuse Early Education Program (NSEEP) through strategic planning and advocacy.* NSEEP is a cornerstone of the district's early childhood continuum, providing inclusive and developmentally appropriate services for young learners throughout Onondaga County. As the district evaluates potential relocation of these programs from Main Street Elementary, it will be essential to analyze the educational, logistical, and fiscal impacts of any move while ensuring continuity of high-quality services.
    - Potential Action Steps:

- Conduct a comprehensive impact analysis of relocating NSEEP, including effects on students, staff, families, transportation, and facilities.
- Engage key stakeholders (including families, teachers, administrators--in North Syracuse CSD and beyond, related service providers, and community partners) in discussions about program design, location, and future growth.
- Develop a transition plan that preserves the integrity of the integrated 4410 model and maintains compliance with state regulations.
- Advocate proactively with the New York State Education Department to sustain the current structure or to secure approval for a revised model that continues to meet the needs of early learners with and without disabilities.
- Ensure that any relocation or reconfiguration includes sufficient staffing, specialized equipment, and facility supports to maintain program quality and accessibility.

- *It is recommended that the district strengthen instructional continuity and course alignment between North Syracuse Junior High School (Grades 8–9) and Cicero–North Syracuse High School (Grades 10–12).* The current separation of Grade 9 from the high school provides focused support for younger adolescents but also presents challenges in maintaining instructional continuity. Students often make course-selection decisions in Grade 9 that effectively determine their high school pathways in math and science, sometimes before they are developmentally ready to make such choices. At the same time, redundancy in course offerings between the junior high and high schools limits scheduling efficiency and dilutes access to advanced opportunities. A coordinated, systemwide review grounded in the state's Blueprint for a Graduate and the new graduation pathways will help ensure that course sequences are both flexible and purposeful.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Ensure Conduct a comprehensive audit of Grades 8–12 course sequences to identify early tracking points, redundant courses, and gaps in alignment with state graduation pathways.

- Use the Blueprint for a Graduate as an organizing framework to map essential skills and competencies across all secondary courses, ensuring that each pathway supports readiness for college, career, and community life.
- Convene cross-building teams of content directors, counselors, and administrators to realign course progressions so students retain flexibility through at least Grade 10 while maintaining access to rigorous options.
- Review credit-bearing Grade 9 offerings to ensure they are directly linked to coherent sequences in Grades 10–12.
- Integrate this review with district planning for new NYSED graduation pathways, using the process as an opportunity to modernize program structures, eliminate redundancies, and expand personalized learning options.
- Monitor the implementation of revised pathways through enrollment data, student feedback, and postsecondary outcomes to ensure equitable access and impact.

- *It is recommended that the district actively monitor and plan for the use of fund balance. In the past fifteen years, the district has made a remarkable recovery from its precarious fiscal position and must continue to build on this progress to position the district for future years of fiscal stability.*
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Cap the future use of assigned appropriated fund balance at the current level with a goal of decreasing when possible.
        - Identify target goals for reserve fund balances and develop a plan for the funding and use of the reserves.
- *It is recommended that the district fully consider and further develop the four building configuration options presented in this report.* The Utilization Study committee developed and discussed a total of seven grade level configurations. Following an anonymous ranking

of all seven possible configurations by each committee member, four options emerged as clear committee preferences (see Chapter 4 for more details on this process). Options 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B represent two core configuration models, with the A and B versions offering small variations in the structure of grades seven through twelve. All four options are presented in the figures and tables that follow, including advantages, disadvantages, and general observations related to each scenario.

Each option provides a different pathway for meeting the priorities identified by the committee. All options bring students together into one cohort earlier (all options bring them fully together as 7th graders rather than currently as 8th graders) and either maintain or reduce current transitions, although they do so in different ways. Options 1A/1B create a clear progression by placing all students in K-3 together in five elementary buildings, followed by grades 4-6 in two intermediate buildings. This structure offers an opportunity to standardize instructional practices and address disparities in experience across buildings. Options 2A/2B reduce transitions even further by placing K-6 in seven elementary buildings. This creates longer periods of stability for students, although it may require more intensive work to ensure instructional consistency across a larger number of sites. In both options, the closure of the Main Street building and the relocation of NSEEP keeps the program intact and positioned in a host building that allows for greater access to services.

No single configuration fully resolves every priority. Options 1A/1B streamline the instructional program by centralizing grade spans, which may support improvements to climate and culture in the intermediate grades, but it also concentrates students in larger grade level cohorts that will require careful planning. Options 2A/2B minimize transitions to the greatest extent but distributes grades across more buildings, which may challenge efforts to reduce instructional disparity and maintain consistent school climate expectations. The junior high and high school variations within each option offer additional flexibility, yet each brings its own tradeoffs related to space, operations, and

student experience. Thoughtful analysis, engagement with stakeholders, and a careful weighing of benefits and challenges is needed before determining which option best supports the district's long term vision.

- Potential Action Steps:
  - Analyzing the grade configuration options should include vetting each option with varied demographic and constituent groups, holding targeted feedback sessions, and gathering additional input to deepen the district's understanding of the strengths, tradeoffs, and potential advantages identified in the initial analysis.
  - Conduct an analysis of attendance zones for the elementary and current middle schools. The current attendance zone configuration may be contributing to imbalances in enrollment and the distribution of student needs across buildings. A zone realignment study will allow the district to determine whether the existing boundaries support equitable opportunities for students and efficient use of space. Furthermore, the four options presented here for grade level/building reconfiguration, would be enhanced by an understanding of alternative attendance zones.
  - Use the New York State Education Department building capacity data included in Appendix B to understand how each configuration uses available space. These capacity figures will help the district evaluate the long-term feasibility of each option and determine which configurations can best accommodate future enrollment patterns.
  - Consider the implementation of this recommendation alongside the realities of currently ongoing and planned capital work. Aligning these efforts will help ensure that staffing, programming, and facilities investments reflect a coherent long-term plan for the district.

Table 11.1 Option 1 Overview		
Number of Buildings	**Type of Buildings**	**Notes**
1	NSEEP @ Allen Rd. Elementary	Main St. would close
5	Kindergarten - 3rd grade elementary buildings	Located at: ● Roxboro Rd. Elementary ● KWS Bear Rd. Elementary ● Cicero Elementary ● Lakeshore Rd. Elementary ● Smith Rd. Elementary
2	4th - 6th grade intermediate buildings	Located at: ● Roxboro Rd. Middle School ● Gillette Rd. Middle School
Option 1A		
1	7th - 9th grade junior high school	Located at: NSJHS
1	10th - 12th grade high school	Located at: CNS High School
Option 1B		
1	7th - 8th grade junior high school	Located at: NSJHS District Office could also move to this building
1	9th - 12th grade high school	Located at: CNS High School

Figure 11.1: Option 1A

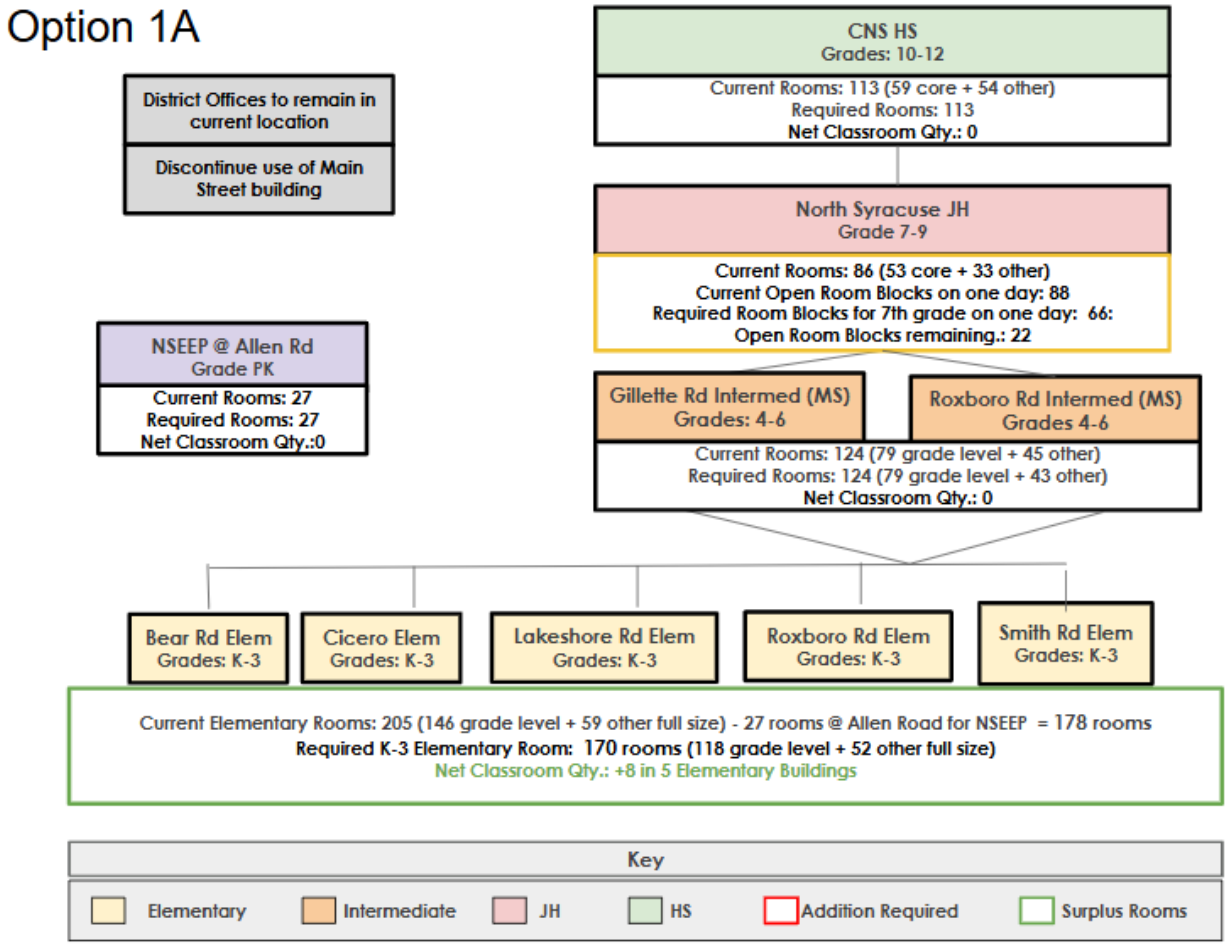


Table 11.2
Option 1A Advantages, Disadvantages, and Observations

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Only one of the JH/HS buildings is impacted • Might not see as many buildings/sections max out attendance-wise. • Students are brought together one grade sooner (7th grade) and 4th grade brought together at a mid-step one grade level sooner, too. • Certification and contract issues are lessened. • 5 elementary schools compared to 6 seems like it could be a pro. • Separating upper elementary from the middle school could be really beneficial for programming options • 7th/8th grade together for sports and extracurriculars	• 9th graders are still separate from the rest of the HS, which continues the "stuckness" and redundant course issues • 7th/8th/9th together might not be the best maturity wise • 9th graders remain separated for sports and other extracurriculars • Space at the JH may be tight • Closing a building would likely have a negative impact on the climate of that building; community concern • 8 "extra" classrooms across the elementary may not be enough given increasing services needed for students

Other Observations

- Option 1A could be viewed as a stepping stone if the ultimate desire is Option 1B (9-12 together).
- Fewer elementary schools will result in larger subgroup populations in each school building which could have an impact on accountability status. Potentially helps buildings re-focus on disproportionality.
- What do we really want in terms of elementary buildings--K-3 vs. K-6? What is really best for kids?
- Maintains the current number of building transitions

Figure 11.2: Option 1B

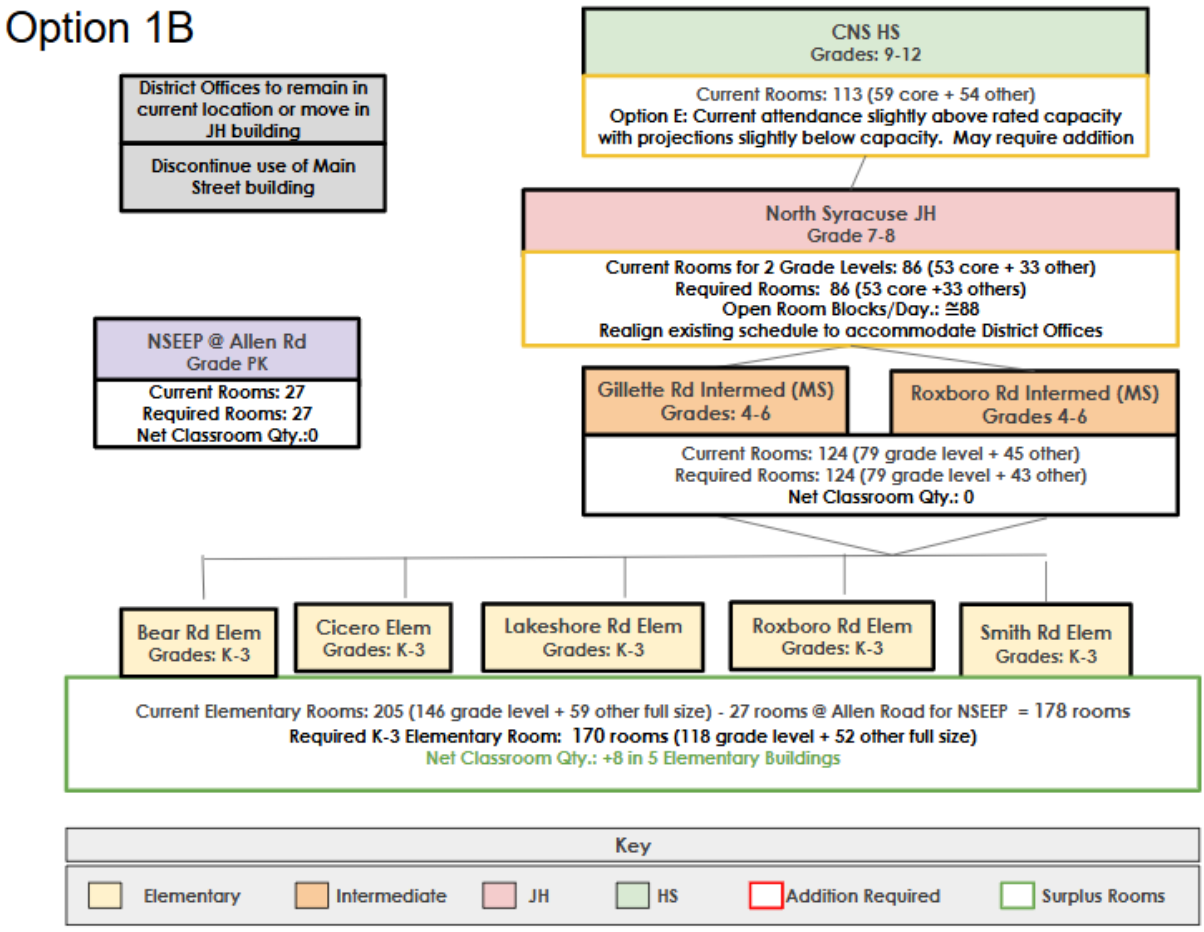


Table 11.3
Option 1B Advantages, Disadvantages, and Observations

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Moving the DO to the JH (as opposed to MS) keeps it more centrally located and accessible to more families • Students are brought together one grade sooner (7th grade) and 4th grade brought together at a mid-step one grade level sooner, too. • Certification and contract issues are lessened. • 5 elementary schools compared to 6 seems like it could be a pro. • Separating upper elementary from the middle school could be really beneficial for programming options • 7th/8th grade together for sports and extracurriculars • Majority of HS/regents classes would be at the High School--9th grade would be more "high school"--will help alleviate some of the "stuckness" and redundancies between 9th/10th grades • Brings most of the varsity sports/athletes to the HS (Some of the activities take place at the Gillette Road school but shuttles would not need to originate at the current MS schools) • 9th graders would be able to participate in more clubs • More students may continue on in music programming from 9th to 10th grades (continuity in teachers and programming).	• JH and HS may both be tight for space. • Closing a building would likely have a negative impact on the climate of that building; community concern • 8 "extra" classrooms across the elementary may not be enough given increasing services needed for students

Other Observations

- Could close 2 buildings (one instructional)
- Maintains the current number of building transitions

Table 11.4 Option 2 Overview		
Number of Buildings	**Type of Buildings**	**Notes**
1	NSEEP @ Roxboro Rd. Elementary	Main St. would close
7	Kindergarten - 6th grade elementary buildings	Located at: ● Allen Rd. Elementary ● KWS Bear Rd. Elementary ● Cicero Elementary ● Lakeshore Rd. Elementary ● Smith Rd. Elementary ● Roxboro Rd. Middle School ● Gillette Rd. Middle School
Option 2A		
1	7th - 9th grade junior high school	Located at: NSJHS
1	10th - 12th grade high school	Located at: CNS High School
Option 2B		
1	7th - 8th grade junior high school	Located at: NSJHS District Office could also move to this building
1	9th - 12th grade high school	Located at: CNS High School

Figure 11.3: Option 2A

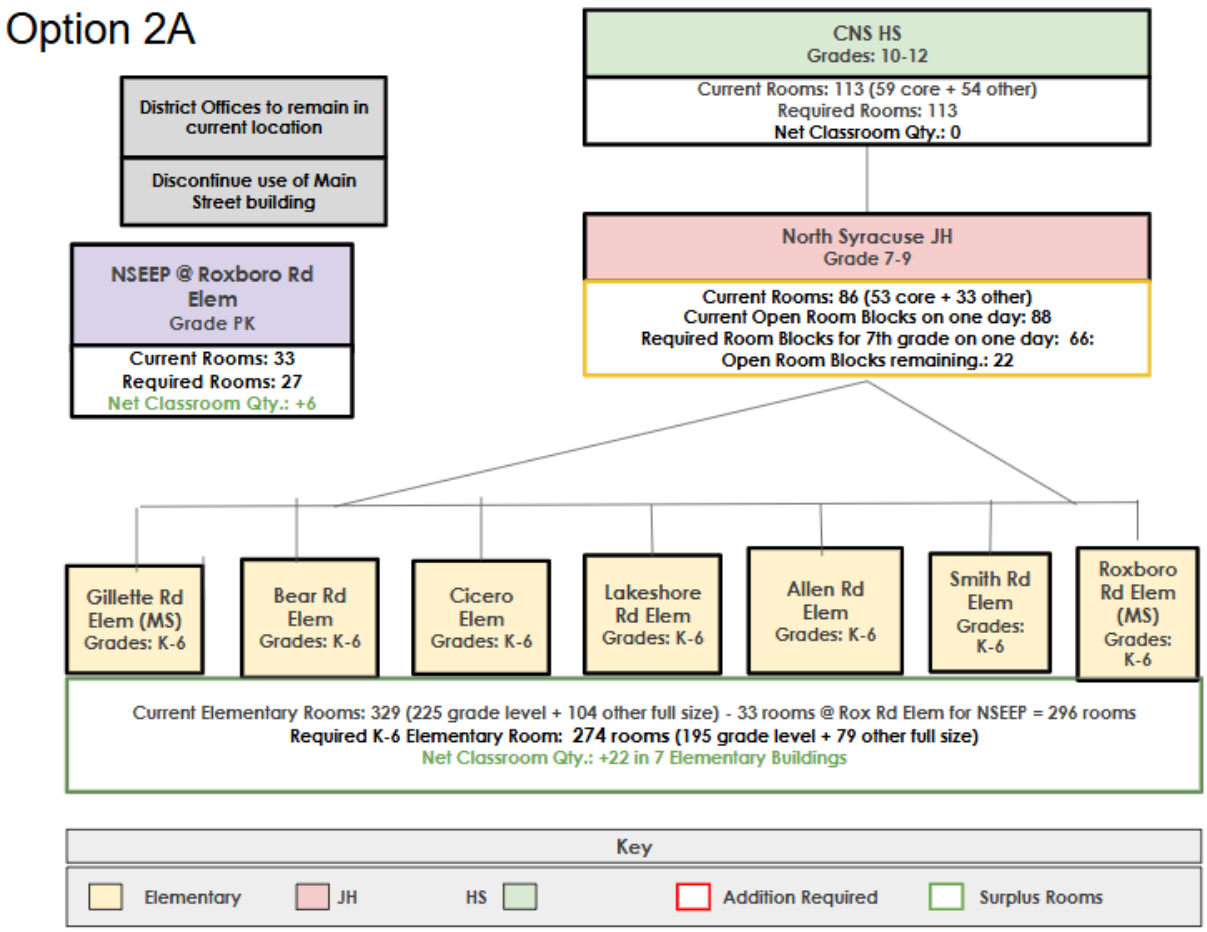


Table 11.5
Option 2A Advantages, Disadvantages, and Observations

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Students come together at 7th grade which is one year earlier than current practice. • There are no "middle schools" so students go straight from elementary to being together in one cohort. • Much more "extra" space in the elementaries	• 9th graders are still separate from the rest of the HS, which continues the "stuckness" and redundant course issues • 7th/8th/9th together might not be the best maturity wise • 9th graders remain separated for sports and other extracurriculars • Space at the JH may be tight • Closing a building would likely have a negative impact on the climate of that building; community concern • 8 "extra" classrooms across the elementary may not be enough given increasing services needed for students • K-6 in one building and on buses together might be a concern for some families about developmental appropriateness • Extensive renovations would be required to retrofit the middle schools to be appropriate for young learners. • Due to the sizes of the K-6 buildings, it's likely the number of students in each building would not be similar, which could lead to some equity issues.

Other Observations

- Would need to understand if this model can be supported by the Transportation Department (increasing number of students at elementary buildings and transporting to 7 elementary buildings instead of 6)

Figure 11.4: Option 2B

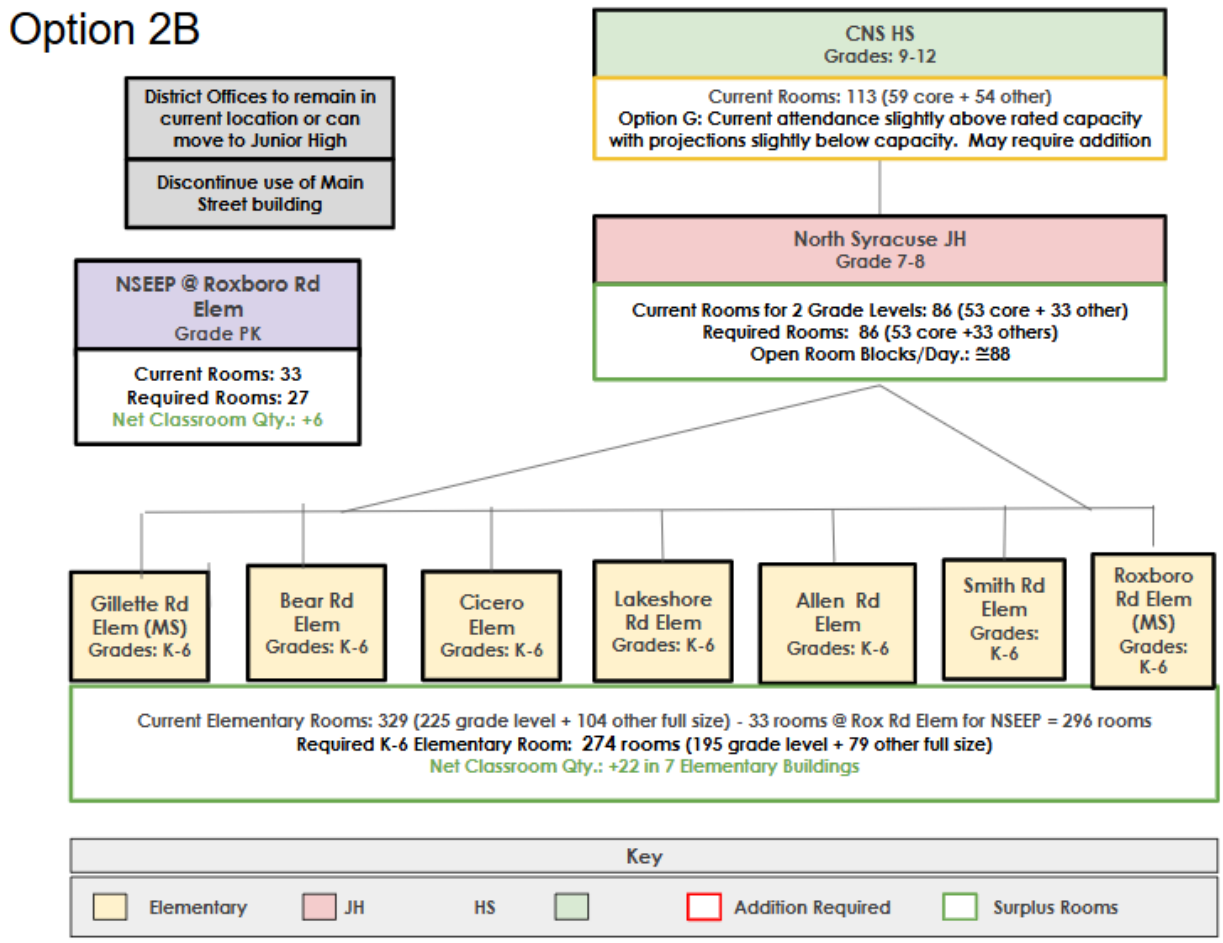


Table 11.6
Option 2B Advantages, Disadvantages, and Observations

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Brings most of the varsity sports/athletes to the HS (Some of the activities take place at the JH school but shuttles would not need to originate at the current MS schools) • 7th/8th grade together for sports and extracurriculars • Majority of HS/regents classes would be at the High School--9th grade would be more "high school"--will help alleviate some of the "stuckness" and redundancies between 9th/10th grades • 9th graders would be able to participate in more clubs • More students may continue on in music programming from 9th to 10th grades (continuity in teachers and programming). • Lots of "extra" space across the elementary buildings	• Closing a building would likely have a negative impact on the climate of that building; community concern • Space at the HS would be tight • K-6 in one building and on buses together might be a concern for some families about developmental appropriateness • Extensive renovations would be required to retrofit the middle schools to be appropriate for young learners. • Due to the sizes of the K-6 buildings, it's likely the number of students in each building would not be similar, which could lead to some equity issues.

Other Observations

- Would need to understand if this model can be supported by the Transportation Department (increasing number of students at elementary buildings and transporting to 7 elementary buildings instead of 6)

- ***It is recommended that in developing and potentially selecting a new building configuration model, the district give thought to whether realigning attendance zones from the current north/south zoning to the east/west zoning proposed in the Haber 2024 study could provide more equitable building demographics. Additionally, it is recommended that in considering attendance zone realignments, the district also consider whether school start times should (and can) be adjusted.*** The committee recognizes the demographic differences apparent in the geographical conditions throughout the North Syracuse CSD. Working to assess the impact of grade level and building level configurations and potential changes to attendance zones could provide more demographically balanced buildings. Likewise, understanding the impacts to start times, and whether the district has interest in adjusting secondary start times similarly to the East Syracuse Minoa school district's changes could provide academic benefits for students.
    - Potential Action Steps:
        - Use updated GIS mapping to visualize demographic distributions, transportation routes, and attendance zone boundaries under multiple configuration options.
        - Assess how potential attendance zone changes would interact with proposed building configuration models to ensure both equitable access and efficient building utilization.
        - Conduct a feasibility study of adjusting school start and end times, particularly at the secondary level, to determine transportation, contractual, and instructional implications.
        - Review research on later secondary start times, including case studies such as East Syracuse Minoa CSD, to evaluate potential academic and health benefits for students.
        - Use modeled scenarios, community input, and logistical analyses to inform configuration and scheduling decisions in alignment with district equity goals.

- *It is recommended that the district continue to monitor sentiment about the inclusion of 9th grade at Cicero-North Syracuse High School.* The committee identified both advantages and disadvantages with having 9th grade students with their 10th - 12th grade peers. The primary advantages are related to opening up academic program pathways for 9th graders and reducing redundant programming between the junior high school and the high school, while the primary concern is the availability of space at the high school for four grade levels. Such monitoring could include attending to considerations like the climate/culture of 9th grade at North Syracuse Jr. High School, changes in academic achievement as indicated by the four-year dropout/graduation rate, and the number of 9th graders active in extracurriculars that involve their 10th - 12th grade peers. If there is consensus across the district that the best opportunities for students lie with a grade 9 - 12 high school, it is logistically possible to add additional classrooms to the existing building footprint.

APPENDIX A

Noticings	Wonderings
Cicero North Syracuse High School	
• Structure of groupings is opposite of the Middle Schools. E.g., principals stay the same here. • All spaces seem to be being used. Is moving 9th grade to the high school even an option? • Everything felt "closed off" --hallways felt tight. How does flow work when the hallways are full? Is there a way to connect hallways so teachers can better collaborate? • Locker units have been reduced/don't exist anymore because students aren't using them the way they did when we were in school! • Hallways were very loud with just us so we can only imagine what it is like when they are full. • Not a lot of signage and the "You are Here" signs are not valuable. But students might get more lost at NSJHS.	• Is the courtyard used for lunches? Not for lunches and rarely at other times. • Is building at full capacity? • Furniture appears dated--doesn't seem to be collaboration spaces. • How do teachers utilize the teachers' rooms? There's one on every floor. (Some teachers have their desks in those spaces.) • How will pool be used during the school day? Will the pool be open to the public? (It is designed to be able to be used securely during the school day, but a decision hasn't been made yet.) • How do students feel about there not being teams? Do they feel connected to their teachers? Do they miss them from their previous experiences? • The location of the SKATE Program and other classrooms for students with special needs is on the ground floor--which is removed from everyone else. Also, some of the spaces are not as ADA friendly as we might expect/like.
North Syracuse Early Elementary Program @ Main Street	

• Amazing work in a facility that is "long past its useful life" and wasn't designed for that purpose.
  ○ The program at NSEEP, despite the concerns about the building, is very appreciated. The culture is strong.
  ○ It looks a lot better than it did 5 years ago (in some ways) but in others it really hasn't changed.
• The space doesn't have the most welcoming environment/feel that we normally envision for PK students.
• Elevator is a safety issue--people have been stuck in it. Students with walkers/wheelchairs on 2nd floor with an elevator that might malfunction is concerning.
	• Because the program is funded by the county/state, does that mean they kick in for renovations?
	  ○ Answer: They get about ⅓ of the state aid facilities funding that a typical elementary building receives (Matt Baldwin provided response)
	• Is it a state requirement to have a PK program?
	  ○ Answer: No, but the state does incentive PK; there are also many reasons why PK is beneficial to communities (Jen Heckathorn provided response)
	• Is the big space (e.g., high ceilings, 2 floors, bathrooms) intimidating for the little students?
	• What other options are there to house a

• The only playground for 2-5 year olds that is fully accessible (and fenced in!) in the immediate Syracuse area. • District-provided transportation to PK programs (at Main St. for Special Education services and in CBOs) is a highlight. • There is no "wraparound care" (before/after school hours) at Main St.	program like NSEEP other than the current building? • Is there a way to have a space that has more aspects of Universal Design for Learning (so more accessible)?
North Syracuse Junior High School	

• The building is so big that it is difficult for students to utilize their lockers between classes/at the end of the day (remediation: trying to consolidate the supplies that teachers require students to bring to each class and maximize efficient use of the Chromebooks)
  ○ Students do use their lockers here because there is not room for backpacks in classrooms (students are not allowed to carry backpacks)
• Surprised that there are 3 entries for students during arrival (but that's the case at other buildings throughout the district)
• This building is pretty much the same (except for the 2 additions) as it was in the 1980s when it was a high school.
• Really clean/well-maintained, but definitely dated
• There are ~15-20 classrooms where there is a maximum of 20 students allowed (due to the space--inside/outside classrooms are different sizes)
  ○ The small classes make collaborative learning difficult (especially when students have backpacks with them)
• There are team rooms for the storage of students' sports equipment
	• What is the passing time between classes (answer: 4 minutes); ~1200 current students
	• Is there the potential for alternatives to lockers (for example, clear backpacks)?
	  ○ But keep in mind, students only have 4 classes each day at this building (unlike at the Middle Schools, where they have 7 periods)
	  ○ There is also about 10 minutes between the end of the day and busses leaving
	• How is NS CSD organizing the traditional FACS/Tech (FACS = Family and Consumer Sciences--think Home Economics) courses? Are they taking advantage of the middle school waiver to offer more career/technical integrated courses?
	  ○ Answer: Because of the 8/9 configuration, there are other opportunities for tech courses (e.g., Project Lead the Way, intro to Tech that rolls into courses at the high school)
	• Would restructuring grade levels make it easier to offer different courses?
	  ○ JEN--be sure to include information in the report on the middle school requirements
	• There's an elevator in the middle of the "Tower" for students in wheelchairs/on crutches

Gillette Road Middle School	
• Every space is being used. The building seems	• Question about the instructional programming

to be at capacity, especially with the 4th grade being here (Lakeshore Rd. Elementary) ○ Through the end of 2025-2026 ○ But then the next layer of renovation starts and grade levels shift again • Does not seem to be enough music space for whole ensembles to practice--there are more smaller spaces for individual practice • This is a bright and open space with a lot of natural light. Building is also immaculately maintained.	for middle school students (related to financial management/personal finance course) ○ This is all related to the middle school requirements
KWS Bear Road Elementary School	
• Feels like a lot of wasted space--flex spaces; hallways are very large when the kids are so small; this is very different from how it used to be and especially in the kindergarten rooms (with the HVAC interference) it seems like it can't work well for students and teachers--even with the older kids, the cubbies are narrow and can't hold much. Spots that teachers can't see in the kindergarten classrooms are also a concern--both from a teacher and parent perspective. • It didn't seem like the architects listened to the teachers when the planning for the space was done--for example, teachers didn't want the lockers in the rooms; no window was put in the library; no bathroom in the library; the only thing that teachers got was no clear walls • There are still some drinking fountains that are new but are not functioning • The white space feels industrial; the outside looks like a prison; it doesn't resemble the warm building that it was before • The bus circle is an improvement over the prior parking lot • It doesn't look like the rest of our district--people might not recognize it as an elementary school in our district • A lot of the technology in the flex instructional space seemed "not permanent"--they weren't wired/mounted in. • Student support specialists (counselor, psych.) are in a side hallway so it might be hard for them to connect with all students (principal said the same for her role) • Student services has been a high need for a	• What has the process been like for listening to/incorporating feedback at Lakeshore Rd.? • We wonder what the kids think about the building-they haven't experienced education/school the way we have. They might have a different perspective. • How do we also plan for big spaces? Like for performances? Stages have gone away but is there a need for a second large space in buildings?

while now and continues to grow, but there did not seem to be a high degree of planning for those areas in this renovation. Providing services to students in hallways is not ideal--for their efficacy or for the privacy/integrity of the students • King and King (the architect) seems to focus more on the futuristic design of the building than on the practical nature but they may be doing better with that since they have finished this project. • The building is in great shape and the security features are note-worthy. However, there aren't doors on the flex space, so teachers must rely on their situational awareness.	
Cicero Elementary School	

• Fabulous job is done maintaining the building. It's in great shape--structurally sound and clean.
• Office is more central so easy access to all parts of the building.
• Bathrooms in every classroom. Some rooms have 2!
• The hallways had names which supports culture (e.g., "Kindness Place"). Hallways are used for street names when students practice addressing letters.
• Student work is throughout the halls and there are sensory paths on the floor.
• Library is centralized.
• Connecting doors make it nice for special area teachers to work with multiple groups.
• Playground here is beautiful and is accessible for students with disabilities/additional mobility needs.
• It's rare (and nice!) that this building still has a stage.
  ○ Allen Rd. also still has a stage.
	• With Lakeshore kindergarten students here, were the kindergarten classrooms collaborating more?
	  ○ YES!
	• Classrooms on the back wing feel larger. Are they?
	  ○ No. But there is less clutter.
	  ○ Also, coming from the tour at Bear Rd. last month, the cubbies on the outside of the classrooms help with the space issues, too.
	• Seemed like a lot of entry/exit points and wondering about the safety of that, especially with the busy roads right here.
	• Why isn't the Lakeshore Rd. side of the building a school zone?
	  ○ There also isn't a school zone on the back side of Gillette Rd. Middle School
	  ○ Wondering if it's about entry/exit points of the school.

APPENDIX B

Analysis of NYSED Building Capacity Ratings Option 1A								
Building	SED Building Capacity (2012)	SED Capacity Combined by Grade Level	2024-25 Enrollment	Combined by Grade Level	2029-30 Projected Enrollment	SED Option 1A	2024-25 Option 1A Enrollment	2029-30 Option 1A Enrollment
Allen Rd Elem	420	3443	331	2824	2603	420	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full* 233 Half*
Bear Rd Elem	690		539			3023	2193	2059
Cicero Elem	622		523					
Lakeshore Elem	556		437					
Rox Rd Elem	583		424					
Smith Rd Elem	572		570					
Gillette MS	1422	2762	1022	1724	1565	2762	1701	1550
Rox Rd MS	1340		702					
NS JH	1683	1683	1186	1186	1102	1683	1741	1661
CNS HS	2269	2269	1748	1748	1531	2269	1748	1531
Main Street	96	96	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full* 233 Half*	96	0	0

Analysis of NYSED Building Capacity Ratings Option 1B								
Building	SED Building Capacity (2012)	SED Capacity Combined by Grade Level	2024-25 Enrollment	Combined by Grade Level	2029-30 Projected Enrollment	SED Option 1B	2024-25 Option 1B Enrollment	2029-30 Option 1B Enrollment
Allen Rd Elem	420	3443	331	2824	2603	420	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full* 233 Half*
Bear Rd Elem	690		539			3023	2193	2059
Cicero Elem	622		523					
Lakeshore Elem	556		437					
Rox Rd Elem	583		424					
Smith Rd Elem	572		570					
Gillette MS	1422	2762	1022	1724	1565	2762	1701	1550
Rox Rd MS	1340		702					
NS JH	1683	1683	1186	1186	1102	1683	1166	1103
CNS HS	2269	2269	1748	1748	1531	2269	2300	2089
Main Street	96	96	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full* 233 Half*	96	0	0

Analysis of NYSED Building Capacity Ratings Option 2A								
Building	SED Building Capacity (2012)	SED Capacity Combined by Grade Level	2024-25 Enrollment	Combined by Grade Level	2029-30 Projected Enrollment	SED Option 2A	2024-25 Option 2A Enrollment	2029-30 Option 2A Enrollment
Rox Rd Elem	583	3443	424	2824	2603	583	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full* 233 Half*
Bear Rd Elem	690		539			5622	3894	3610
Cicero Elem	622		523					
Lakeshore Elem	556		437					
Allen Rd Elem	420		331					
Smith Rd Elem	572		570					
Gillette MS	1422	2762	1022	1724	1565			
Rox Rd MS	1340		702					
NS JH	1683	1683	1186	1186	1102	1683	1741	1661
CNS HS	2269	2269	1748	1748	1531	2269	1748	1531
Main Street	96	96	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full* 233 Half*	96	0	0

Analysis of NYSED Building Capacity Ratings Option 2B								
Building	SED Building Capacity (2012)	SED Capacity Combined by Grade Level	2024-25 Enrollment	Combined by Grade Level	2029-30 Projected Enrollment	SED Option 2B	2024-25 Option 2B Enrollment	2029-30 Option 2B Enrollment
Rox Rd Elem	583	3443	424	2824	2603	583	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full* 233 Half*
Bear Rd Elem	690		539			5622	3894	3610
Cicero Elem	622		523					
Lakeshore Elem	556		437					
Allen Rd Elem	420		331					
Smith Rd Elem	572		570					
Gillette MS	1422	2762	1022	1724	1565			
Rox Rd MS	1340		702					
NS JH	1683	1683	1186	1186	1102	1683	1166	1103
CNS HS	2269	2269	1748	1748	1531	2269	2300	1531
Main Street	96	96	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full 233 Half	80 Full* 233 Half*	96	0	0