

# SACHEM FACILITIES STUDY COMMITTEE

Report to the Board of Education  
January 22, 2014

The Sachem Facilities Study Committee was created by the Board of Education to study the effective use of present school facilities in light of declining enrollment and budgetary concerns. We thank the Board members for involving us as stakeholders in this important work and commend them for taking this step.

Recognizing the crucial nature of our task we approached it with seriousness, openness and great energy. The Sachem administrators were very helpful in providing information and data and were extremely responsive to all our requests.



# CHARGE TO THE STUDY COMMITTEE

- ✱ The Sachem Facilities Study Committee is to study options involving facilities\* which would enhance Sachem's budgetary situation while maintaining Sachem's educational quality.

\* excluding the high school level but including District-owned properties not presently used for schools.

# DUAL PROBLEMS

DECLINING ENROLLMENT

+

BUDGETARY LIMITATIONS



# Historic Enrollments

## Districtwide by Grade

Grade	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Kindergarten	1,081	1,037	966	1,035	957	932
First	1,062	1,084	1,061	988	1,031	956
Second	1,096	1,058	1,082	1,065	995	1,014
Third	1,175	1,084	1,063	1,076	1,069	970
Fourth	1,175	1,154	1,079	1,068	1,078	1,060
Fifth	1,178	1,180	1,162	1,094	1,066	1,075
SubTotal	6,767	6,597	6,413	6,326	6,196	6,007
Sixth	1,084	1,163	1,186	1,169	1,097	1,081
Seventh	1,192	1,105	1,160	1,191	1,183	1,109
Eighth	1,143	1,187	1,113	1,271	1,197	1,202
SubTotal	3,419	3,455	3,459	3,631	3,477	3,392
Ninth	1,235	1,146	1,206	1,132	1,187	1,200
Tenth	1,228	1,218	1,156	1,211	1,133	1,182
Eleventh	1,112	1,188	1,197	1,142	1,190	1,135
Twelfth	1,245	1,130	1,222	1,240	1,183	1,217
SubTotal	4,820	4,682	4,781	4,725	4,693	4,734
Total	15,006	14,734	14,653	14,682	14,366	14,133

# Projected Enrollments Districtwide by Grade (using a 5 year survival ratio)

Grade	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Kindergarten	932	912	890	816	896	889
First	956	944	922	902	828	908
Second	1,014	956	944	922	902	828
Third	970	1,004	950	936	916	896
Fourth	1,060	970	1,004	949	936	916
Fifth	1,075	1,060	970	1,004	949	936
SubTotal	6,007	5,846	5,680	5,529	5,427	5,373
Sixth	1,081	1,075	1,060	970	1,004	949
Seventh	1,109	1,091	1,087	1,072	982	1,016
Eighth	1,202	1,136	1,117	1,112	1,095	1,005
SubTotal	3,392	3,302	3,264	3,154	3,081	2,970
Ninth	1,200	1,194	1,130	1,111	1,105	1,087
Tenth	1,182	1,199	1,194	1,130	1,111	1,105
Eleventh	1,135	1,164	1,180	1,175	1,113	1,093
Twelfth	1,217	1,167	1,196	1,213	1,208	1,144
SubTotal	4,734	4,724	4,700	4,629	4,537	4,429
Total	14,133	13,872	13,644	13,312	13,045	12,771

October 17, 2013

Applied Data Services  
for Sachem CSD

## CHARGE TO THE STUDY COMMITTEE

The Committee functioned as a study group. We viewed our job as a resource to the Board of Education. We understood that we were not to make recommendations. The ultimate decision-making role lies with the duly-elected Board of Education.



# COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Scott Anderson
Jeremy Bigler
Janet Coleman
Michael Conrad
Dana DeMeo
Kevin Guilfoyle
Anthony Horber
Stephen Huffman Jr.
Anthony Joseph
James Kiernan
Jim LaCarrubba
Wendy Levine
Bevin Llanes

Larry Manganello
Elliot Margolis
Denise McKay
Nancy Merkle
Debra Mills
Dennis O'Hara
Brian Reilly
Vincent Reynolds
Barbara Roden
Richard Sayres
Laura Slattery
Dorothy Stallone
Richard Stilwagen
Allen Wone



# MEETING SCHEDULE

October 10, 2013 - Guidelines, Charge, Overview  
October 17, 2013 - Presentation by Demographer, Wayne Verderber  
October 24, 2013 - Presentation by Realtor, Working Session  
October 31, 2013 - Working Meeting  
November 7, 2013 - Working Meeting  
November 14, 2013 - Working Meeting, Presentation by Administration  
November 21, 2013 - Working Meeting  
December 12, 2013 - Working Meeting  
January 9, 2014 - Working Meeting

*All meetings were open to visitors*

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. We seek to do what is best for all of the children of Sachem.
2. We plan for the future of our schools and for the future in which our young people will live and work.
3. We are conscious of the need to plan with an eye toward flexibility to adapt to possible unforeseen future factors impacting enrollment.
4. We explore options that are consistent with our District's values.
5. We seek to explore changes with the awareness of the emotion and upsetment we know comes about with change.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

6. We recognize the need to seek alternative uses of buildings that may no longer be used as schools.
7. We value diversity, keeping it in mind in any options we study.
8. We recognize that our goal is to investigate all plausible options while seeking to maintain the quality of our educational offerings in a fiscally sound manner. We understand our role to be study and investigation, not recommendation. We see our role as a resource to the Board of Education.
9. We recognize the strengths and limitations of demographic planning and enrollment predictions. Specifically we understand that five year predictions can be made with reasonable accuracy but more long term predictions are prone to greater error.
10. Recognizing the decrease of enrollment at each level, we are guided by the need to look at the population as a whole rather than the present population of any given school.

The Committee agreed to stay within the present District policy statements on class size and teacher/student ratios.

# RESOURCES

*The Study Committee utilized many resources during its deliberations:*

*District Administration*

*District Facilities and Maintenance Administrators*

*Applied Data Services - Demographer*

*Transportation Director*



# METHODOLOGY

*The Committee studied all available data on enrollment, building utilization, budgetary costs associated with District owned facilities and related information.*

*The Group studied reports from Wayne Verderber, the demographer hired by the District about projected enrollments.*

*With this information, much discussion ensued and eight final plausible options for investigation resulted.*

*Four working teams were established. Each team studied two options.*

*At the conclusion of each meeting, all four teams shared their progress with the full Committee and entertained critical revisions, adjustments and questions.*



# EIGHT OPTIONS

## **Options involving only the elementary level**

1. Status Quo - Close no schools. Redistrict all attendance zones to save on transportation costs. Option 1a: Possible revenue production from District properties.
2. Close one elementary school and redistrict.
3. Close two elementary schools and redistrict.
4. Close three elementary schools. Redistrict.



# EIGHT OPTIONS

## **Options involving both the elementary level and the middle level**

5. Close 2 middle schools. Move 6th grade to elementary schools. Redistrict. Option 5a: Move UPK to middle school.
6. Close 4 elementary schools. Move 5th grade to middle school. Redistrict.
7. (a) Close one elementary and one middle school. No grade level restructuring. (b) Close two elementary schools and one middle school. Redistrict.
8. Close 2 elementary first and subsequently close 2 middle schools in the future. Move 6th grade to elementary schools. Redistrict.

## INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL OPTIONS

### *Recognition of the Problem and Impact of Solutions*

- ✱ The Committee recognizes that the dual problems of declining enrollment and fiscal restraints provide the community with a choice of undesirable options.
- ✱ The Committee is well aware of and sensitive to the emotion that comes with change.

**There is no good option.**



## INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL OPTIONS

### *Tiered Options*

- ✱ The options presented tonight represent a spectrum of increasingly aggressive approaches to the dual problems of finance and declining enrollment. With each successive option you will note that estimated savings increase but the impact to the District becomes more severe.

## INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL OPTIONS

### *Calculation of Potential Savings*

- ✱ Savings resulting from the closing of a building as estimated by Sachem District administration. These are net savings.
- ✱ Elementary = \$437,679
- ✱ Middle School = \$676,590



## INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL OPTIONS

### *Sale or Lease of District Properties*

- ✱ The present real estate market for the sale or lease of any school buildings on Long Island is not strong.
- ✱ Sale of District-owned properties takes a significant period of time.
- ✱ Sale of properties would produce a “one-shot” infusion of revenue but might produce tax revenue in future years.

## INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL OPTIONS

### *Calculation of Building Capacity*

- ✱ You will note that different options were studied with the use of different methods to calculate building capacity.
- ✱ Each set of such assumptions will be clearly stated.
- ✱ Some options and their assumptions allowed for greater flexibility than others.



## INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL OPTIONS

### *Redistricting*

- ✱ You will note that all options except Option 1 - Status Quo, call for the redistricting of the District to reduce transportation costs while minimizing travel mileage as much as possible.
- ✱ The Committee sought to maintain feeder patterns to middle schools and high schools as much as possible depending upon the nature of the option.

## INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL OPTIONS

### *Potential Impact of Major Housing Developments in the District*

- ✱ The Committee expressed concern about two major housing developments in the Sachem district and their ability to add numbers of students in the future.
- ✱ The Committee felt that any such addition would be several years in the future.
- ✱ While the initial estimates of the number of students each development would yield are questionable, the impact on various options was included as much as possible.



# INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL OPTIONS

## *Condition and Maintenance Issues*

*In discussions with District officials knowledgeable about facilities and maintenance, we were assured that all buildings are all in a basically good state of repair and that utility and other operating costs are roughly similar.*



WE RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THAT BOARD MEMBERS MAKE NOTE OF THEIR CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS AS THE PRESENTATION CONTINUES WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IF YOU COULD NOTE THE SLIDE # FOR REFERENCE.

WE WILL BE PLEASED TO ANSWER BOARD QUESTIONS AT THE CONCLUSION OF OUR PRESENTATION.

SINCE THIS IS A REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION WE UNDERSTAND THAT QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC WILL BE ADDRESSED AT FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS AND WILL NOT BE PART OF TONIGHT'S AGENDA.

SHEETS FOR THE WRITTEN COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS OF THE PUBLIC ARE AVAILABLE TONIGHT AND CAN BE SUBMITTED IN THE BOXES PROVIDED.

**NOTE: THE BOARD HAS RECEIVED THE FULL 58-PAGE WRITTEN REPORT COMPILED BY THE FULL COMMITTEE**

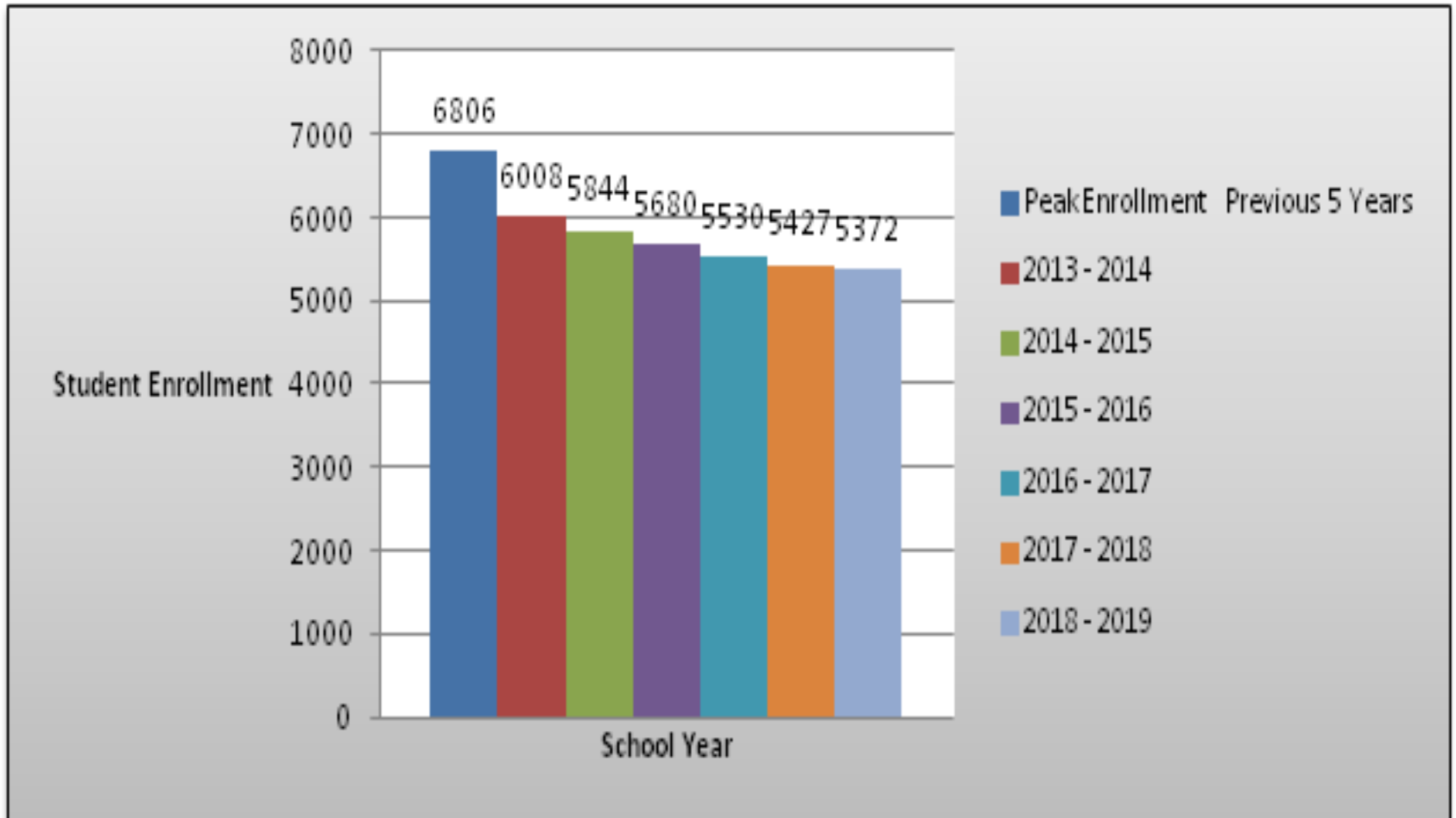


# Elementary School Options

# Option1



Option 1  
Status Quo – Close no schools – Re-district



Option 1  
Status Quo – Close no schools – Re-district

**Status quo** – the current situation : the way things are now  
– It's an option

**Current State:**

- Enrollment – Projected 5 year declining enrollment
  - Elementary –10.59%
  - Middle – 12.44%
  - High School – 6.44%
- Financial
  - Budget constraints/potential shortfall
  - Increased costs
  - Less State aid
  - Property tax cap
- Building Capacity
  - Buildings have rooms that can be re-claimed for teaching
    - Inefficient use of rooms
    - Empty classrooms



Option 1  
Status Quo – Close no schools – Re-district

**Reasons for keeping Status Quo:**

- No relocation impact to students – remain in current school buildings
- District retains ownership of assets
  - Continue to monitor demographics, economy, state aid / requirements
  - Allow time for further recovery of real estate market

**Reasons for not keeping Status Quo:**

- Potential budget shortfall for 2014 – 2015 school year
  - Risk of losing community support for tax increases to support budget

Administration confirmed there would not be a budget savings associated with redistricting without closing a school.

## Option 1

### Status Quo – Close no schools – Re-district

#### **Implications:**

- Budget shortfall – Administration & Board of Education will need to “find” savings
  - Potential negative impact to students
    - Less resources in schools (classroom teachers, guidance counselors, specialty teachers etc.)
    - Loss of clubs and programs
    - Funding for full day Kindergarten
  - Talent acquisition
    - Will Sachem attract the best teachers if budget issues persist ?
- Community reaction
  - Continued budget issues could have an adverse effect on community growth
    - People tend to purchase homes within a “good” school district
  - Will community support another tax increase?
- Administration and Board of Education credibility at risk
  - Perception of doing nothing to resolve financial issues
- Declining population
  - Will only push the issue down the road



# Option 1A

## Option 1 A

Outline possible revenue producing opportunities from District properties.

**This option is not exclusive to Option 1 and could be considered as an addition any of the options presented**

District properties in scope:

- Waverly Fields
- Transportation Facility – includes:
  - Maintenance Garage with parking for 30 buses
- Maintenance Building and Yard
  - Parking for Maintenance vehicles
- Property behind Grundy Ave. School



## Option 1 A

Outline possible revenue producing opportunities from District properties.

### **Reasons for exploring sale:**

- The sale of and/or alternative use of these properties could provide the District with financial flexibility in the budget.
- One-shot revenue injection
- Ongoing tax revenue from new development
- Ongoing revenue associated with alternative use of property

### **Reasons against exploring sale:**

- District loses assets
- Does not address long term budget issues associated with declining enrollment
- Community loses open space
  - Waverly Soccer Fields
    - Negative community reaction to selling fields
    - Disruption of kids athletic programs

## Option 1 A

Outline possible revenue producing opportunities from District properties.

### **Implications:**

- Unknown property value – Appraisals need to be conducted
- Sale of property could take several years
- No immediate tax revenue benefit
  - Data presented to the FSC suggested it would take 5+years after a sale to reap tax revenue benefits
- Loss of open space within the Sachem community could:
  - Force conflicts with various athletic groups for use of school fields
  - Create negative impact of surrounding communities – less desirable place to live

The Committee understanding of the current lease agreement to SYSL may have served the District well however it does not seem to align with the District's needs of today



## Option 1 A

Outline possible revenue producing opportunities from District properties.

The committee does not have enough information to determine the viability of the sale of the Sachem owned property. It is our recommendation that the Administration and Board of Education commission a study that includes but is not limited to:

- Determining the feasibility a property sale
- Gaining property appraisals
- Re-evaluate current lease and negotiate to fair market value
- Engaging local town governments to determine zone changes as appropriate
- Exploring all possible revenue producing options for properties
  - Determine feasibility of leasing Waverly Fields to a “for profit” organizations at market rates
    - Sports Facility Management organization – expand beyond Soccer
      - Sachem maintains a vested interest in revenue (concessions, events, etc.)
    - Community Events that are fee based

It is recommended that the Committee be made up of a community members , and

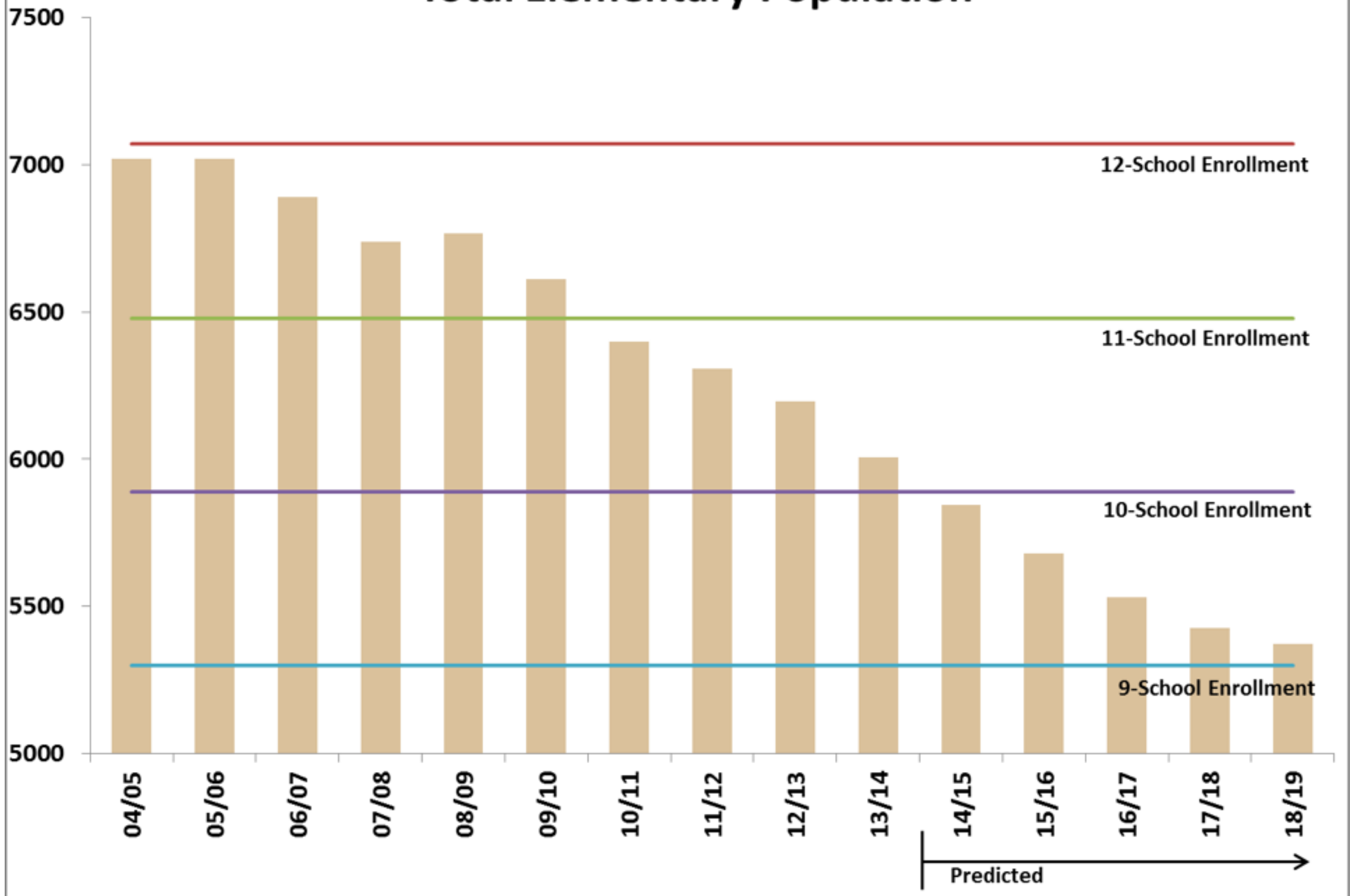
## Option #2 and #3:

Close 1 or 2 elementary schools and redistrict

- Additional guiding principles
  - Ensure students and staff will retain the full functionality of their existing educational experience
  - Prohibit disruption of high school feeder patterns
- Considerations
  - Geographic location
  - Enrollment and utilization
  - Transportation and safety
  - Maintenance and security
  - Alternate uses



# Total Elementary Population



- Closing up to 2 schools is possible while minimizing educational impact

# Enrollment Decline is Unbalanced

School	2013/14	2018/19	Decline	% Decline
Grundy Elementary	484	500	16	3.3%
Cayuga Elementary	531	529	-2	-0.4%
Tecumseh Elementary	420	405	-15	-3.6%
Chippewa Elementary	474	453	-21	-4.4%
Merrimac Elementary	450	417	-33	-7.3%
Lynwood Aven	479	439	-40	-8.4%
Gatelot Elementary	577	506	-71	-12.3%
Nokomis Elementary	501	439	-62	-12.4%
Tamarac Elementary	567	483	-84	-14.8%
Waverly Elementary	559	459	-100	-17.9%
Wenonah Elementary	494	383	-111	-22.5%
Hiawatha Elementary	471	359	-112	-23.8%

- Broad redistricting would maintain balance
  - Maintain educational experience for all students by avoiding a lopsided district
  - Optimize transportation
  - Provide buffer in all schools for unanticipated growth
  - Middle school feeder patterns would be changed



## Option #2:

# Close one elementary school and redistrict **Lynwood or Tecumseh are the optimal findings**

### Reasons to support closing Lynwood:

- Small number of classrooms
- Hidden from main roadways
- Marketable

### Reasons to support closing Tecumseh:

- Located at the edge of the district, can only accept students from the southwest
- Marketable

### Reasons against closing Lynwood:

- Location in neighborhood makes it difficult to protect and secure

### Reasons against closing Tecumseh:

- Adjacent to Sachem East High School
- Large number of classrooms
- Accessible and visible

**This option provides \$437K in annual savings**

# Option #2:

## Close one elementary school and redistrict

**The remaining schools on the East side were not optimal findings for the following reasons:**

- **Chippewa**
  - Extremely close proximity to Sagamore Middle School, including shared fields
  - Not marketable
- **Waverly**
  - Relatively large size and central proximity
  - Main road/highway proximity for easy emergency vehicle access
- **Merrimac and Tamarac**
  - Only two elementary schools on the Sachem East side that are south of the LIE
  - Transportation safety is paramount
  - Islip Pines project would most likely have children attend these schools.



# Option #3:

**Close two elementary schools and  
redistrict**

**Findings from Option #2 plus a school in the North  
feeder**

**There are no optimal findings,  
however Grundy and Gatelot are least  
desirable**

**Reasons against closing Grundy and Gatelot:**

- **Grundy**
  - Only elementary school in the North feeder that is south of the LIE
  - Transportation safety is paramount
  - Predicted 3.3% increase in enrollment over next 5 years
- **Gatelot**
  - Close proximity to Samoset Middle School
  - Not marketable

**Provides \$874K in savings**

# Option #3:

## Close two elementary schools and redistrict

### **Reasons to support closing Nokomis/Hiawatha:**

- Central location could be good candidate for UPK (to keep the building in use)
- Easier to secure and monitor
- Highest enrollment decline over next 5 years (–23.8%)

### **Reasons against closing Nokomis:**

- Located across from public library
- Visibility on a main road

### **Reasons against closing Hiawatha:**

- Closest candidate to receive Ronkonkoma Hub students
- Very large number of classrooms
- Accessible and visible on main road



# Option #3:

## Close two elementary schools and redistrict

### **Reasons to support closing Cayuga:**

- Small number of classrooms
- Property setback from main road
- Easier to secure and monitor

### **Reasons to support closing Wenonah:**

- Located at the edge of the district, can only accept students from the southeast
- High enrollment decline over next 5 years (-22.5%)
- Marketable

### **Reasons against closing Cayuga:**

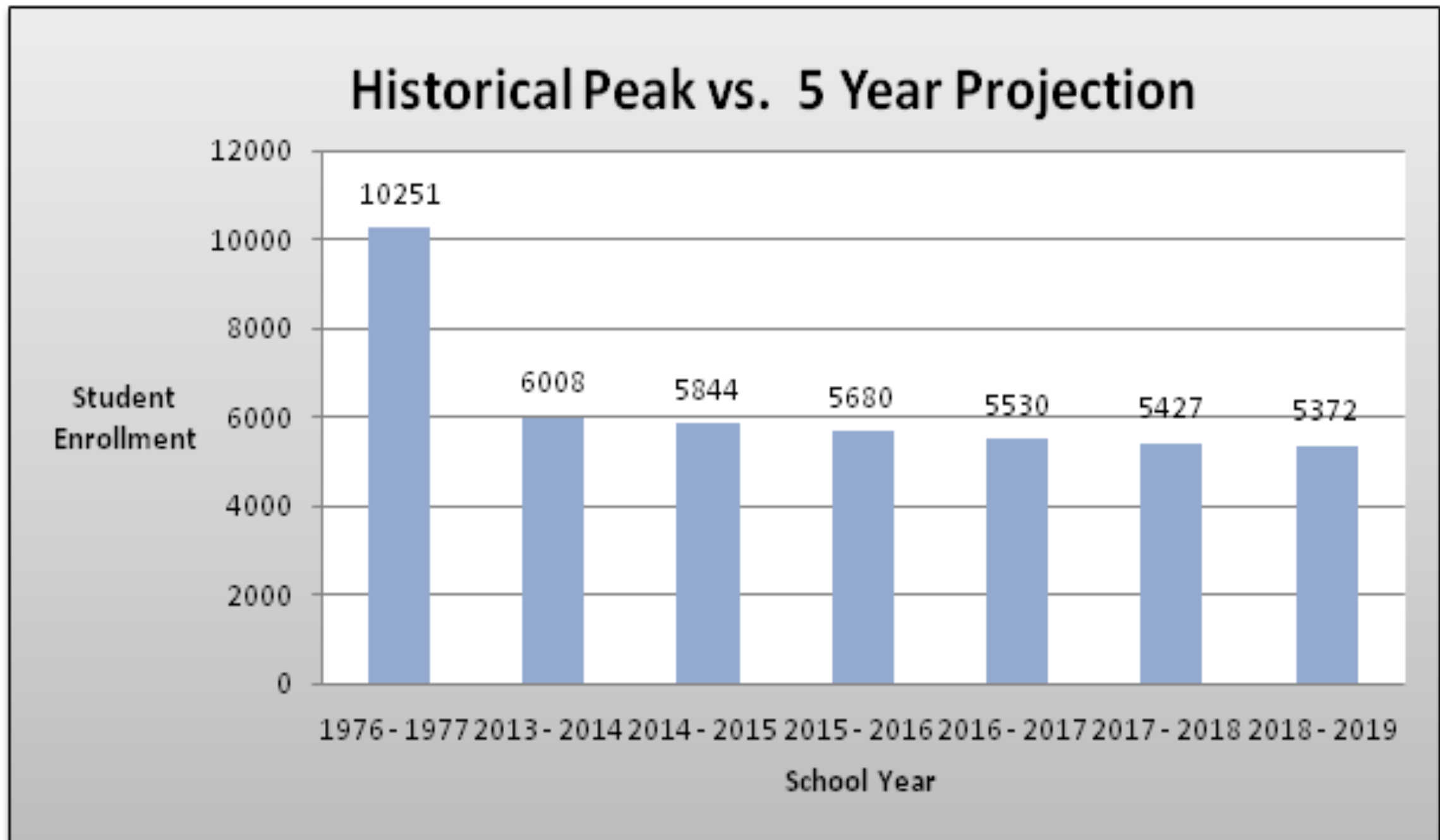
- No predicted decline in enrollment over next 5 years
- Not marketable

### **Reasons against closing Wenonah:**

- Shares property with the facilities buildings

# Option 4

Option 4  
Close 3 Elementary Schools – Re-district



**Note:**1976-77 was before the Individuals with Disabilities Act which mandated services for classified special education students. These mandated services must be included in administrative planning.



Option 4  
Close 3 Elementary Schools – Re-district

**Several trends emerged within the 12 buildings such as:**

- Multiple empty rooms
- Rooms utilized for storage
  - Art supplies, Custodial storage, Book storage
- Dedicated full size classrooms
  - ESL, Remedial Reading and Math
  - Band & Orchestra
- Each building is utilizing unoccupied rooms for various other functions besides classroom instruction.

Option 4  
Close 3 Elementary Schools – Re-district

**Elementary School – Feeder System Analysis**

The analysis of this committee demonstrates that with more efficient room utilization of 9 Elementary School buildings the district would be in a position to consider the closing of 3 Elementary School Buildings such that no 2 schools would be in the same feeder pattern.

In addition the Sachem teacher–student ratio would be maintained.

Option 4  
Close 3 Elementary Schools – Re-district

Feeder Analysis

Feeder # 1 – Cayuga, Gatelot, Wenonah

- Student Enrollment = 1535
- Available Classrooms Across 3 Schools = 90
- Available Classrooms Across 2 Schools = 64
- Projected Student/Teacher Ratio – 24:1

Cayuga and Gatelot has the capacity to absorb the Wenonah capacity.

Feeder # 2 – Hiawatha, Nokomis, Grundy

- Student Enrollment = 1439
- Available Classrooms Across 3 Schools = 99
- Available Classrooms Across 2 Schools = 66
- Projected Student/Teacher Ratio – 22:1

Any of the 3 Schools in this Feeder can be considered for closure. From a geographical perspective the Hiawatha and Nokomis buildings should be considered for closure.



## Option 4

### Close 3 Elementary Schools – Re-district

#### Feeder # 3 – Merrimac, Tamarac, Waverly

- Student Enrollment = 1543
- Available Classrooms Across 3 Schools = 95
- Available Classrooms Across 2 Schools = 65
- Projected Student/Teacher Ratio – 24:1

In Feeder # 3 Merrimac and Waverly appear to be candidates for closure however with the potential for additional students due to the development of Islip Pines and the potential re-districting of the Summerfield Community this Feeder should remain status quo.

#### Feeder # 4 – Chippewa, Lynwood, Tecumseh

- Student Enrollment = 1327
- Available Classrooms Across 3 Schools = 90
- Available Classrooms Across 2 Schools = 60
- Projected Student/Teacher Ratio – 22:1

Any of the 3 Schools in this Feeder can be considered for closure. From a geographical perspective the Lynwood and Tecumseh buildings should be considered for closure.

## Option 4

### Close 3 Elementary Schools – Re-district

#### **Reasons for closing 3 Elementary schools**

- Positive impact to the 2014 – 2015 budget
  - Savings\_ – \$437,679 per school \* 3 Schools = \$1,313,037 annual savings
- Teacher Student ratios would be maintained

#### **Reasons against closing 3 Elementary Schools:**

- Student routines and relationships will be disrupted
- Negative reaction from community, specifically families with school age children
  - Must be able to justify closing schools and not selling property
- Buildings would have more students than previous 5 years
- Sale of school building could take several years
- Empty buildings within residential communities
  - Potential decrease in home values and building vandalism
- Loss of Buildings
  - Community use of buildings –
  - Polling stations for elections

Option 4  
Close 3 Elementary Schools – Re-district

**Implications:**

- More focused scheduling process to ensure all classes have time for specials, lunch
- Unknown future population growth
- Redistrict attendance zones
  - Balance out the district
- Sachem Administration and Board of Education will lose credibility with community:
  - If buildings are closed and property is not sold
  - Salaries for Administration are not reviewed and/or evaluated for savings



# Options Involving Elementary Schools and Middle Schools

Option # 5  
Closing of 2 Middle Schools  
&  
Move 6<sup>th</sup> Grade to  
Elementary Schools

# Option #5 – Close 2 MS/6<sup>th</sup> to Elementary Schools

- Close 1 Middle School in each existing feeder pattern

# Option #5 – Close 2 MS/6<sup>th</sup> to Elementary Schools

- Pros :
  - Savings of approximately \$1.3 million



# Option #5 – Close 2 MS/6<sup>th</sup> to Elementary Schools

- Cons :
  - 2 Vacant Buildings
  - 2 Crowded Remaining Buildings
    - Middle School Enrollment does not see the decline until the 2018/2019 school year
  - Extra lunch period needed starting at 9:40AM
  - Possible Overcrowding of Classrooms
  - Approximately 1114 students in each school

# Option #5 – Close 2 MS/6<sup>th</sup> to Elementary Schools

- Cons continued:
  - Specialized education lost for 6<sup>th</sup> grade
  - 6<sup>th</sup> grade staff have been teaching a specialized area for over 10 years
  - Staff will need development training
  - Opportunities lost for 6<sup>th</sup> graders (drama, clubs, music, Arrowettes)

# Option #5 – Close 2 MS/6<sup>th</sup> to Elementary Schools

- Cons continued:
  - Special education students may lose their home base school due to the consolidation
  - Extra help lost for 6<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Redistricting is required

# Option #5 – Close 2 MS/6<sup>th</sup> to Elementary Schools

- Implications:
  - Moving UPK to vacant buildings does not maximize savings.
    - Custodial staff required will cut the number UPK slots from 252 to 230.
    - Bathrooms would need to be modified for younger children.
  - Extra help in Elementary School is offered once a week while it is everyday in MS.



# Option #5 – Close 2 MS/6<sup>th</sup> to Elementary Schools

- Implications continued:
  - Students will lose sports opportunities.
  - NYS curriculum is written for 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Elementary report cards are trimester based while MS is not.
  - Excluding small East End districts, there are only 2 Suffolk County School Districts with 6<sup>th</sup> grade in elementary schools.

# Option #5 – Close 2 MS/6<sup>th</sup> to Elementary Schools

- Questions to consider:
  - What will happen when the master schedule is complete over the summer and if it just might not work with 2 MS?
  - What about the emotional factor of the current 5<sup>th</sup> grade students who are currently preparing to move to MS?
  - How will 6<sup>th</sup> grade science and social studies be incorporated into the elementary day with limited space now?

Option # 6  
Closing of 4 Elementary  
Schools  
&  
Move 5<sup>th</sup> Grade to Middle  
Schools

# Option #6 – Close 4 ES/5<sup>th</sup> to Middle Schools

- Close 2 Elementary Schools in each existing feeder pattern



# Option #6 – Close 4 ES/5<sup>th</sup> to Middle Schools

- Pros :
  - Savings of approximately \$1.9 million
  - UPK can stay and could possibly be expanded
  - Increased opportunities for 5<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Specialized teachers for 5<sup>th</sup> graders

# Option #6 – Close 4 ES/5<sup>th</sup> to Middle Schools

- Cons :
  - 4 Vacant Buildings
  - Crowded Middle School with approximately 1117 students per school

# Option #6 – Close 4 ES/5<sup>th</sup> to Middle Schools

- Concerns:
  - Longer day for transportation for 5<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Maturity level of 5<sup>th</sup> graded may not be conducive to a middle school setting
  - After care issues for 5<sup>th</sup> grade

# Options 7 and 8

**Option 7: Close one Elementary School and one Middle School**

**Option 7a: Close two Elementary Schools and one Middle School**

It should be noted, with regard to Option 7, that we feel there exists the opportunity to further maximize cost reductions by expanding the Option 7 charter to include two Elementary schools. This ancillary option is referred to as Option 7a.

**(Original) Option 8: Close two Elementary Schools and two Middle Schools, and move 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Elementary**

It should be further noted, with regard to Option 8, it was found the original Option 8 to be disadvantageous to the District. As an overall Committee, we have modified the original Option 8 charter to read as follows:

**(Revised) Option 8: Close two Elementary Schools and, when appropriate, close two Middle Schools and move 6<sup>th</sup> grade to Elementary**

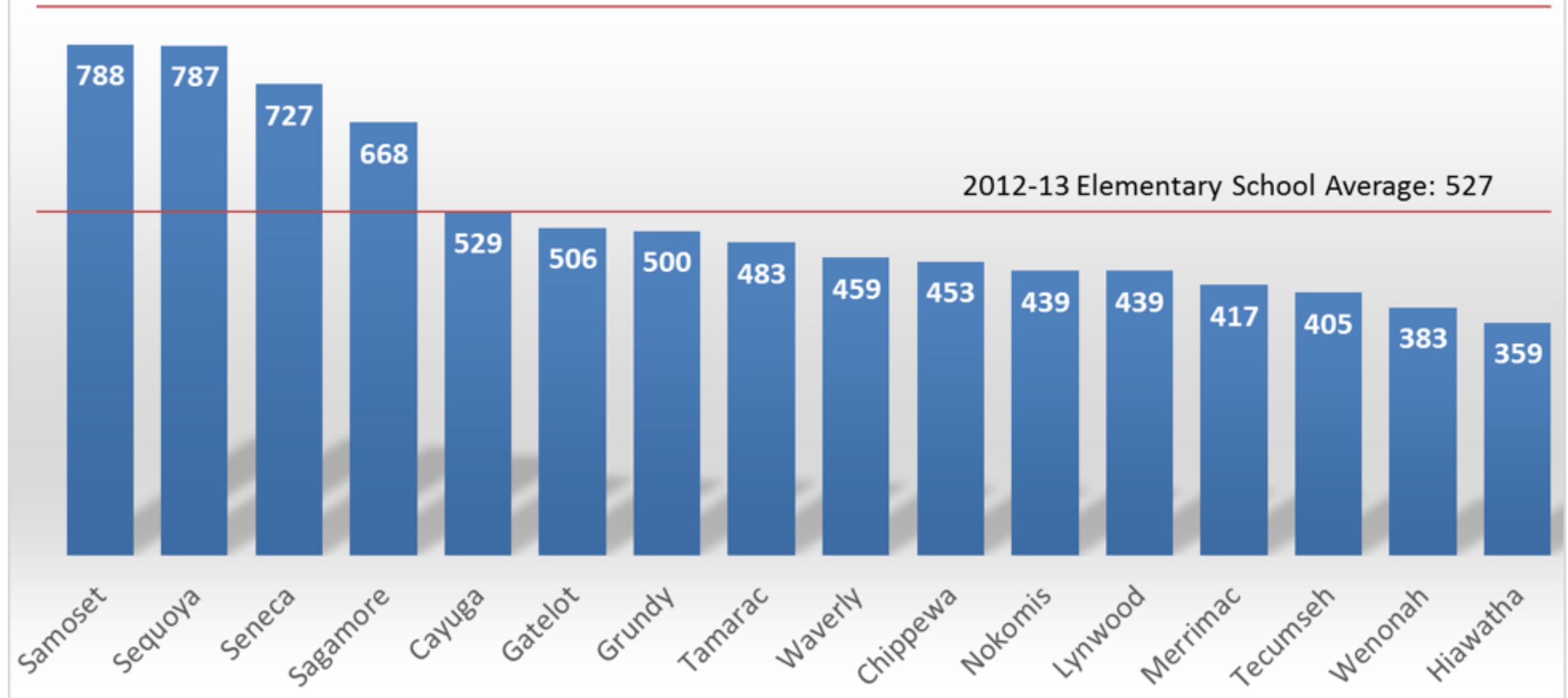
The following is a summary of Option #7 and #8. There are additional details and implications for these options included in the final Report.



# Assumption: Redistricting must affect entire District

2018-19 Student Population Projection

2012-13 Middle School Average: 907



We will have variable swings in Elementary populations ranging from 529 (today's average is 527) down to 359.

# Assumption:

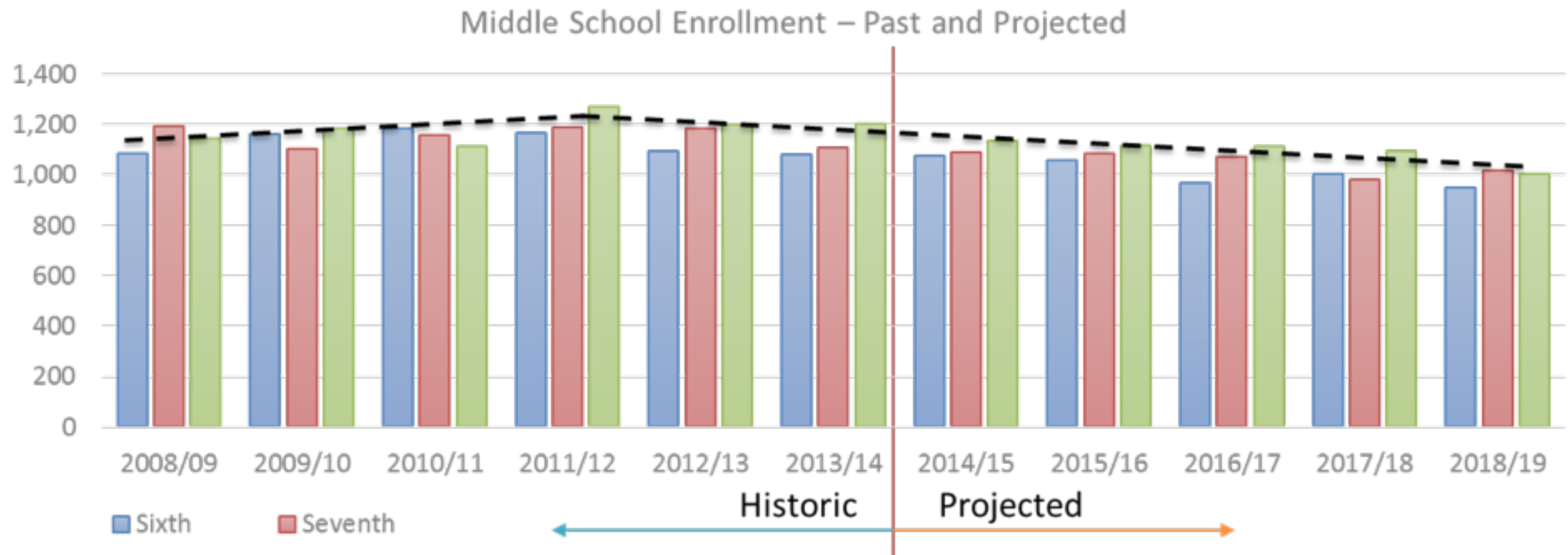
## Facilities Capacity Analysis

- Elementary Capacity (12 existing facilities)
  - 273 full-sized classrooms for instructional purposes (including Special Education) (2012–13)
  - 121 shared or special-use rooms
  - 394 total rooms or 32.8 (33) avg.
- Across 11 Elementary Schools (80% scheduling efficiency)
  - 321 rooms or 29.2 (30) average per facility
- Across 10 Elementary Schools (80% scheduling efficiency)
  - 321 rooms or 32.1 (33) average per facility

School	Full-Sized Classrooms
Cayuga Elementary	34
Chippewa Elementary	35
Gatelot Elementary	36
Grundy Elementary	39
Hiawatha Elementary	40
<i>Lynwood Avenue Elementary</i>	<i>28</i>
Merrimac Elementary	33
Nokomis Elementary	36
Tamarac Elementary	37
Tecumseh Elementary	37
Waverly Elementary	36
Wenonah Elementary	36

# Assumption:

## Facilities Capacity Analysis

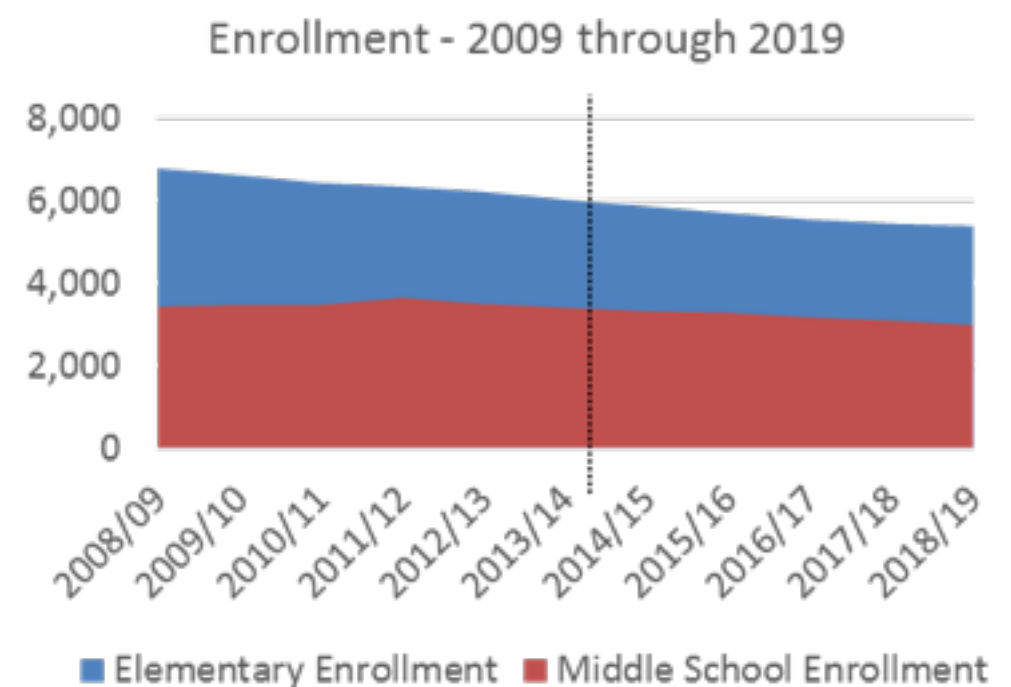


Historic decline in enrollment:

- 08–09 to 13–14: K–5 enrollment is down 760
- 08–09 to 13–14: 6–8 enrollment is down 27

Projected decline in enrollment:

- K–5 will decrease another 634
- 6–8 will decrease 422



## Option 7:

Close one Elementary and one Middle School and redistrict the entire District

Total cost savings is \$ 1,114,269

There are no optimal choices for schools to close; however, Seneca and Lynwood appear the most desirable.

### Reasons to support closing Seneca:

- One of the least full-size classroom capacities
- Sagamore cohabitates a campus with Chippewa
- Higher potential leasing prospectus
- Sequoya – only Middle School capable of housing a school within a school model

### Reasons to support not closing Seneca:

- Visible location on Main Street may impact the community

Possible:



Yes, this option is possible given the current information the team possesses.

Probable:



Yes, we feel this option would be a functional approach with limited implementation risks.

Desirable:



This option could be desirable assuming the District supports a School within a School model.



In the absence of the above, this option would not be desirable given the need to split a Middle School.

### Reasons to support closing Lynwood:

- Lowest full-size instructional classroom capacity (28 vs. 33+ in other facilities)
- Away from main roads

### Reasons to support not closing Lynwood:

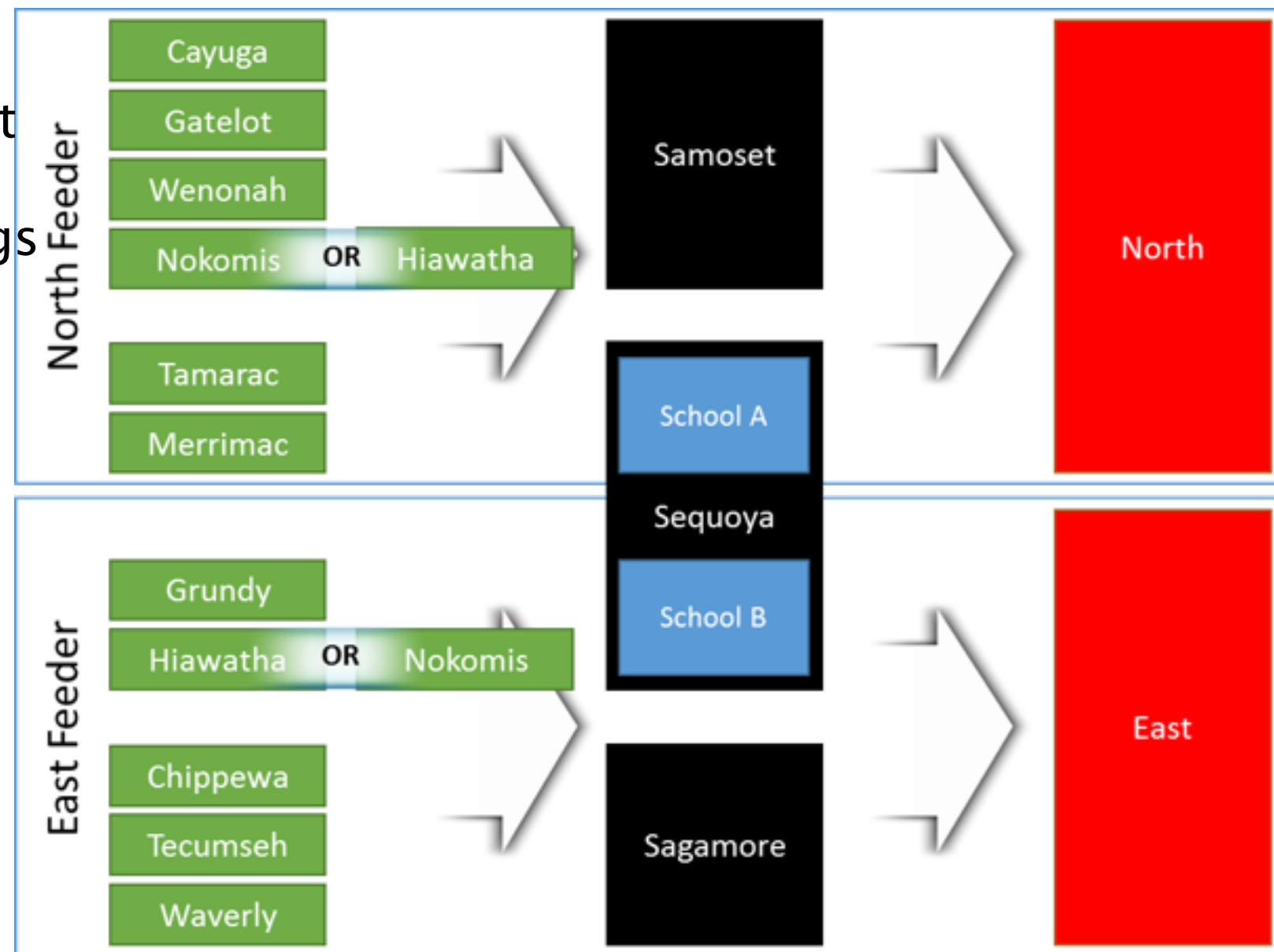
- Working towards obtaining the Covey Lighthouse School certification
- Security may be an issue

## Option 7:

Close one Elementary and one Middle School and redistrict the entire District

Reasons to pursue this option:

- This option does not change Sachem's current educational structure of K–5 and 6–8.
- We are easily able to accommodate the necessary full-sized classrooms in other buildings.
  - There are 10 UPK rooms and 16 empty classrooms district wide.
- Redistricting the entire district would bring the number of students in these two buildings down in line with the rest of the district.





## **Option 7:**

Close one Elementary and one Middle School and redistrict the entire District

Reasons to not pursue this option:

- Splitting one Middle School is, by far, the most difficult part of this option.
  - This would require the remaining middle schools to support an average student population of 1,101 (split over the three grade levels).
  - This could impact availability of programs to students, such as honors programs, groups and clubs, and sports.
  - This may require additional shared services sections such as lunch.
  - By reducing the number of Middle Schools from four to three, District programs such as athletics and similar may be impacted.
  - Splitting a Middle School may have impact to affected students and their families.

## Option 7a:

Close two Elementary Schools and one Middle School and redistrict the entire District

Total cost savings is \$ 1,551,948

There are no optimal choices for schools to close; however, for the second Elementary School, Nokomis appears the

Possible:



Yes, this option is possible given the current information the team possesses.

Probable:



Yes, we feel this option would be a functional approach with limited implementation risks.

Desirable:



This option could be desirable assuming the District supports a School within a School model.



In the absence of the above, this option would not be desirable given the need to split a Middle School.

### Reasons to support closing Nokomis:

- One of the lowest populations in its geographic proximity
- Population can be absorbed by the surrounding schools
- Central location may benefit use of facility for shared services (e.g. expanded UPK)

### Reasons to support not closing Nokomis

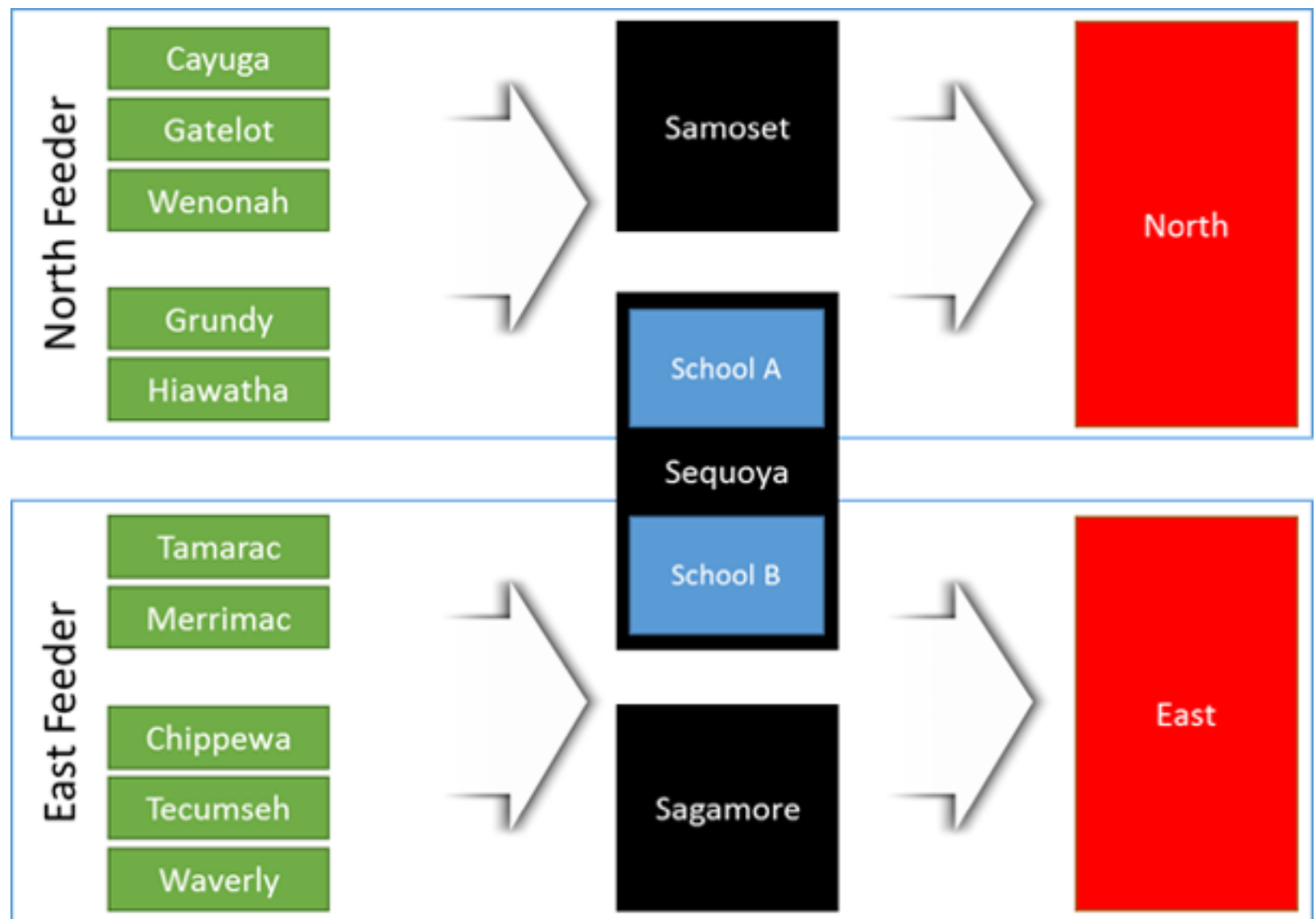
- Visible location opposite the Library may impact the community

## Option 7a:

Close two Elementary and one Middle School and redistrict the entire District

Reasons to pursue this option:

- Those listed for Option 7 and,
- Closing an additional School (beyond Lynwood) in the North feeder system balances feeder system
- Additional cost saving for the District.



## Option 8:

Close two Elementary and (when appropriate) two Middle Schools, move 6th grade to Elementary and redistrict entire District

Total cost savings is \$ 2,228,538

There are no optimal choices for schools to close; however, Seneca and Sagamore (Middle) and Lynwood and Nokomis (Elementary) appear the most

### Reasons to support closing

#### Seneca:

- One of the two lowest enrollments and facilities capacity
- Higher potential leasing prospectus

### Reasons to support closing

#### Sagamore:

- One of the two lowest enrollments and facilities capacity
- Other two middle schools have larger facilities
- Sequoia has outstanding bonds

Possible:



Yes, as revised, this option is possible given the current information we possess.

Probable:



Yes, as revised, we feel this option would be a functional approach with limited implementation risks.

Desirable:



As revised, we feel this option represents the best alternative for the Board considering the overall savings and the fact the delay in Middle School closings allow time for preparation. We denote the “minus” sign only due to moving 6th grade to Elementary and the associated complexities



Should the District not implement the delay in Middle School closings, we would find this option both non-desirable as well as not probable.

### Reasons to support closing Lynwood:

- Lowest full-size instructional classroom capacity
- Geographic location (away from main roads)

### Reasons to support closing Nokomis:

- One of the lowest populations in its geographic region
- Potential community utilization – Universal PK, etc.

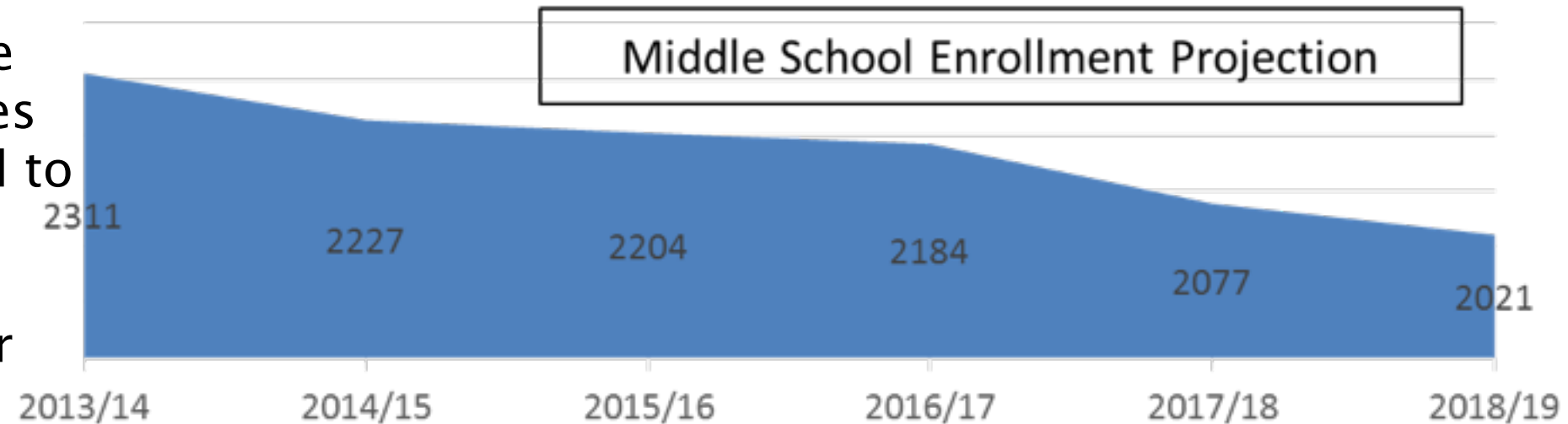
## Option 8:

Close two Elementary and (when appropriate) two Middle Schools, move 6th grade to Elementary and redistrict entire District

Delaying the closing of the two Middle Schools reduces number of students added to the receiving schools.

Delaying closing until later years has the following sliding benefit (assuming 6th moves to elementary):

- 2016/17: Add'l 220 students per school drops to +156 per school
- 2017/18: Add'l 220 students per school drops to +103 per school
- 2018/19: Add'l 220 students per school drops to +75 per school





## **Option 8:**

Close two Elementary and (when appropriate) two Middle Schools, move 6th grade to Elementary and redistrict entire District

There are approaches which can be taken to minimize the impact of 6<sup>th</sup> grade transitioning to Elementary:

- Introduce of modified block scheduling, allowing 6<sup>th</sup> graders to still cycle through core curriculum classes but without the full day transition found in Middle School.
- Use mandated staff instructional days to start transitioning 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers into an Elementary setting.
- Plan, with the community, the transition. Kindergartners today would be in 4<sup>th</sup> grade when the change occurs.

## **Option 8:**

Close two Elementary and (when appropriate) two Middle Schools, move 6th grade to Elementary and redistrict entire District

### Reasons to pursue this option:

- This option would lower the overall risk presented by the immediate closing related to the “optimal” master scheduling.
- Advanced notice of planned closings would allow:
  - mimicking a middle school environment with reduced elementary population and a drop of students in 6th grade.
  - for minimal impact to district families.
  - the District time to properly train and prepare 6th grade staff to transition to elementary.
  - families with special needs or ‘pull-out’ students to receive an additional year of more focused assistance prior to Middle School.
- Phased closing of 2 Elementary and 2 Middle School facilities provides:
  - the District with one of the highest overall savings potential;
  - for a very low negative impact to academic and student experience.
- After-care is available in Elementary but not Middle School – this would benefit 6th grade working parents (additionally – increased revenue source).
- Students would be more mature and socially ready for middle school.

## **Option 8:**

Close two Elementary and (when appropriate) two Middle Schools, move 6th grade to Elementary and redistrict entire District

### **Reasons to not pursue this option:**

- Potential loss of opportunities for students in sports, drama, performing groups and Arrowettes.
- Concerns with moving 6th grade back to the elementary schools:
  - Every subject is taught every day in the current 6th grade setting.
  - 6th grade teachers:
    - have become specialists in a subject area, and the 6th grade students have benefited from dedicated subject area teachers.
    - would require training to be brought up to speed in all subject areas.
    - work closely with the department chair, and 7th and 8th grade teachers to best prepare students for what comes next.
  - 6th graders develop organizational and time management skills, timed test taking, and how to deal with expectations of many different teachers prior to entering 7th grade.
  - There are no guidance counselors in the elementary schools; Elementary Schools contain a social worker and psychologist who may be able to provide services if necessary.
  - Currently, 6th graders have late buses to support after school extra help and activities.
- The following items may not be available if the 6th grade is moved to the elementary schools:
  - Online grade books – Elementary school teachers do not maintain grade books on the parent portal.
  - Quarterly exams, midterms and finals – Elementary Schools are on trimesters; Middle Schools are on quarters.

THE COMMITTEE RESPECTFULLY  
REQUESTS THAT THE WRITTEN  
REPORT AND THIS PRESENTATION  
BE MADE AVAILABLE TO DISTRICT  
RESIDENTS ON THE WEBSITE.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Study Committee wishes to thank the Board of Education for providing this opportunity. We also wish to express our gratitude to the Sachem Administration for its openness and responsiveness to our requests.



WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO  
ENTERTAIN ANY QUESTIONS FROM  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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WE HAVE AGREED THAT THE INDIVIDUAL  
PRESENTERS WILL FIELD AND TRY TO  
ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AND CALL UPON  
THEIR RESPECTIVE TEAM MEMBERS AS  
NEEDED.

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IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF YOU COULD  
REFERENCE THE OPTION # AND SLIDE# IN  
YOUR QUESTIONS