

Five-Year Niskayuna School District Student Enrollment Projections

2006-2011

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Introduction

A previous comprehensive student enrollment projection was completed internally in August, 2004, projecting through 2009. The methodology incorporated a combination of the common "*cohort survival*" method coupled with projections of new housing developments and subsequent student "yields" from each new home start. **The cohort survival method is a retrospective statistical analysis that projects forward based upon previous enrollment trends.** When a school district experiences rapid growth or new housing development, this method tends to not fully capture the increase in students attending the schools.

Examining and attempting to capture new housing developments and the resulting student yields has certain risks. It is extremely difficult to predict when a prospective development will actually be built. The prospective developers may take months or many years to receive all approvals from the various municipalities. After roadways and utilities are in, the pace of development is based upon the housing market, financing, the economy, etc. Further, *predicting the yield is also difficult* even when using historical data.

Utilizing projected developments is risky but failing to anticipate for this growth will cause future problems – especially if a district is planning for a new capital project including building additional classrooms.

Regardless of the methodology employed, **enrollment projections are simply an educated forecast.** The variables that mitigate accuracy include: a) changes in housing costs or interest rates; b) large scale employment shifts or company relocations; c) perceived quality of the schools; d) the changing tax structure of the area; e) the cost of the homes and the resulting size of the families that either purchase or build new homes; f) the area, state and national economies; g) changes in the birth rate; h) local or national disasters; i) locations and increase of charter schools and other non-public schools; and a host of other variables.

Methodology Used

On a conservative basis, we have *utilized the cohort survival method* to project enrollment – a five year historical trend. We have also listed other projected developments that could impact the future student enrollments. This method accounts for some of the projected growth since the Niskayuna school district has been experiencing development for some time.

Elementary Enrollment

Between 2001 and 2011 (ten years)

- An increase of more than 180 students
- The Kindergarten class of 2003-04 is a "bubble" and will be the largest class through the school system
- Grades K-4 all increased approximately by 20-40 students each
- High "water marks" for each school would be: Birchwood (343); Craig (455); Glenclyff (315); Hillside (383); and Rosendale (446)
- Beginning in 2006-07, there could be classroom shortages likely beginning in Craig and Glenclyff (utilizing current class size guidelines)
- Beginning in 2007-08, there could be a classroom shortage in Rosendale
- In 2008-09, the remaining two elementary schools (Hillside and Birchwood) could face a similar room shortage
- At least two additional classrooms are needed in each building to accommodate enrollment growth under the mid-point class size guideline (a total of ten)
- Under the current class size guideline, you would only reduce the classroom needs by approximately two rooms total
- By 2009-2010, utilizing the mid-point class size guideline of (21 for grades K-1; 24 for grades 2-3; and 26 for grades 4-5) would require four additional sections at the elementary (from 85 to 89);
- In order to plan for a shortage of classrooms on the short term, the district could do a combination of: a) plan for more combination classes; b) increase class sizes over current numbers; c) transport students away from the home school to where there is room; d) conduct classes on stages, basements, closets, and hallways
- In order to plan for a shortage of classrooms on the long term, the district, in addition to the steps listed above, could: a) provide art and music in the regular classroom; b) divide part of the gyms into additional classrooms; c) re-draw elementary attendance boundaries and d) purchase portable classrooms.

Middle School Enrollment

- Experience stable enrollment from 2001-2011, with a range of 1,000 to 1,088 students
- "High water marks" or peak attendance during the period will be 488 students at Van Antwerp in 2009-10 and 600 students at Iroquois in 2010-11

- Current classroom space should be able to accommodate student enrollment through 2011 – unanticipated space needs could be accommodated through use of district office space or current space leased to other agencies

High School Enrollment

- Peak attendance (1,471) occurred in 2004-05 (over the 2001-2011 period)
- High school enrollment will gradually fall to 1,403 by 2010-11
- The addition of six regular classrooms, 1 special education room and 1 science room should address the schedule capacity issue of 89% (recommended to be at 80% usage)
- Graduating classes will range between 329 and 372 through 2011
- Additional enrollment increases could be addressed through post/pre block or evening or distance learning course offerings

Overall Enrollment

- During the period 2001-2011, total enrollment will increase by 225 students
- Total enrollment will increase every year through 2011
- Total enrollment by 2011 will be approximately 4,400
- The average annual increase of 22-23 students although not marked annually, has an aggregative impact over ten years