

**A Feasibility Study on Reconfiguring the
Somers Point School District**

by

**Statistical Forecasting LLC,
Virgil Johnson Ed.D., and
James L. Kirtland CPA_{OH}**

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I. INTRODUCTION

For years the Board of Education of Somers Point has considered whether its current K-8 grade configuration provides the most educationally effective and cost efficient academic environment for the students of Somers Point. Currently, and for some time, it has educated its students in grades Kindergarten through six in two separate schools only to have them come together for grades seven and eight.

The Somers Point Board retained the following independent experts to analyze various possible grade configurations, to prepare a feasibility study outlining the educational and financial impact of such configurations, and to recommend the most academically and fiscally sound grade configuration for the district: Dr. Richard S. Grip of Statistical Forecasting LLC was primarily responsible for the demographics and enrollment projections; Dr. Virgil Johnson, Ed.D., retired school administrator, was primarily responsible for the educational configurations and impacts; and James L. Kirtland, a retired CPA, was primarily responsible for the financial analysis.

These experts interviewed the Superintendent of the Somers Point School District along with the Business Administrator and Supervisor of Curriculum. They also visited all three of the district's schools where discussions were held with the Principals, Assistant Principals, Supervisors, the Somers Point Education Association as well as other district faculty and staff.

This report analyzes the educational, financial, and facility impacts of several different grade-level configurations, including the following: closing the New York Avenue School and moving all Pre-K classes to either the Dawes Avenue School or the Jordan Road School; maintaining the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring the Dawes Avenue School and the Jordan Road School as follows: Dawes K-4 and Jordan Road 5-8; Dawes K-3 and Jordan Road 4-8; or Dawes K-2 and Jordan Road 3-8.

Following an extensive analysis, the experts conclude that the most academically and fiscally sound grade-level configuration is one in which all K-3 grade students are educated at the Dawes Avenue School and all 4-8 grade students are educated at the Jordan Road School. This will result in the following district reconfiguration:

Jordan Road School – Grades 4-8
 Dawes Avenue School – Grades K-3
 New York Avenue School – Pre-K and administration

Educationally, given the size of the district, the most appropriate grade configuration is one in which all students in a given grade are educated in the same building. This configuration is the most feasible from a facilities standpoint, without the need for significant and potentially expensive construction. From a financial perspective, there are no reasons to not consider moving forward with the reconfiguration in the district.

For the reasons set forth more fully in the pages below, the experts conclude that the proposed changes should be encouraged.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A. Community Description - City of Somers Point

The City of Somers Point (“Somers Point”) is located in Atlantic County and contains a land area of approximately 4.03 square miles, with an additional 1.13 square miles of water area. Historical and projected populations for Somers Point from 1940 to 2040 are shown in Table 1. In the last Census conducted in 2010, Somers Point had 10,795 residents, which is 2,678.7 persons per square mile. Children attend the Somers Point School District for grades PK-8 and then attend Mainland Regional High School for grades 9-12 in Linwood, New Jersey.

Somers Point experienced its greatest growth in the 1950s and 1960s when the population more than tripled over a twenty-year period. Since peaking at 11,614 persons in 2000, the population declined to 10,795 in 2010, which is a loss of 819 persons (-7.1%). While not shown in the table, the Census Bureau has estimated the Somers Point population to be 10,688 in 2015, which is a decline of approximately 100 persons from the 2010 count. Estimates are computed using the decennial census base counts, number of births and deaths in a community, and migration data (both domestic and international).

Population projections for 2040 were prepared by the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (“SJTPO”). Between 2010 and 2040, Somers Point is projected to have a small increase in its population, gaining 259 persons over a thirty-year period.

Table 1
Historical and Projected Populations for the City of Somers Point
1940-2040

Year	Population	Percent Change
Historical¹		
1940	1,992	N/A
1950	2,480	+24.5%
1960	4,504	+81.6%
1970	7,919	+75.8%
1980	10,330	+30.4%
1990	11,216	+8.6%
2000	11,614	+3.5%
2010	10,795	-7.1%
Projected²		
2040	11,054	+2.4%

Sources: ¹United States Census Bureau.

²South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, *Regional Transportation Plan 2040, Technical Appendix #1: Demographic Forecast*, July 2012.

B. Selected Demographic Characteristics

In Table 2, selected demographic characteristics of Somers Point are compared from the 2000 Census, the 2010-2014 American Community Survey (“ACS”), and the 2010 Census. While some Census variables account for everyone in a 100% population count (e.g., age, race, and total housing units), other variables are collected from a sample (e.g., median family income, educational attainment, poverty status, etc.). The ACS replaced the long form of the Census, last administered in 2000 to approximately 16% of the population in the United States. For smaller municipalities such as Somers Point, ACS data represent a sample collected over a five-year time period, where the estimates represent the average characteristics between January 2010 and December 2014. This information does not represent a single point in time like the long form of earlier Censuses. The five-year ACS contains 1% annual samples from all households and persons from 2010 to 2014, resulting in a 5% sample of the population. Due to the small sample size, the sampling error is quite large, which increases the degree of uncertainty of the estimated values. Therefore, the forthcoming ACS data should be interpreted with caution.

Regarding race, Somers Point was 78.7% White in 2010, which is a decline of 7.0 percentage points from the 85.7% that existed in 2000. The second-largest race in 2010 was Black/African American representing 10.7% of the population, which is a gain of 3.7 percentage points from 2000. The Census Bureau does not consider Hispanic as a separate race; rather it identifies the percentage of people having Hispanic origin. Hispanics in the Census population can be part of the White, Black, Asian, or any of the other race categories. The concentration of persons having Hispanic origin increased from 6.0% in 2000 to 9.5% in 2010.

With respect to nativity, 10.0% of Somers Point residents were foreign-born in the 2010-14 ACS, which is a 1.8 percentage point increase from 2000. As a point of comparison, New Jersey’s foreign-born resident percentage was 21.5% in the 2010-14 ACS. While not shown in the table, place of birth, which serves as a proxy for country of origin, indicates that Mexico was the largest source of immigrants in 2010, accounting for 23.5% of the foreign-born population.

The median age in Somers Point increased from 38.4 years in 2000 to 41.4 years in 2010, while the percentage of people under the age of 18 decreased from 23.4% to 21.3%.

Regarding educational attainment for adults aged 25 and over, 23.0% of the population had a bachelor’s degree or higher in the 2010-14 ACS, which is a 3.2 percentage point increase from the 19.8% that existed in 2000. During this time period, the percentage of persons possessing a graduate degree increased from 5.1% to 6.7%.

Median family income increased from \$51,868 in 2000 to \$63,988 in the 2010-14 ACS, a 23.4% increase. During this time period, the percentage of children under the age of 18 in poverty increased significantly from 8.3% to 26.3%.

Table 2
Selected Demographic Characteristics

Race Origin	City of Somers Point	
	2000	2010-2014, 2010 ²
White	85.7%	78.7%
Black/African American	7.0%	10.7%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.2%	0.3%
Asian	3.2%	3.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%
Other Race	2.2%	4.2%
Two or more Races	1.6%	3.0%
Total	100.0%¹	100.0%¹
Hispanic Origin	6.0%	9.5%
Age		
Under 18	23.4%	21.3%
18-64	61.5%	64.1%
65 and over	15.1%	14.6%
Median age (years)	38.4	41.4
Nativity		
Foreign-Born	8.2%	10.0%
Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's degree or higher	19.8%	23.0%
Graduate or professional degree	5.1%	6.7%
Income		
Median family income	\$51,868	63,988
Percentage of Persons in Poverty under age 18	8.3%	26.3%
Housing Units		
Total number	5,402	5,556
Occupied units	4,920 (91.1%)	4,655 (83.8%)
Vacant units	482 (8.9%)	901 (16.2%)
Vacant housing for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	318 (5.9%)	528 (9.5%)
Owner-occupied units	2,824 (57.4%)	2,627 (56.4%)
Renter-occupied units	2,096 (42.6%)	2,028 (43.6%)
Median value of an owner-occupied unit	\$122,000	\$226,500

Sources: American Community Survey (2010-2014), United States Census Bureau (2000 and 2010).

Notes: ¹Data may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding.

²Data shaded orange are from 2010 Census while data shaded blue are from 2010-14 American Community Survey.

Regarding housing, there were 5,556 housing units in Somers Point in 2010, which is an increase of 154 units (+2.9%) from 2000. During this time period, the occupancy rate declined slightly from 91.1% to 83.8%. The low occupancy rates are primarily due to second-home owners, as sections of Somers Point have access to the Great Egg Harbor Bay. In the last decade, there are fewer primary residents in Somers Point as the percentage of second-home owners continues to grow. The majority of housing units in Somers Point are owner-occupied as 56.4% consisted of owners in 2010, which is a 1.0 percentage point decline from the 57.4% that existed in 2000. Nearly 44% percent of the housing units in 2010 were occupied by renters. The median home price of an owner-occupied unit in the 2010-14 ACS was \$226,500, which is an 85.7% increase from the value reported in 2000 (\$122,000).

C. District Overview

Children from Somers Point attend the Somers Point School District for grades PK-8. As currently configured, grade-level and special education pre-kindergarten students attend the New York Avenue School (“New York Avenue”). The Dawes Avenue Elementary School (“Dawes Avenue”) educates children in grades K-6 while the Jordan Road Elementary School (“Jordan Road”) serves grades K-8.

According to the district’s Long Range Facilities Plan (“LRFP”), the Somers Point School District, which is shown in Figure 1, has a capacity of 1,308 using District Practices methodology and 1,154 using Facilities Efficiency Standards (“FES”) methodology. The District Practices methodology considers how the building is utilized by the school district and its targeted student-teacher ratios. This method does not take into account square footage allowances per student, which is the FES methodology. Capacity using FES methodology is often lower than when using District Practices methodology, but is used by the State for funding purposes. Since buildings cannot be 100% utilized, due to scheduling conflicts, most districts employ either an 85% or 90% utilization factor to determine school capacity. A comparison of each school’s capacity to current and projected enrollments is provided later in the report.

Figure 1
School Locations



D. Explanation of the Cohort-Survival Ratio Method

In this study, historical enrollments from 2011-12 through 2016-17 were obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education (“NJDOE”) and the Somers Point School District and were used to project enrollments for five years into the future using the Cohort-Survival Ratio method (“CSR”).

The CSR method has been approved by the NJDOE to project public school enrollments. In this method, a survival ratio is computed for each grade, which essentially compares the number of students in a particular grade to the number of students in the previous grade during the previous year. The survival ratio indicates whether the enrollment is stable, increasing, or decreasing. A survival ratio of one indicates stable enrollment, less than one indicates declining enrollment, and greater than one indicates increasing enrollment. If, for example, a school district had 100 4th graders and the next year only had 95 5th graders, the survival ratio would be 0.95.

The CSR method assumes that what happened in the past will also happen in the future. The CSR method is most appropriate for districts that have relatively stable increasing or decreasing trends without any major unpredictable fluctuations from year to year. In school districts encountering rapid growth not experienced historically (i.e., a change in the historical trend), the CSR method must be modified and supplemented with additional information.

In this study, survival ratios were calculated using historical data from the past six years. Due to the fluctuation in survival ratios from year to year, it is appropriate to calculate an average survival ratio for each grade progression, which is then used to calculate future grade enrollments.

E. Historical Enrollments

Historical PK-8 enrollments from 2011-12 through 2016-17 for the Somers Point School District are displayed in Table 3. Enrollment has been steadily declining in the district. In 2016-17, enrollment was 958 students, which is a loss of 137 students from 2011-12. Table 3 also shows computed average cohort survival ratios based on the last three years of historical data, which will be used to project future enrollment. While using five or six years of historical data is typically the standard, the last three years were used to capture the most recent trends in the district. It should be noted that of the nine average ratios, eight were below 1.000, indicating a general net outward migration in the district. The outward migration may be due to the closing of several casinos in Atlantic City in 2014, which has resulted in a loss of jobs in the area.

Table 3
Somers Point School District Historical Enrollments (PK-8)
2011-12 to 2016-17

Year ¹	PK RE ²	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	SE ³	PK-8 Total
2011-12	98	119	96	106	101	96	94	96	120	120	49	1,095
2012-13	83	126	117	105	101	97	95	104	91	120	46	1,085
2013-14	88	119	120	113	104	105	97	96	101	92	33	1,068
2014-15	89	112	99	106	105	99	96	87	89	105	29	1,016
2015-16	82	125	105	97	100	99	92	88	91	88	30	997
2016-17	80	95	113	100	81	93	93	86	92	90	35	958
Average 3-Year Ratios		0.7977 ⁴	0.9208	0.9661	0.8892	0.9364	0.9343	0.9257	1.0457	0.9889	0.0328 ⁵	

Notes: ¹Enrollment data were provided by New Jersey Department of Education (<http://www.nj.gov/njded/data/enr/>) and the Somers Point School District.

²Pre-kindergarten regular education enrollment.

³Ungraded special education students.

⁴Birth-to-kindergarten ratio based on birth data five years prior.

⁵Average proportion of special education students with respect to PK-8 subtotals.

F. Birth Data and Kindergarten Replacement

Birth data were needed to compute kindergarten enrollments, which were calculated as follows. Birth data, which were lagged five years behind their respective kindergarten classes, were used to calculate the survival ratio for each birth-to-kindergarten cohort. For instance, in 2011, there were 143 births in Somers Point. Five years later (the 2016-17 school year), 95 children enrolled in kindergarten, which is equal to a survival ratio of 0.6643 from birth to kindergarten. Birth counts and birth-to-kindergarten survival ratios are displayed in Table 4.

Values greater than 1.000 indicate that some children are born outside of a community's boundaries and are attending kindergarten in the school district five years later, i.e. an inward migration of children into the district. This type of inward migration is typical in school districts with excellent reputations, because the appeal of a good school district draws families into the community. Inward migration is also seen in communities where there are a large number of new housing starts, with families moving into the community having children of age to attend kindergarten. Birth-to-kindergarten survival ratios that are below 1.000 indicate that a number of children born within a community are not attending kindergarten in the school district five years later. This is common in communities where a high proportion of children attend private, parochial, or out-of-district special education facilities, or where there is a net migration of families moving out of the community. It is also common in school districts that have a half-day kindergarten program where parents choose to send their children to a private full-day kindergarten. The Somers Point School District implemented a full-day kindergarten program in 2011-12, which led to an increase in its birth-to-kindergarten survival ratio from 0.6125 in 2010-11 to 0.9597 in 2011-12.

Birth data were geocoded by the New Jersey Center for Health Statistics ("NJCHS") for 2005-2014 by assigning geographic coordinates to a birth mother based on her street address. Births for 2015 and 2016 are not yet available. There does not appear to be a clearly defined trend, either increasing or decreasing, in the Somers Point birth rate, as the number of births has ranged from 124 to 160 births per year in the last decade.

Table 4
Birth Rates and Historical Birth-to-Kindergarten Survival Ratios
in the Somers Point School District

Birth Year¹	Number of Births Somers Point	Kindergarten Students Five Years Later	Birth-to-Kindergarten Survival Ratio
2005	160	98	0.6125
2006	124	119	0.9597
2007	129	126	0.9767
2008	147	119	0.8095
2009	146	112	0.7671
2010	130	125	0.9615
2011	143	95	0.6643
2012	147	N/A	N/A
2013	132	N/A	N/A
2014	146	N/A	N/A

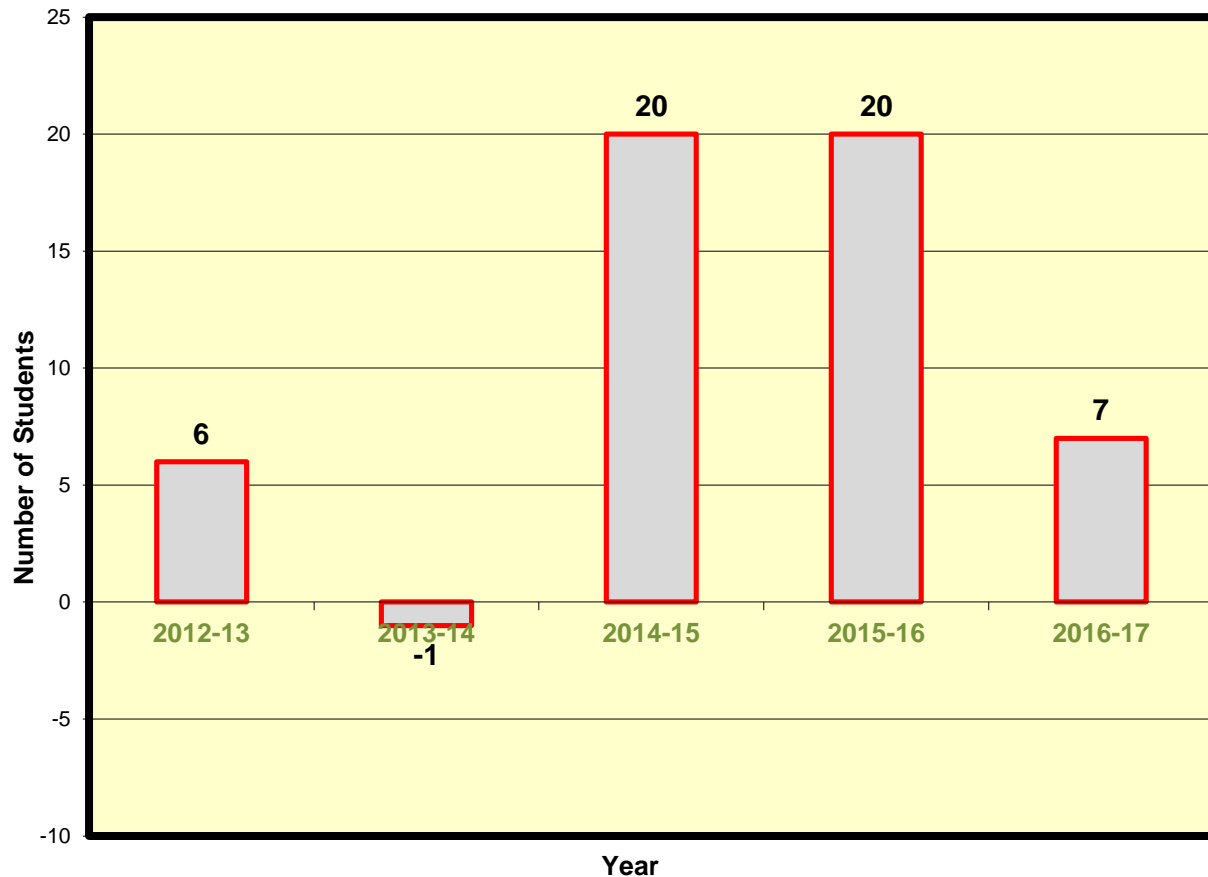
Notes: ¹Birth data were provided by the New Jersey Center for Health Statistics for 2005-2014.

Birth-to-kindergarten survival ratios have been below 1.000 in each of the last seven years. Excluding the 2010-11 year when a half-day kindergarten program was in place, survival ratios have ranged from a low of 0.6643 to a high of 0.9767, which is very inconsistent.

Since the NJCHS did not have geocoded birth data for 2015 and 2016, estimates were formulated by computing a five-year rolling average based on historical birth data. Birth rates were needed for 2015 and 2016 since these cohorts will become the kindergarten classes of 2020 and 2021.

Kindergarten replacements were also analyzed, which is the numerical difference between the number of graduating 8th graders and the number of entering kindergarten students. The district has experienced positive kindergarten replacement in four of the last five years. Positive kindergarten replacement occurs when the number of graduating 8th grade students is less than the number of kindergarten students entering the district in the next year. Negative kindergarten replacement occurs when the number of graduating 8th grade students is larger than the number of kindergarten students replacing them in the next year. As shown in Figure 2, in the last five years, positive kindergarten replacement has ranged from 6 to 20 students per year. In 2016-17, there was a gain of seven (7) students due to kindergarten replacement, as 88 eighth graders graduated in 2015-16 and were replaced by 95 kindergarten students in 2016-17.

Figure 2
Historical Kindergarten Replacement



G. Effects of Housing Growth

Ms. Linda Loughlin, Technical Assistant in the Somers Point Construction Office, provided information regarding current and future development in the community. Currently, there are no residential developments under construction, nor are there applications for residential subdivisions before the planning board as the community is essentially built out.

Regarding affordable housing, the Council on Affordable Housing (“COAH”) was eliminated by Governor Chris Christie in August 2011, when he transferred all functions, powers, duties, and personnel of COAH to the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. However, in March 2012, a New Jersey appeals court overturned the Governor’s efforts to abolish the agency. Recently, in March 2015, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the trial courts, not the state government, are responsible, on a case-by-case basis, to determine the amount of affordable housing communities must provide. Each community’s 3rd round, or projected growth share, is to be satisfied by 2018. The projected growth share is an estimate based on projected housing growth and employment in a community. Somers Point’s projected growth share is 51 units. It is unclear what impact the recent Supreme Court ruling may have on the number of units a community is required to build.

In Table 5, the number of certificates of occupancy (“CO”) in Somers Point is shown from 2010 to 2015. During this timeframe, 11 COs were issued for single- or two-family homes while 12 were issued for either multi-family or mixed-use units for a total of 23 COs, which is an average of approximately four new units per year. In the last two years, there were no newly constructed units in Somers Point.

Table 5
Number of Residential Certificates of Occupancy by Year

Year	City of Somers Point		
	1&2 Family	Multi-Family/ Mixed-Use	Total
2010	6	3	9
2011	3	9	12
2012	2	0	2
2013	6	0	6
2014	0	0	0
2015	0	0	0
Total	11	12	23

Source: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

H. Enrollment Projections

PK-8 enrollments were projected for each grade from the 2017-18 school year through the 2021-22 school year. Enrollments for self-contained special education classes were computed by calculating the historical proportions of special education students with respect to the historical general education subtotals and then multiplying by the future general education subtotals to estimate the future number of self-contained special education students.

As part of the School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (“SFRA”), all school districts in New Jersey are to provide expanded Abbott-quality pre-school programs for at-risk 3- and 4-year olds as outlined in *N.J.A.C. 6A:13A*. The State of New Jersey intends to provide aid for the full-day program based on projected enrollment. School districts categorized as District Factor Group¹ (“DFG”) A, B, and CD with a concentration of at-risk pupils equal to or greater than 40 percent, must offer a pre-school program to all pre-school aged children regardless of income, known as “Universal” pre-school. While the DFG rankings are no longer used, the number of pre-kindergarten students was determined by those rankings. For all other school districts, a pre-school program must be offered only to at-risk children, known as “Targeted” preschool. School districts were required to offer these programs to at least 90% of the eligible pre-school children by 2013-14. School districts may educate the pre-school children in-district, by outside providers, or through Head Start programs.

Due to budgetary constraints, the NJDOE postponed the roll-out of the program, which was scheduled for the 2009-10 school year. According to a recent conversation with Ms. Karin Garver, Educational Program Development Specialist in the NJDOE Early Childhood Education, there are no plans in the imminent future by the State Legislature to fund the program, which would prevent school districts from implementing the program. Since it is unclear if and when the program will be funded and subsequently mandated, the forthcoming enrollment projections do not include additional pre-kindergarten students from the SFRA. The pre-school program would have been rolled out over a five-year period according to the following schedule:

- At least 20% of the eligible pre-school universe in Year 1
- At least 35% of the universe in Year 2
- At least 50% of the universe in Year 3
- At least 65% of the universe in Year 4
- At least 90% of the universe in Year 5

The universe of pre-school children in “Universal” districts is computed by multiplying the 1st grade enrollment in 2007-08 by two. The universe of pre-school children in “Targeted” districts is computed by multiplying the 1st grade enrollment in 2007-08 by two and then multiplying by the percentage of students (K-12) having free or reduced lunch in the district. The Somers Point School District is a “Targeted” district since its DFG is “CD” with a concentration of at-risk pupils less than 40 percent. Table 6 shows the potential impact on the

¹ Introduced by the NJDOE in 1975, it provides a system of ranking school districts in the state by their socio-economic status. While the system is no longer used, the number of pre-kindergarten students was determined by the former DFG rankings.

school district if the program were mandated. As the table shows, there is the potential for 75 pre-kindergarten students as a result of the SFRA. Since it is unclear if and when the program will be funded and subsequently mandated, the forthcoming enrollment projections do not include additional pre-kindergarten students from the SFRA.

Table 6
Estimated Number of Eligible Pre-School Students
as Per School Funding Reform Act of 2008

School District	Free/Reduced Percentage 2007-08	DFG (2000)	Total eligible ¹	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Somers Point	39.52%	CD	75	15	26	38	49	68

Note: ¹Provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education.

Projected PK-8 enrollments for the Somers Point School District are shown in Table 7. Enrollment is projected to slowly decrease to 888 in 2021-22, which would be a decline of 70 students from the 2016-17 enrollment of 958.

Table 7
Somers Point Projected Grade PK-8 Enrollments
2017-18 to 2021-22

Year	PK RE	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	SE	PK-8 Total
2017-18	85	117	87	109	89	76	87	86	90	91	30	947
2018-19	85	105	108	84	97	83	71	81	90	89	29	922
2019-20	85	116	97	104	75	91	78	66	85	89	29	915
2020-21	85	111	107	94	92	70	85	72	69	84	28	897
2021-22	85	113	102	103	84	86	65	79	75	68	28	888

I. Projected Enrollments by Proposed Grade Configuration

In Table 8, projected enrollments are shown by the proposed grade configurations (PK, K-3, and 4-8) in the Somers Point School District. While no changes would be made to New York Avenue, the report recommends for the conversion of Dawes Avenue to a K-3 facility and the conversion of Jordan Road to house grades 4-8. Ungraded special education students were reassigned into each of the schools based on historical trends in each of the buildings.

At New York Avenue, pre-kindergarten enrollment is projected to be 89 students throughout the projection period. This includes both grade-level and special education pre-kindergarten students. The constant value is due to the method of projecting pre-kindergarten students, which was computed by an average of historical enrollment.

At Dawes Avenue, configured to grades K-3, enrollment is projected to be fairly stable, ranging from 405 to 416 students. In 2021-22, enrollment is projected to be 414 students.

For grades 4-8 at Jordan Road, enrollments are projected to slowly decline throughout the five-year projection period. In 2021-22, enrollment is projected to be 385 students.

Table 8
Projected Enrollments for Grades PK, K-3, and 4-8
2017-18 to 2021-22

Projected	PK (New York Avenue)	K-3 (Dawes Avenue)	4-8 (Jordan Road)
2017-18	89	415	443
2018-19	89	407	426
2019-20	89	405	421
2020-21	89	416	392
2021-22	89	414	385

J. Capacity Analysis

Table 9 shows the capacities of the schools in the Somers Point School District in comparison to the actual enrollments in 2016-17 in the existing configuration. The capacities of the buildings were also compared to the projected enrollments in 2021-22 in the new configuration, assuming that Dawes Avenue becomes a K-3 school and Jordan Road houses grades 4-8. Positive values indicate available extra seating while negative values indicate a shortage of seating, which is also known as “unhoused students.”

Seating surpluses exist in each of the district’s three schools as it is currently configured, with the greatest being at Jordan Road (+177). If the proposed reconfiguration were to occur, the number of surplus seats would increase at Jordan Road, as more students would attend Dawes Avenue. The increased number of students at Dawes Avenue would result in a reduction of the surplus seats in the school.

Table 9
Capacity Analysis

School	Capacity ¹	2016-17 Enrollment Existing Configuration	Difference	2021-22 Projected Enrollment Proposed Configuration	Difference
New York Avenue School (Grade PK)	149	65	+84	89	+60
Dawes Avenue Elementary School (Grades K-3)	437	348	+89	414	+23
Jordan Road Elementary School (Grades 4-8)	722	545	+177	385	+337

Note: ¹District Practices Capacity from Somers Point School District Long Range Facility Plan.

III. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

A. Introduction

From an educational standpoint, this study will focus on the possible reconfiguration of the Somers Point School District for the purpose of improving instruction as well as exploring the possibilities of savings for the taxpayers.

The Superintendent of the Somers Point School District along with the Business Administrator and Supervisor of Curriculum were interviewed. Visits were made to all three of the district's schools where discussions were held with the Principals, Assistant Principals, and Supervisors. Additionally, discussions were held with the Somers Point Education Association as well as district faculty and staff. In all cases, personnel from the school district were cooperative and helpful throughout this process. An opportunity was also provided for the public to meet with the educational consultants for the purpose of providing a forum for their input.

B. Overview of the Somers Point School District

The total student population for the 2016-17 school year is 958. The district provides a comprehensive educational program for its students ranging from basic subjects such as Math, Language Arts, and Foreign Languages to Special Education and Gifted Programs. Computer Science, Library Science, Art, and Music are also offered, as well as a Science Technology laboratory in both the Jordan Road School and the Dawes Avenue School. Disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary instructional programs are provided throughout the district.

Consistent with monitoring approval, the district has a five-year curriculum review plan, a technology plan, Multi-Year Equity Plans, comprehensive maintenance plans, special education plans/policies, and a number of other planning tools and instruments that align to various NJDOE models and/or expectations.

1. Overview of Schools

a) New York Avenue School

The New York Avenue School was constructed in 1914 with an addition in 1922 and a refurbishment in 2005. The school houses pre-Kindergarten classes which are full-day sessions, with approximately 72 students. The school also houses the Central Office, Business Office, Child Study Team, and the Community Recreation Office.

b) Jordan Road School

The Jordan Road School, constructed in 1966 with an addition in 1991, is a Kindergarten through 8th grade facility, which currently houses approximately 560 students.

c) **Dawes Avenue School**

The Dawes Avenue School is the newest school in the district being constructed in 1998. It is physically located on the other side of town from the Jordan Road School separated in part by Route 9, which runs through the district. The school currently houses Kindergarten through 6th grade with approximately 350 students.

2. **Assessment Data**

a) **2015 PARCC Outcomes**

PARCC Performance levels are based on the following assessment levels:

- Level 1 – Not yet meeting grade-level expectations
- Level 2 – Partially meeting grade-level expectations
- Level 3 – Approaching grade-level expectations
- Level 4 – Meeting grade-level expectations
- Level 5 – Exceeding grade-level expectations

Table 10
PARRC Performance Levels
Percent of Students Greater Than or Equal to Level 4
Language Arts

Grade	Jordan Road School	Dawes Avenue School	State
3	23%	27%	44%
4	20%	27%	51%
5	21%	43%	52%
6	41%	31%	49%
7	44%	N/A	52%
8	31%	N/A	52%

As indicated in Table 10, students in grades three through eight in the Jordan Road School and students in grades three through six in the Dawes Avenue School score below the state percentage at all grade levels in Language Arts. Likewise, as indicated in Table 11, students in grades three through eight in the Jordan Road School and students in grades three through six in the Dawes Avenue School score below the state percentage at all grade levels in Mathematics.

Table 11
PARRC Performance Levels
Percent of Students Greater Than or Equal to Level 4
Mathematics

Grade	Jordan Road School	Dawes Avenue School	State
3	25%	22%	45%
4	20%	22%	41%
5	12%	7%	41%
6	32%	20%	41%
7	24%	N/A	37%
8¹	8%	N/A	24%
Algebra I	32%	N/A	36%

Note: ¹Approximately 30,000 New Jersey students participated in the PARCC Algebra I assessment while in middle school. Thus, PARCC Math 8 outcomes are not representative of grade 8 performance as a whole.

A curricular advantage of reconfiguration for the district would be to have all classes of a given grade level in the same building in order to facilitate horizontal and vertical curriculum articulation. There is less likely an opportunity for one class to fall behind other classes in that type of configuration. Additionally, students with specific instructional weaknesses could be more effectively assigned to teachers with identified instructional strengths and abilities. Extracurricular activities could also be more effectively organized and supervised under these conditions.

C. K-8 Configuration Analyses

The critical issue presented by the Somers Point School District is whether a K-8 school building or separate elementary and middle school buildings provides for a better educational structure for the education of its students. The financial implications of such a change are important, but if a new structure will not be more educationally advantageous than the status quo, there is little impetus to make what no doubt will be a disruptive change. Therefore, it is first prudent to consider the scholarly research conducted regarding K-8 grade configuration.

“Research has not provided definitive answers to the myriad possible questions about grade span, but the questions have never gone away. There are questions which arise whenever school reform, increasing or declining enrollment, or financial considerations bring about a reorganization of existing schools, the building of new schools, or consolidations of districts.” (Paglin and Fager, 1997). Much of the research available has been done on rural or middle schools.

One of the reasons that so little research exists in the area is that there are so many variables when comparing one school configuration to another (economic aspects of the community, geographical location, quality of instruction along with quality of administration, type of curriculum used, etc.). With so many variables, researchers can draw on general

conclusions from their studies and comparisons; and not draw statistical results that can be substantial.

“Much of what has happened with regards to school grade structure can be attributed to the development of the middle school.” (Franklin & Glascock, 1996). The separation of students in grades 5 or 6 or 7 or 8 in middle schools is pursued and supported by some school districts because research strongly indicates that having a separate middle school better meets the developmental needs of adolescents. The developmental needs of young adolescents differ from those of elementary school children and older teenagers. This has been substantiated by numerous studies over the years (e.g., Howley (2002)). As a result, between 1967 and 2000, the number of separate middle schools increased by 35%. (National Center for Educational Statistics).

Researchers at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NOREL) looked at eight schools with seven different grade spans. They examined the history of each school’s decision on grade configuration along with observed advantages and disadvantages of each configuration and principals’ comments on the success of their programs. (Paglin and Fager, 1997). Based on this research, Paglin and Fager compiled a list of nine factors that school districts should consider when making decisions about grade configurations of individual schools. Of the nine, five particularly relate to concerns regarding a K-8 building:

- The number of students at each grade level, which may affect class groupings and courses offered
- The effect of school setting on achievement, particularly for grades 6-9
- The opportunities for interaction between age groups
- The influence of older students on younger students
- The building design – is it suitable for only a few or for several grade levels?

Paglin and Fager concluded that designing a school system to use a particular span of grades in individual schools will not in itself guarantee that students will learn well and be well adjusted. (See Nancy McEntire, "Grade Configuration in K-12 Schools.") There are several other factors, discussed further below, that come into play and should be considered alongside a change in grade-level configuration.

In 2010, Rockoff and Lockwood studied the New York City public schools and concluded that matriculating from an elementary school into a middle school causes a drop in student achievement relative to the performance of those who remain in a single K-8 school. This study looked at the New York City public schools, a large urban school district vastly different in size and demographics from Somers Point. In their report, Rockoff and Lockwood provided two possible explanations for the decline in student achievement. First, they described the negative impact of bringing together a large group of diverse students from a variety of elementary schools. Second, they hypothesized that maybe any move from one building to another would cause a decline in student achievement. The report provided no support for this hypothesis, however.

As set forth in the sections above, Somers Point is a relatively small school district, quite different in size and demographics than the New York City public schools studied by Rockoff and Lockwood. In addition, in Somers Point, all students would matriculate to the middle school from the same elementary school. This eliminates the concern related to bringing together students from differing schools. Moreover, unless the district were to build an entirely new building, some, if not all, of Somers Point's students would have to change schools. Therefore, changing schools is an inevitability that cannot be avoided.

Regardless of the grade configuration, no fact is more critical than the quality of administrators and teachers who work in the district. "Rather than debate which grade configuration is best for middle school grades, we would be better off expending our energy creating a curriculum that intellectually engages and inspires young adolescents, pushing for organized structures that support high quality relationships, and finding better ways to reach out to families and communities (Beane and Lipka (2006))." Anfara and Buehler (2005) agreed with Paglin and Fager (cited above) that "no sequence of grades is perfect or, in itself, guarantees student academic achievement and healthy social and emotional development. No particular grade configuration is the 'magic bullet' to improving student achievement."

Indeed, recent international comparisons in math and science reveal many countries scoring better than the U.S. One key factor noted was in the area of teacher in-service. In all the countries scoring better than the U.S., staff development stressed the "knowledge of the subject matter," and not the "how to teach the subject" which is the norm for American schools' staff development. In other words, math teachers would attend staff development sessions on math, not sessions on how to teach math. Based upon the experience of the consultants, we agree completely.

Minimally, a K-8 school building should have about 600 students in order to provide a complete and varied curriculum. As for transitions from one building to another building, which includes a different approach to the curriculum (which is necessary for middle school students), it is difficult under the best of circumstances. Experience has indicated to the consultants that the transition within a K-8 building is much less disruptive when compared with a transition to another building for 6-8.

As referenced above, Somers Point's current physical plant could not accommodate such a configuration across the district without significant construction. Thus, as is the current situation, duplicate grade levels are educated in separate buildings and come together in 7th grade. This makes seamless horizontal and vertical articulation more difficult; forces certain students, and not others, to change buildings; and causes delays in 7th grade when attempting to transition two groups into one for 7th and 8th grades.

D. District Reconfiguration

1. Research Option

Based upon the research above, one would conclude that the best reconfiguration for Somers Point would be one Pre-K to 8 building serving the entire district. This obviously is not feasible from any standpoint. This would require the closing of three existing buildings and constructing a new facility.

The status quo is also not recommended, as there exists a duplication of services since the Jordan Road School has students in a K-8 setting while the Dawes Avenue School has students in a K-6 setting. As set forth above, this makes seamless horizontal and vertical articulation more difficult. It forces certain students, and not others, to change buildings. This may create certain perceived inequities in the district. It also is not optimal as it requires integration of those new students into the building. From a staff development and instruction standpoint, it is more academically appropriate to have all, or most, staff who work with a particular grade level housed in the same building. This permits easier facilitation of staff development, professional learning communities, department meetings, and, in general, the sharing of information regarding best practices and individual student needs.

Since a Pre-K to 8 building for the district is not feasible from a facility standpoint, research and the experience of these consultants indicates that the best educational structure is to have all students in a given grade level housed in the same facility.

2. Options for Reconfiguration

A number of options were considered for the reconfiguration of the district as follows:

a. Closing the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring both Dawes Avenue and Jordan Road School as K-8 schools

b. Closing the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring Dawes Avenue to a Pre-K -2 school and Jordan Road School to a 3-8 school

c. Maintaining the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring Dawes Avenue to a K-2 school and Jordan Road School to a 3-8 school

d. Maintaining the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring Dawes Avenue to a K-3 school and Jordan Road School to a 4-8 school

e. Maintaining the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring Dawes Avenue to a K-4 school and Jordan Road School to a 5-8 school

a. The closing of the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring both the Dawes Avenue School and the Jordan Road School to K-8 configurations are what the research suggests would be the best option for the district since one K-8 school for the entire district is not possible. This option appears, however, to not be feasible for a number of reasons. First, moving the Pre-School to either the Dawes Avenue School and/or the Jordan Road School presents a number of substantial problems detailed below in paragraph b. From a curricular standpoint, major changes would have to be made to accommodate the 7th and 8th grade instructional programs. This configuration would result in each school having roughly half the number of 7th and 8th grade students as compared to the current configuration. Therefore, there would be limits on the curricular offerings the district can provide with the limited number of students. It is the consultants' opinion that this reduction would result in a significant, negative outcome for the students. Additionally, major re-configurations to the facility would have to be made at the Dawes Avenue School to accommodate the programming as well as the interschool athletic program for the district. Finally, the current and projected enrollments for the district do not warrant two K-8 programs. The projected enrollment is roughly 70 to 90 students district-wide in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, respectively. Under this configuration, each school would have roughly 35 to 45 students per grade. This limited number of students per grade in middle school is not educationally optimal.

b. The closing of the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring the Dawes Avenue School to a PK-2 and the Jordan Road School to a 3-8 building poses a number of questions with regard to financial savings. In order to determine the savings of closing the New York Avenue School, the consultants and the superintendent in consultation with the district architect determined the following listed cost estimates:

- The cost to retrofit existing classrooms in the Dawes Avenue School for Pre-School classes. Based upon the consultants' review of the Dawes Avenue School, it is quite possible that any retrofit would result in pre-school square foot violations, which would require a DOE waiver. There are so many variables in retrofitting the Dawes Avenue School for the Pre-School program, the Board would have to develop a "Request for a Proposal: (RFP) from an architect and/or building contractor to estimate the cost of retrofitting for the Pre-School program.
- The cost to purchase and install Pre-School playground equipment at Dawes. Based upon the consultants' review of the New York Avenue School it is unlikely that the equipment could be moved efficiently and effectively. It would likely need to be replaced. The current equipment at the Dawes Avenue School is not acceptable for pre-school programming. It is estimated that new Pre-School equipment would cost \$75,000 to \$100,000.
- The cost to rent (and prepare with heat, air conditioning, phones, etc.) for a five-room trailer for the Superintendent and the Business Administrator. Moving the pre-school programming over to Dawes would not permit sufficient space for all the central office staff that is currently housed at the New York Avenue School. In addition, such trailers are intended to be temporary in nature. Current DOE policies do not support

"permanent" trailers. It is estimated that this would cost in the \$300,000 to \$350,000 range.

- The cost to retrofit the old Industrial Arts classroom in the Jordan Road School for the Child Study Team, Community Education and Recreation staff, and School Registration offices is estimated to cost approximately \$700,000.

Additionally, if the current Dawes Avenue School bathrooms are approved for Pre-School use, then additional non-certified staff will be needed to accompany the students to the bathrooms. The DOE does not permit the unaccompanied movement of preschool children through school buildings. Also, a determination would have to be made as to where the Superintendent's office-trailer would be located. The additional staff and students at these two schools will increase traffic flow in an around the remaining two buildings.

The closing of the New York Avenue School would result in a reduction of two faculty members, and a savings of approximately \$38,300 in utility costs. This is not likely to offset the substantial additional costs of renovations to Dawes and rental or purchase of trailers. The school would still have to be maintained, at some cost to the district. While the cost could be reduced if it is not in active use, at a minimum it would still have to be heated to avoid damage in the winter and the grounds maintained. There is a possibility of renting the facility – St. Joseph's Catholic School and the Atlantic County Special Service District are two possibilities. The possible income, however, cannot be determined at this time.

There is also the public relations issue of having pre-school students in the Dawes Avenue School. The pre-school parents have been accustomed to a manner of visiting the school that would not normally be acceptable in a traditional elementary school. These parents might also have a concern with having their preschoolers in a building with higher grades. Conversely, the existing parents of the Dawes School might object to having preschoolers in the building.

It is also our understanding that the New York Avenue School has been designated as an historical building and cannot be sold. It can possibly be returned to the Borough of Somers Point. However, the district would not be able to realize the income associated with the sale of this building. It would also limit the options available for renting the building, as there are significant limitations on renovations to historical buildings.

Given all of the above, it is our recommendation that the New York Avenue School not be closed.

c. Maintaining the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring Dawes Avenue to a K-2 school and Jordan Road School to a 3-8 school. This option is not feasible from a facility standpoint. The Jordan Road School would not be able to accommodate this reconfiguration and maintain board policy regarding the number of students in a given classroom.

d. Maintaining the New York Avenue School and reconfiguring Dawes Avenue to a K-3 school and Jordan Road School to a 4-8 school. This is the most feasible reconfiguration for the district. With this reconfiguration, neither school would have any empty classrooms. Additionally, with this reconfiguration, special education students could be housed in their

appropriate age-group schools. This will allow for increased mainstreaming of those students, as appropriate.

With a K-3, 4-8 reconfiguration being fully implemented by the 2021-22 school year, the Board in consultation with the Superintendent would have the option of modifying the number of classes at some of the grade levels. At the Dawes Avenue School for example, starting with the 2017-18 year, there would be a total of 117 students projected for the Kindergarten grade level. There are currently six Kindergarten teachers. It is recommended that six classes be housed in the Dawes Avenue School resulting in no loss of teaching staff at the Kindergarten level.

There are a total of 87 students projected for Grade One at the Dawes Avenue School. There are currently six Grade One teachers. It is recommended that six classes be housed in the Dawes Avenue School resulting in no loss of teaching staff at the First Grade level.

There are a total of 109 students projected for Grade Two at the Dawes Avenue School. There are currently six Grade Two teachers. It is recommended that six classes be housed in the Dawes Avenue School resulting in no loss of teaching staff at the Second Grade level.

There are a total of 89 students projected for Grade Three at the Dawes Avenue School. There are currently six Grade Three teachers. It is recommended that five classes be housed in the Dawes Avenue School resulting in the reduction of one faculty member at the Third Grade level.

There are a total of 76 students projected for Grade Four at the Jordan Road School. There are currently six Grade Four Teachers. It is recommended that five classes be housed in the Jordan Road School resulting in the reduction of one faculty member at the Fourth Grade.

There are a total of 87 students projected for Grade Five at the Jordan Road School. There are currently five Grade Five teachers. It is recommended that five classes be housed in the Jordan Road School resulting in no loss of teaching staff at the Fifth Grade.

There are a total of 86 students projected for Grade Six at the Jordan Road School. There are currently five Grade Six teachers. It is recommended that five classes be housed in the Jordan Road School resulting in no loss of teaching staff at the Sixth Grade.

There are a total of 90 students projected for Grade Seven at the Jordan Road School. There are currently five Grade Seven teachers. It is recommended that five classes be housed in the Jordan Road School resulting in no loss of teaching staff at the Seventh Grade.

There are a total of 91 students projected for Grade Eight at the Jordan Road School. There are currently five Grade Eight teachers. It is recommended that five classes be housed in the Jordan Road School resulting in no loss of teaching staff at the Eighth Grade. Based upon the above projections it is recommended that there be a reduction of two faculty members for the 2017-18 school year.

Following the same projected enrollments for the subsequent four years would result in the following, as compared to the 2016-17 numbers:

2018-19: There would be a reduction of two faculty members, one each in Grade 3 and Grade 4.

2019-20: There would be a reduction of two faculty members, one each in Grade 3 and Grade 4.

2020-21: There would be a reduction of one faculty member, Grade 3.

2021-22: There would be a reduction of three faculty members, one each at Grade, 3, 4 and 5.

The above projections are based upon class sizes currently approved by the Board of Education. Further reductions in faculty members could be implemented by increasing the size of classes at each respective grade level with the recommendation of the Superintendent and Board of Education approval.

It is not projected that any reduction in professional staff would occur in the special education area or the non-classroom (art, music, etc.) areas. All of this, of course, would be at the discretion of the Board in consultation with the Superintendent.

e. Option 'e', a K-4 and 5-8 reconfiguration would be less desirable from a curriculum standpoint than a K-3 and 4-8 configuration. Additionally, a K-4 configuration would have a negative impact on the Dawes Avenue School in terms of space and classrooms. Based upon the capacity analysis set forth above, a K-3 configuration at Dawes provides only a 23-seat surplus, whereas there are projected to be 86 students in grade 4 in 2021-22. This configuration would leave Dawe's overcapacity and would, unnecessarily, create additional excess capacity at Jordan Road.

3. Reasons in Favor of Redistricting

Redistricting to a K-3 and 4-8 will result in many positive educational changes within the district. From an educational standpoint, the ability to manage and supervise the curriculum will be much easier when all classes of a given grade level are in one building. This will also enhance the ability to departmentalize where deemed necessary. This will reduce the need for much duplication in the existing building for books and materials. This will also result in better management of class size as well as student assignment in classes. Special education classes can also be placed in more age appropriate settings that can better manage and supervise the special instruction required for these students. The planning and presenting of staff development will also be facilitated in this grade level configuration. Teachers will not have to travel from building to building for staff development and other faculty oriented meetings such as in-service meetings on new state regulations and laws. An additional element will be the reduction in 'competition' that now exists between the schools in athletics and academics. There is also a possibility of financial savings by having all the teachers in the same grade level in the same building, as this can result in reducing faculty. Given the configuration of the Somers Point School District, it is clear that a change to a lower elementary and higher elementary would be advisable from a curricular as well as an administrative standpoint. The positive reasons listed above support the positive reason for a change in the district configuration.

The following comments - both positive and negative - were received as a result of interviewing district administrators, school level administrators, teachers, parents and the public. They are listed in no particular order of priority.

- Provide for more effective curricular integration both horizontally and vertically
- Consolidation of material and personnel resources presently located in both schools
- Special education self-contained classes can be housed more equitably
- More effective grade level collaboration and team planning
- Instructional time better allocated to increase student achievement
- Building wide events would be more appropriate for students
- Ability to departmentalize when and where if necessary
- Reading teacher for each school's grade levels
- Equalization of class size and better assignment of students to homerooms
- Better opportunity for placement of students with special needs (other than Special Ed.)
- Better opportunity for more effective professional development
- No contact between primary and intermediate age students unless specifically scheduled
- More classrooms result in more opportunity for mainstreaming
- Reduce grade level range for special education teachers
- Reduce competition between schools
- Consolidation of activities for each schools' grade configuration
- 6th graders from Dawes would no longer be the "new kids" in the school
- More equity for student instructional activities, i.e., Spanish.
- More equity for ESL student instruction
- More equity for student activities
- More effective scheduling for coaches

4. Reasons Against Redistricting

- One of the biggest concerns in implementing a K-3, 4-8 configuration would be that some 4th and 5th grade students might have to cross Route 9, a major highway, which bisects the municipality. State law provides that the provision of crossing guards is the responsibility of the municipality, not the school district. Therefore, a request would need to be made to the municipality to provide crossing guards at designated cross walks. Depending upon the decision of the Board in consultation with the Superintendent, this might also result in an additional bus route.
- Some additional families might find themselves in the position of having their children in three different school buildings.
- Maintaining the existing configuration will result in a continuing problem of ensuring that scheduled activities, such as parent visitation, school events, etc. will not conflict.

Changes of the nature recommended here do not come without major concerns on the part of families who have children in the district. Change in itself causes concern on the part of parents and students. Some parents will not want to change the status quo because of the

disruption in an existing situation. Regardless of the positive aspects of the recommended changes, many parents will not want to change for reasons noted above. Therefore, care should be taken to coordinate schedules in the two buildings to allow for as smooth a transition as possible and to allow parents/families to participate in the many events that will be offered in the various schools.

E. Transportation

Transportation is currently provided for students in the Somers Point School District. In the event the K-3, 4-8 reconfiguration is approved by the Board, there is a possibility that one additional bus run will be required. This will be dependent upon how many parents continue to transport their children to the various schools, and how many students walk to either the Jordan Road School or Dawes Avenue School to be transported to the other school due to the reconfiguration. It is recommended that one additional bus be budgeted for the school year when the reconfiguration is implemented.

F. Financial Considerations Regarding Kindergarten Regulations

Having all kindergarten students at the Dawes Avenue School creates a possible problem with NJDOE facility requirements for kindergarten classes. However, *N.J.A.C. 6A:26-6.3(h) 4ii* outlines the requirements for bathroom facilities for kindergarten students if a waiver is granted. It is highly unlikely that new in-class bathrooms would have to be installed at the Dawes Avenue School if the district is reconfigured as recommended. If the requirements have to be adhered to strictly, facility modifications such as the construction of bathroom facilities will be necessary which will be an added expense for the Board of Education. In the event the NJDOE grants a waiver for these requirements, no financial outlays for bathroom facilities will be required at this time.

G. Educational Conclusions and Recommendations

The following recommendations and options are presented for the Board's consideration with respect to the implementation of the reconfiguration of the Somers Point School District. The Board in consultation with the Superintendent has a number of options to consider. The following provides a possible phased-in approach to reconfiguring the district.

2016-17 Implementation

- a. House all K-1 students at the Dawes Avenue School and house all the 5th and 6th grade students at the Jordan Road School resulting in:

Jordan Road School – Grades 2-8

Dawes Avenue School – Grades K-4

- b. House all K-2 students at the Dawes Avenue School and house all 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students at the Jordan Road School resulting in:

Jordan Road School – Grades 3-8

Dawes Avenue School – Grades K-3

The following school year, the remaining '3rd grade' would become a '4th grade' at the Jordan Road School.

- c. House all K-3 students at the Dawes Avenue School and house all 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students at the Jordan Road School resulting in:

Jordan Road School – Grades 4-8

Dawes Avenue School – Grades K-3

d. Listed above are three of the more common examples of the reconfiguration in this scenario. The above could also be implemented over a two-year period. There is any number of variations of the above that could result from building administration in consultation with the Superintendent regarding facilities and staffing for recommendation to the Board. In terms of financial considerations, item "c" above would be the most feasible.

IV. FINANCIAL IMPACT

A. Introduction

From a financial perspective, this feasibility study will focus on the consideration of the Somers Point current (status quo) configuration compared to the alternative with each grade being housed in only one building.

The financial impact has been calculated in “2015 dollars” to eliminate the variable of inflation and the time value of money. The results are expressed in terms of average property tax levies and average tax rates, over the five-year projection period, and any changes therein. The results are calculated assuming full implementation at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. This is done in order to reflect the full financial impact, over the five-year period. Since the results of this potential change will be long-term, this offers better information to make this long-term decision because it reflects the full impact. However, if actual implementation of changes like these involves a phase-in period, the total financial impact will be spread over that phase-in period.

In developing this analysis, the following additional activities were completed:

- Review of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which includes the Independent Auditor’s Report on the general purpose financial statements of the City of Somers Point Board of Education for each of the three years ended June 30, 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- Review of the historical enrollment data and projected enrollment data for the above school district.
- Review of the New Jersey Department of Education Reports, State Aid information, equalized property values, and other relevant data for the district, as set forth in various Internet databases operated by the State of New Jersey.
- Discussions with Suzanne Keller, the Business Administrator for the district, concerning various issues related to the study.

B. Methodology

The starting point for analyzing the financial impact was modeling of the existing pattern of revenues and expenditures in the school district based upon the existing level of educational services being provided in the district during the 2014-15 school year. Additionally, the model was based upon the most recent three years of audited revenue and expenditure data (2012-13 thru 2014-15). In order to estimate the revenues, expenditures, and tax levies for both the present organizational structure and the alternative scenario, the model is based on the actual enrollments for the most recent six years and the projected enrollment in the district for each of the five years from 2017-18 to 2021-22. The model takes into account fixed costs, such as

superintendent salaries or interest on bonds, as well as those that vary with enrollment, like classroom teachers' salaries.

Teachers' salary expenditures are based on the number of certificated staff that existed in the 2014-15 school year. Any projected increase or decrease in certificated staff will be based on the approximate average salary, which reflects a long-term average cost rather than the specific salary of a new hire or a departing staff member. Possible changes, other than the reconfiguration of grades, in educational approach or philosophy are not reflected in the analysis, as they are independent of the alternatives being considered.

Tax levies and rates were estimated for the district. The average tax levies and average tax rates over the five-year period were calculated for each scenario. The relative financial impact was obtained by comparing each the average tax levy and rate, for the alternative scenario, to the average tax levy and rate estimated for the status quo scenario. These levies and rates are calculated solely for the purpose of comparing the scenarios and are not intended to reflect future tax levies and rates, as future tax levies will not be in 2015 dollars.

The numbers below reflect the long-term impact for making a long-term decision. However, the amounts are heavily influenced by enrollment numbers that change from year to year. For example, the Somers Point second grade actual and projected enrollment numbers range from 97 to 109 over a three year period. Therefore, the actual impact in a single year could vary from the long-term average. Additionally, the actual salaries and benefits of employees leaving or being added to a district will not necessarily match the averages used for the long-term result. Nevertheless, the consultants believe that a five-year average is better than a one-year snapshot for making this kind of long-term decision.

C. Key Assumptions

The analysis of the financial impact relied on a comprehensive set of assumptions. Among the more significant of these assumptions are the following:

- The community's tax levy and rate were estimated for purposes of comparing alternative configurations only and not to approximate the actual future tax levy and rate.
- Estimates of revenues, expenses, tax levies and tax rates were expressed in "2015 real dollar" terms. This assumption facilitates comparison of the alternatives.
- Estimates of future enrollment were prepared using the Cohort-Survival Ratio method. This assumes that the historical ratios for the Somers Point community will continue into the future.
- State aid for the district, before and after reconfiguration, will approximate the rate of funding that existed, or would have existed, in the district in the 2014-15 school year.
- State aid, if any, for existing debt service will continue at the 2014-15 rate.

- Educational programs were assumed to be equivalent to those that have existed in the Somers Point School District during the 2014-15 school year.
- Instruction in the districts after reconfiguration is normally assumed to involve approximately the same number of certificated staff per pupil as in the respective districts during recent school years. Any projected increase or decrease in certificated staff will be based on the approximate average staff salary, which reflects a long-term average cost rather than the specific salary of a new hire or a departing staff member.
- Prior years' surplus is not used, nor is any additional surplus generated in any year.
- New conditions, such as authorized bonds that will have no impact in the comparison of alternatives, may not have been included in the projected tax levies and tax rates.
- The present organizational structure and alternative configuration were calculated as if fully implemented at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year.
- Programs at the PK-8 level, if any, that have not yet been implemented, have not been reflected in this study.
- Statutory limits (CAPS) on budgets and tax levies have not been considered.

D. Results of the Financial Analysis

The information in Table 12 summarizes the findings of the analysis for the potential scenario and is based on the enrollment tables above. As noted above, for revenues and expenditures, the model assumes the continuance of the existing level of educational services provided in the school district in the 2014-15 school year. The projected enrollment for each of the five years from 2017-18 to 2021-22 was used to estimate the revenues, expenditures (see exception below.), tax rates, and tax levies for each of the five years, under both the present organizational structure and the alternative scenario. Estimated tax levy savings are expressed as positive amounts; estimated additional tax levies are expressed as negative amounts.

The assumption about State Aid, though normally an important consideration in these kinds of comparisons, is not a factor in this case. Any changes in State Aid would go to Somers Point in each of the scenarios. Therefore, the State Aid would be the same in each of the scenarios and the projected difference in State Aid would be negligible.

Recent history shows that enrollment is not a good predictor of instructional staff in Somers Point. Over the period from 2011-12 through 2015-16, the enrollment has dropped each year, going from 1095 to 997. Based on the CAFR for 2015-16, for the same time period, the full-time equivalent employee count for instruction has increased from 107 to 128 with increases in each year. Therefore, the Status Quo in this report assumes no change in instructional staff from 2015-16, even though enrollments are declining.

Table 12
Summary Of Tax Impact On Somers Point
Compared With Status Quo Scenario

		Status Quo	Grades Reconfigured
Community: City of SOMERS POINT			
	Tax Levy*	\$9,600	\$9,485
	Rate	\$0.842	\$0.832
	Savings (loss)*		\$115
	Rate Change		\$0.010
Note: *In thousands			

As identified in Table 12, the tax levy and the savings or loss is expressed in 2015 constant dollars. The rates are expressed in dollars and cents per \$100 of equalized property valuation.

1. City of Somers Point with Grades Reconfigured

There would be a decrease, when compared to the Status Quo, in the tax levy of approximately \$115,000 for Somers Point property owners if the Somers Point students were reconfigured. The major factor relates to the fact that the number of classroom teachers can be reduced when all sections of each of these grades are in one physical location. Additional teachers related to class size considerations occur less frequently when all the sections of the grade are located in one building.

For example, if the class size limit is 20 and there are 90 students across two buildings, it will be difficult to have fewer than six sections because one less teacher in a building with three sections of a grade will likely increase enrollment above the limit more often than if there are six sections. With all sections together in one building, five sections will now work.

The number of teachers in the Status Quo scenario is assumed to remain constant even with declining enrollment. There is no reconfiguration for grades 7 and 8 so there will be no difference in the number of teachers for those two grades. When analyzed on a year-by-year basis, there will be an average of approximately two fewer teachers over the five-year projection period. Using average salary and fringe benefit costs, this will save the district approximately \$150,000 per year. Note that this is a savings from projected future taxes and may not be an actual reduction in the tax levy.

However, the reconfiguration will likely result in more students needing to be bussed, because of the distance these students live from their new school building and the Route 9 consideration. The extra bussing will add approximately \$35,000 to annual expenditures.

E. Summary of Fiscal Advantages and Disadvantages

Under the proposed change for Somers Point there will be savings for the taxpayers and therefore there are no financial reasons to not consider the potential education benefits that the proposed reconfiguration offers for the students of Somers Point.

V. CONCLUSION

From an educational as well as a facility standpoint, all K-3 students should be housed at the Dawes Avenue School and all 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students should be housed at the Jordan Road School resulting in the following district reconfiguration:

Jordan Road School – Grades 4-8
Dawes Avenue School – Grades K-3
New York Avenue School – PK classes

This reconfiguration will result in a better horizontal and vertical management of the curriculum in order to facilitate the improvement of the educational program. Instructional time can be better allocated. Additionally an equalization of class size and class assignments will result. Staff development can be more effectively presented, students can be more appropriately assigned to teachers, special education classes can be better housed, and special area classes can be better managed. The reconfiguration will also result in more equity for ESL students. Special area teachers will be required to travel less which will provide more time for instruction if necessary. By having a K-3 and 4-8 configuration, many of the existing instructional aspects of the district will not have to be duplicated.

From a financial perspective, there are no reasons to not consider moving forward with the reconfiguration of grades in the district. For the above reasons, the consultants conclude that the proposed changes should be encouraged.

VI. APPENDICES

Bibliography

Anfara, Vincent & Buehler, Alison (2005). Grade configuration and the education of young adolescents. Middle School Journal, Issue 1, 53-59.

Beane, James & Lipka, Richard (2006). Guess again: Will changing the grades save middle level education? Educational Leadership, 63(7), 26-30.

Franklin, Bobby J. & Glascock, Catherine H. (1996). The relationship between grade configuration and student achievement in rural schools. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Rural Education Association, San Antonio, TX. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 403 083).

Howley, Craig, (2002). Grade-span configuration. American Association of School Administrators [Online].

Paglin, Catherine, & Fager, Jennifer. (1997). Grade configuration: Who goes where? [Online].

Rockoff Jonah E. & Lockwood, Benjamin B. (2010). Stuck in the middle: Impacts of grade configuration in public schools. [Online]

RICHARD S. GRIP, Ed.D.

Work Address:
 Statistical Forecasting LLC
 P.O. Box 1156
 Secaucus, NJ 07096-1156
 1-877-299-6412

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER HISTORY

Executive Director: Statistical Forecasting LLC, Secaucus, New Jersey, March 1998 – present.

- Performed demographic studies projecting enrollment using the Modified Regression Technique and Cohort Survival Ratio method for public school districts.
- Testified at a deposition and trial as an expert witness in school demography regarding the termination of the sending-receiving relationship of Newfield Borough with the Buena Regional School District.
- Testified at a trial as an expert witness in school demography regarding the termination of the sending-receiving relationship of the Merchantville School District with the Pennsauken Public Schools.
- Testified at a trial as an expert witness in school demography regarding a proposed change in the funding formula for River Dell Regional School District.
- Completed feasibility studies for school districts considering regionalization, de-regionalization, or alternative send-receive relationships. The studies look at demographic, educational, and financial implications of the new structure as compared to the status quo.
- Performed external evaluations of educational programs in both secondary and post-secondary settings using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Constructed surveys and conducted interviews to measure program effects.

Representative Projects

West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District (NJ) - Demographic Study (2013) – Performed ten-year enrollment projections for large school district (9,800+ students) at the individual school level. Births by census tract and block group were used to project enrollment at the school level. Student addresses were geocoded to show the five-year changes in the relative concentrations of where students live and the sections of each township that have the most children per housing unit. Computed student yields by development and housing type (single-family, townhouse, apartment) in both communities. Analyzed change in racial and poverty distributions in the district and at school level over six historical years.

Merchantville Borough (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2012) – Conducted a study considering the demographic and racial effects of the withdrawal of Merchantville students from the Pennsauken Public Schools upon termination of the existing sending-receiving relationship.

Woodbridge School District (NJ) - Demographic Study (2012) – Performed five-year enrollment projections for large school district (13,000+ students) at the individual school level. Births by census tract and block group were used to project enrollment at the school level. Student addresses were geocoded to show the five-year changes in the relative concentrations of where students live and the sections of the township that have the most children per housing unit.

South Hunterdon Regional School District (NJ) Feasibility Study (2012) – Conducted a study considering the dissolution of the South Hunterdon Regional School District (grades 7-12) and analyzed six different scenarios for the education of students in Lambertville Borough, Stockton Borough, and West Amwell Township. Analyzed demographic and racial impacts in each of the scenarios.

Yonkers Public Schools (NY) - Demographic Study (2011, 2013) – Performed ten-year enrollment projections by the four major races in the school district. Other analyses performed include projecting future birth counts by race, studying the impact of immigration on enrollment, and the effects of charter, private, and parochial schools on enrollment. The impact of new housing developments on the school district was also considered.

New York City School Construction Authority - Demographic Study (2006-2013) – Performed enrollment projections for the New York City Public Schools as part of the Five-Year Capital Plan. Projections are being computed by the four major races for each of the 32 community school districts and aggregated by borough and citywide. Another analyses performed include projecting future birth counts by race, developing a special education model to project self-contained special education students, and studying the impact of immigration on enrollment. Finally, a comprehensive study of the impact of new housing development in New York City on enrollment at the community school district level was undertaken.

Hackensack Public Schools (NJ) - Demographic Study (2010) – Conducted a study projecting enrollment five years into the future. Analyzed local population trends, demographic characteristics of the community using Census and ACS data, student mobility rates, and the impact of new housing starts on enrollment. Completed a capacity analysis of building capacities compared to projected enrollment. Performed a separate analysis of housing turnover in the community by using home sale data for the past 30 years to project the number of homes by length of ownership based on the current length of ownership and historical turnover rates. Using the student yields computed separately by length of ownership, the total number of students was projected five years into the future.

North Hanover Township School District (NJ) - Demographic Study (2010) – Conducted a study projecting enrollment five years into the future. Analyzed local population trends, demographic characteristics of the community using Census and ACS data, and student mobility rates. Completed a capacity analysis of building capacities compared to projected enrollment. Performed an in-depth analysis of the demolition and renovation of housing units at McGuire Air Force Base and its impact on enrollment.

Black Horse Pike Regional School District (NJ) Feasibility Study (2009) – Conducted a study considering the dissolution of the Black Horse Pike Regional School District (grades 9-12) whereby a full PK-12 regional district would be created between Bellmawr Borough, Gloucester Township, and Runnemede Borough. Analyzed demographic and racial impacts in each of the scenarios.

Robbinsville Township School District (NJ) - Demographic Study (2009) – Conducted a study projecting enrollment five years into the future. Analyzed local population trends, demographic

characteristics of the community using Census and ACS data, student mobility rates, and the impact of new housing starts on enrollment. Completed a capacity analysis of building capacities compared to projected enrollment. Performed a separate analysis of housing turnover in the community by using home sale data for the past 30 years to project the number of homes by length of ownership based on the current length of ownership and historical turnover rates. Using the student yields computed separately by length of ownership, the total number of students was projected five years into the future.

Montvale Borough (NJ) and Woodcliff Lake Borough (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2008) – Conducted a study considering the dissolution of the Pascack Valley Regional High School District whereby a full K-12 regional district would be created between Montvale and Woodcliff Lake Boroughs.

Carlstadt Borough (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2008) – Conducted a study considering the dissolution of the Carlstadt-East Rutherford Regional High School District whereby a full K-12 regional district would be created between East Rutherford and Carlstadt Boroughs or whereby a K-12 district would be created in East Rutherford Borough and high school students from Carlstadt Borough would attend East Rutherford on a sending-receiving basis.

Watchung Borough (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2008) – Conducted a study considering the withdrawal of Watchung Borough from the Watchung Hills Regional High School District whereby Watchung would send its students to the existing regional district on a sending-receiving basis. The study also considered the dissolution of the Watchung Hills Regional High School District whereby a full K-12 regional district would be created or whereby a K-12 district would be created in Warren Township and high school students from Watchung Borough would attend Warren Township on a sending-receiving basis.

Park Ridge Borough (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2007) – Conducted a study considering many different organizational structures to the existing PK-12 school district including forming an all-purpose regional school district with adjoining communities and joining an existing limited-purpose regional high school district.

Merchantville Board of Education (NJ) – Racial Impact Study (2007) – Conducted a study to determine the racial impact of Merchantville terminating its sending-receiving relationship with Pennsauken Township.

Vineland Board of Education (NJ) - Demographic Study (2006,2013) – The average student yield per home was computed by analyzing recent developments constructed in Vineland City. This value was then used to project the number of children from comparable future developments. A representative sample of 26 new streets located in 15 different developments was analyzed. District transportation records were accessed from 2002-2006 to obtain the number of children per household on these streets and their grade levels for each of these years. The number of children per housing unit was computed and used to project the expected number of children from approximately 1,600 new single-family homes in Vineland City. Baseline enrollment projections were then modified.

Oradell Borough (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2006) – Conducted a study of dissolving the River Dell Regional School District, a limited-purpose grade 7-12 regional district, with the resulting formation of two independent K-12 districts in Oradell Borough and River Edge Borough. The study explored having Oradell enter into a send-receive relationship with River Edge for its grade 7 and 8 students while River Edge enter into a send-receive relationship with Oradell for its grade 9-12 students.

Liberty Township (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2006, 2008) – Conducted two studies, one which would dissolve the Great Meadows Regional School District, a grade PK-8 regional district, and create two independent PK-8 districts in Liberty Township and Independence Township. The second study analyzed dissolving the Great Meadows Regional School District, creating a PK-8 district in Independence Township and a PK-5 district in Liberty Township where Liberty Township students in grades 6-8 would be sent to Independence Township on a sending-receiving basis.

Newfield Board of Education (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2006) – Conducted a study of terminating the existing send-receive relationship between the Newfield Board of Education and the Buena Regional School Board of Education and initiating a new sending-receiving relationship between the Newfield Board of Education and the Delsea Regional Board of Education and the Franklin Township Board of Education. Testified at a deposition and trial as an expert witness in school demography regarding the termination of the sending-receiving relationship of Newfield Borough with the Buena Regional School District.

Elmer Borough Board of Education (NJ) - Feasibility Study (2004) – Conducted a study of making the Elmer Borough School District a non-operating district by creating a new sending-receiving relationship between the Elmer Board of Education and the Pittsgrove Board of Education. Analyzed the demographic impacts on each school district for the proposed organizational change.

Elk Township, Franklin Township, and Delsea Regional High School District (NJ) – Feasibility Study (2003-2004) – Conducted a feasibility study exploring the expansion of the Delsea Regional High School District from a limited purpose (grades 7-12) regional concept to an all-purpose (grades PK-12) regional alignment. Other options explored were the dissolution of the Delsea Regional High School District and formation of two independent PK-12 school districts in Franklin Township and Elk Township.

The College of New Jersey - External Evaluator and Psychometrician (2003-2006) – Served as an external evaluator and psychometrician measuring the effects of the Teachers as Leaders and Learners program, which was designed to provide professional development opportunities, mentoring, and graduate coursework in mathematics and science for elementary and middle school teachers of an urban school district in New Jersey. Entry and exit surveys were constructed to measure changes in attitudes and beliefs of teachers after program participation. Terra Nova, NJASK4, and GEPA test score data of students whose teachers participated in the program were analyzed to measure gains. A summative year-end report, which consisted of survey and test score results, was written to demonstrate how the program's goals and objectives were being met.

New Jersey Department of Education - External Evaluator and Psychometrician (2003-2006) – Served as an external evaluator and psychometrician for the Alternate Route Strand of the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant for the New Jersey Department of Education. Responsibilities included writing quarterly and year-end reports documenting completion of program initiatives by the New Jersey Department of Education Provisional Teacher Program (Alternate Route). Provisional teachers rated the program's formal instruction component through a written survey. Data collected was subsequently analyzed to aid the New Jersey Department of Education in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Adjunct Professor: Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, June 1999 – December 2000.

- Taught *Assessment and Measurement for Teachers*, a graduate-level course offered by the Department of Educational Psychology.

- Taught *Psychometric Theory I*, a graduate-level course offered by the Department of Educational Psychology.

Physics and Statistics Instructor (with tenure): Bridgewater-Raritan High School, Bridgewater, New Jersey, September 1993 – June 2001.

- Chair of Technology Committee for Middle States Evaluation – Directed faculty in the creation of a report on uses of technology in the school. Presented the summative report to the faculty and administration for final approval.

Adjunct Statistics Instructor: Raritan Valley Community College, Somerville, New Jersey, January 1996 - May 1999.

Physics Instructor (tenure-track): Montville High School, Montville, New Jersey, September 1992 - June 1993.

Adjunct Mathematics Instructor: County College of Morris, Randolph, New Jersey, June 1992 - December 1992.

Physics and Astronomy Instructor: Delbarton School, Morristown, New Jersey, January 1992 - June 1992.

EDUCATION

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

Doctor of Education in Educational Statistics and Measurement, May 1998

Dissertation: Prediction of Student Enrollments using the Modified Regression Technique

Doctoral Committee Chair: John W. Young

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

Master of Education in Science Education, January 1992

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, May 1989

PRESENTATIONS

Panel Presenter. New Jersey Association of School Administrators, Branchburg NJ, June 2009: Forum on New Jersey School District Consolidation.

Lead Presenter. Population Association of America, New Orleans, LA, April 2008: Does Projecting School District Enrollments by Race Produce More Accurate Results?

Lead Presenter. Population Association of America, New York City, NY, March 2007: Highlights of a Demographic Study Prepared for an Abbott District.

Lead Presenter. American Association of School Administrators Rural and Small School Leaders, Baltimore, MD, July 2002: Performing Enrollment Projections in Vermont: A Case Study.

Lead Presenter. New Jersey Association of School Administrators, Atlantic City, NJ, May 2002: The Demographic Study: One size does not fit all.

Lead Presenter. New Jersey Association of School Administrators, Atlantic City, NJ, May 2001: Projecting Enrollments in Rapidly Growing School Districts.

Lead Presenter. New Jersey School Boards Convention, Atlantic City, NJ, October 2000: Enrollment projections: Making them accurate

Lead Presenter. New Jersey Association of School Administrators, Atlantic City, NJ, May 2000: Enrollment projections: A new direction.

Lead Presenter. New Jersey Association of School Administrators, Atlantic City, NJ, May 1999: Enrollment projections: A solution for high growth and low growth school districts.

Lead Presenter. American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada, April 1999: Predicting public school enrollments using the Modified Regression Technique.

Co-Presenter. Research Corporation Conference, Tucson, Arizona, January, 1996: Presented the experimental results of ^{152}Gd g-factors at the 2^+ and 4^+ states using a particle accelerator at Yale University.

PAPERS

Grip, R. S. (2010). Reading trends, not tea leaves. School Leader, 40(4), 32-38.

Grip, R.S. (2009). Does projecting enrollments by race produce more accurate results in New Jersey school districts? Population Research and Policy Review, 28(6), 747-771.

Grip, R. S. (2005). Enrollment trends in New Jersey. School Leader, 34(5), 20-27.

Grip, R. S. (2004). Projecting enrollment in rural schools: A study of three Vermont school districts. Journal of Research in Rural Education [On-line] 19(3). Available: <http://www.umaine.edu/jrre/19-3.htm>

Grip, R. S. (2002). Using demographic studies to project school enrollments. School Business Affairs, 68(7), 15-17.

Grip, R. S. & Young, J.W. (1999). The modified regression technique: A new method for public school enrollment projections. Planning and Changing, 30(3 & 4), 232-248.

AWARDS

Outstanding Dissertation Award (1999): Presented by the Rutgers University Alumni Association to the best dissertation from the Graduate School of Education

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Educational Research Association
Population Association of America

VIRGIL M. JOHNSON, Ed.D.

**22 Constitution Blvd.
Berlin, New Jersey 08009-1352
856-767-9146
609-220-4175 (cell)
vjohanson316@hotmail.com**

EXPERIENCE

Educational Consulting

General Educational Consulting, 1/09 to present, provides a variety of educational services, including withdrawal/dissolution feasibility studies, staff development, 3rd party evaluations, and strategic planning, to local school districts, local municipalities, and colleges.

Recent New Jersey studies and projects include 3rd Party Evaluation Team, 21st Century Goals Project (Gloucester City, Salem City and Penns Grove); Feasibility Studies, (Oradell, Liberty Twp., Sea Isle City, Park Ridge, Carlstadt, Watchung Hills, Avalon/Stone Harbor, Franklin Twp and Cape May City, Woodcliff Lake); Strategic Planning (Hampton Township School District, and Rancocas Valley Regional High School District).

Centennial Associates, LLC. Educational Consultants. Managing Member, 12/05 to 12/08.
Cram, Galasso & Johnson, LLC. Educational Consultants. Managing Member, 12/01 to 12/05.
Company provides a variety of educational services, including superintendent searches, staff development, regionalization studies, and strategic planning, to local school districts. CGJ, LLC. is also a partner with the Educational Information and Resource Center (EIRC), Sewell, New Jersey. The company provides EIRC with services such as third party independent evaluation of state and federal programs, strategic planning, administrative personnel services, mentoring services, and staff development and training.

Field Service Representative, New Jersey School Boards Association, 7/99 to 11/01.
Provided direct services to over 50 school boards in Burlington and Cumberland counties. Services included superintendent searches (10), superintendent evaluation, goal setting, board self-evaluation, and strategic planning.

Johnson / McLaughlin Associates, Educational Consulting, 11/94 - 9/95. Services provided to Harcourt Brace School Publishers, Camden County College, and various local school districts.

College/University

New Jersey Recruiter, Delaware Valley College, 4/10 to 4/15. Seeks local school districts to set up co-hort group for Educational Leadership master's degree. All courses taught in-district. Students can complete program and receive master's degree in two and ½ to three years.

College/University (con't)

Director, Office of Field Experiences, Rowan University, 1/98 to 6/99. Supervised the placement of practicum and student teachers from four departments (elementary, secondary, special education, and health & exercise sciences) to over 175 school districts in the seven southern counties in New Jersey. The office is responsible for over 2800 student pre-service placements throughout the school year.

Assistant Professor, Rowan University, Department of Elementary/Early Childhood Education, 9/95 to 1/98. Supervising student teachers, practicum students; and teaching [undergraduate] Educational Studies II (Measurement and Evaluation), Educational Studies IV (Classroom Management) and [graduate] Elementary School Curriculum and Foundations of Educational Policymaking.

Part-Time Lecturer, Rutgers, The State University, Graduate School of Education, 1990 to present. "Curriculum and Instruction", "Curriculum Development in the Elementary School", "Curriculum Development in the Secondary School", and "Fundamentals of Curriculum."

School Administration

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Winslow Township, NJ School System, June 1992 to October 1994. Assisted in the development and refinement of the general programs of curriculum and instruction, administration, personnel, staff development and evaluation. Served in the absence of Superintendent as Chief School Administrator. [During the period from October 1, 1993 to December 31, 1993 served as Acting Superintendent].

Elementary School Principal, Pennsauken, NJ, 1976 to 1992. Multi-building responsibility during most of this period. Served as Chairperson of the Elementary Curriculum Steering Committee (four years) and Chairperson of the K-12 Curriculum Articulation Committee for two years.

Curriculum Supervisor (Library Media Services, K-12), Camden, NJ School System, 1975-76. Supervised librarians and audio-visual specialists; coordinated film and video productions for instructional use. Prior to being appointed supervisor, I served as an audio-visual specialist from 1971-74.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ (1986), Curriculum Theory and Development. Dissertation: Anti-Democratic Attitudes of High School Students.

Master of Education (Ed.M.), Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, (1972), Educational Media.

Bachelor of Arts (BA), Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC, (1966), Theatre Arts. Graduated cum laude; member, Alpha Phi Sigma, national honorary scholastic fraternity.

EDUCATIONAL CERTIFICATES HELD

Elementary Teacher, Educational Media Specialist, Supervisor, Principal, School Administrator.

OTHER

Strategic Planning
Certificate of Completion
2005

The International Strategic Planning Center for Education / The Cambridge Group

PUBLICATIONS

Analyzing the Third International Mathematics and Science Study – School Leader, Journal of the New Jersey School Boards Association, Vol. 29, No. 4 (January/February, 2000), Trenton, NJ.

A Professional Development District: A Strategy for School Improvement with Barry J. Galasso) - **Focus on Education**, Journal of the NJASCD, 1994 edition, Bayonne, NJ.

Citizen Preparation: The Basic Skill - New Jersey Parent-Teacher, Vol.66, No. 5 (April 1982), Trenton, NJ.

Foreign Languages and Careers - A transparency kit with script. Published by the **New Jersey Vocational-Technical Curriculum Laboratory**, 1974.

Career Education - A narrated slide program. Published by the **New Jersey Vocational-Technical Curriculum Laboratory**, 1973.

MILITARY

U.S. Marine Corps (Sgt), 1955-59, U.S. Embassy Security Guard, Taipei, Taiwan (Formosa), 1957-59.

PUBLIC SERVICE

During the 1980s and early 1990s, I served 14 years on the Berlin Borough School Board. During this period, I served as President of the Berlin Borough BOE, President of the Camden County School Boards Association, and two years as a Vice-President (Special Projects and Legislation) of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

REFERENCES

Provided upon request.

JAMES L. KIRTLAND

149 CORNELL AVENUE
BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NEW JERSEY 07922
(908) 771-5607

Executive experienced in domestic and international business.

- \$10.8 million annual savings for a Fortune 50 corporation by implementing statistical sampling approach in taking of physical inventories.
- \$2.5 million savings in audit time by standardizing audit programs.

Chaired Statistical Sampling Subcommittee (AICPA) for three years.

Served on International Federation of Accountants' Committee on Audit Sampling.

Served on AICPA Ethics Division Behavioral Standards Subcommittee.

Proficient in Spanish and Portuguese.

Certified Public Accountant, Ohio.

MBA in Accounting, Columbia University, New York.

BA in Math, *magna cum laude*, Shelton College, Ringwood, New Jersey.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1991 - Present **INDEPENDENT CONSULTING**

- Consulted with various New Jersey school districts regarding financial impact of district reconfiguration.
- Consulted with and conducted seminars for Fortune 50 Corporation on audit effectiveness and efficiency in the international internal audit group.
- Consulted with USAID on Capital Markets Project in Sri Lanka. Involved in peer review of Sri Lankan accounting profession to promote better auditor/investor communications and in development of standard programs and related training.
- Consulted re statistical approach to multi-million dollar Medicaid claim for large school districts.

1975 - 1991 Partner **DELOITTE & TOUCHE**

Recognized as auditing and statistical expert, using innovative approaches to problem solving.

- Developed and assisted in the implementation of practical sampling and regression applications in auditing throughout the Firm.
- Developed materials and conducted seminars for internal audit staff of large multi-national corporation.
- Served many clients with innovative analytical problem solving.

Supported National Managing Director of Accounting and Auditing in administrative management.

- Responsible for administration, including budgeting and salaries (ten departments, over 100 employees.)
- Assisted *National Managing Director* in accounting and auditing emerging issues.
- Participated in the development of standard programs and approaches in auditing.

Prior to 1975

National Office Accounting and Auditing Department.

- Developed innovative client service and auditing approaches used throughout the Firm.

JAMES L. KIRTLAND

- Participated in the development of a computer-based program for the evaluation of internal accounting controls.

Responsible for audit work in clients' offices - Cleveland, Ohio.

Responsible for first US GAAP audit of 21-company conglomerate in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Developed and presented expert testimony.

- *Pension fund allocation in spin-off of major business segment.*
- *Accounting for cellular phone acquisition costs defended before SEC.*
- *Tax Ruling on use of hedge accounting in mutual funds.*
- *Construction cost and allocation in major construction project.*

Other Activities.

- *Berkeley Heights Board of Education.
Member 18+ years, including serving as Vice President and President.
Lead Board financial/quantitative analysis expert.
Lead Board negotiator for teachers' contract - multiple occasions.
Lead Board negotiator for administrators' contracts.
Developed salary guides.*
- *Union County School Boards Association - Vice President*
- *Union County Regional High School Dissolution Group - Lead financial expert in successful application for dissolution of high school district.*
- *Lower Atlantic County Regional High School District # 1 - Feasibility study regarding financial aspects of Dissolution Feasibility Study.*
- *West Morris Regional High School District - Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible reconfigurations of the District.*
- *Borough of North Haledon and North Haledon Board of Education – Feasibility study regarding financial impact of withdrawal from a regional school district.*
- *Mountain Lakes Board of Education – Feasibility study regarding financial impact of ending a sending/receiving relationship.*
- *Cape May Borough and Cape May Board of Education - Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative configurations of the Regional District.*
- *Seaside Park Borough and Seaside Park Board of Education - Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative configurations of Central Regional District.*
- *Township of Mansfield – Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative configurations of Northern Burlington County Regional District.*
- *Borough of Oradell - Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative configurations of River Dell Regional District.*
- *Borough of Park Ridge– Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative high school configurations including participating in Pascack Valley Regional District.*
- *Boroughs of Montvale and Woodcliff Lake– Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative high school configurations regarding Pascack Valley Regional District.*
- *Borough of Watchung– Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative high school configurations regarding Watchung Hills Regional District.*
- *Merchantville BOE– Feasibility study regarding termination of the sending-receiving agreement with Pennsauken Public Schools.*

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- *Lambertville, Stockton & West Amwell– Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative high school configurations regarding South Hunterdon Regional School District.*
- *Franklin Township BOE– Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative high school configurations regarding Delsea Regional High School District.*
- *Merchantville BOE– Updated Feasibility study regarding termination of the sending-receiving agreement with Pennsauken Public Schools.*
- *Cape May Borough and Cape May Board of Education -Updated Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative configurations of the Regional District.*
- *Borough of Woodcliff Lake– Feasibility study regarding financial impact of possible alternative high school configurations regarding Pascack Valley Regional District.*
- *Expert witness testimony re Seaside Park’s court case regarding the funding formula.*
- *Expert witness testimony re North Haledon’s Supreme Court case regarding changing the funding formula.*
- *Expert witness testimony re Merchantville regarding send/receive relationship.*
- *Treasurer of local church with half million dollar annual budget.*
- *Treasurer of other charitable organizations.*