

A Feasibility Study to Consider School Consolidation for

the Andover Regional School District and

by

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Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
I. INTRODUCTION	5
II. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES	7
A. Community Descriptions	7
1. Andover Borough.....	7
2. Andover Township.....	8
B. Relevant Demographic Characteristics	9
1. Andover Borough.....	9
2. Andover Township.....	11
C. District Overview	12
D. Explanation of the Cohort-Survival Ratio Method.....	12
E. Historical Enrollment Trends.....	14
F. Birth Data.....	15
G. Potential New Housing	17
1. Andover Borough.....	17
2. Andover Township.....	17
H. Enrollment Projections.....	18
I. Capacity Analysis	21
III. EDUCATIONAL IMPACT.....	24
A. Introduction.....	24
B. District and School Profiles	25
1. Burd.....	25
2. Long Pond.....	26

C.	Curriculum Development and Implementation	27
1.	Overview.....	27
2.	Professional Development	29
3.	Student Performance.....	29
D.	Chronic Absenteeism	31
E.	Students In Need of Special Education Programs and Services.....	32
F.	School and Class Size	33
1.	School Size.....	33
2.	Class Size	34
G.	School Safety	35
H.	School Transitions	36
I.	Educational Conclusions & Answers to Research Questions.....	36
J.	Educational Recommendation	40
IV.	FINANCIAL IMPACT.....	41
A.	Methodology	42
B.	Key Assumptions	42
C.	Results of the Analysis.....	43
D.	Financial Conclusion	53
V.	STUDY CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	54
	APPENDIX AA – TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY MODELS & PRACTICES	57
	EDUCATION CHAPTER REFERENCES.....	59

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Andover Regional School District ("Andover Regional") serves students in grades PK-8 from the communities of Andover Borough and Andover Township in Sussex County, New Jersey. Students will attend two school buildings based on their grade level; the Florence M. Burd Elementary School ("Burd") serving students in grades PreK-4 and the Long Pond Middle School ("Long Pond") serving students in grades 5-8. Students in 9th through 12th grades from both Andover Borough and Andover Township attend Newton High School in Newton, New Jersey through a sending-receiving relationship. In addition to students from the Town of Newton, students from Green Township also attend Newton High School through another sending-receiving relationship. Andover Regional, and the school districts of the Town of Newton and Green Township, have formed an informal Tri-District Consortia in order to partner together on educational issues and on developing shared services.

The Andover Regional Board of Education has asked for a study regarding the feasibility of closing Burd and moving all students to Long Pond resulting in the consolidation of all grades PK-8 in Long Pond. The Board has recognized that long-term demographic trends are leading to enrollments losses that are expected to result in a 17% decline in the student body over the next five years. Property taxes are rising and State aid is declining. Declining enrollments present a number of challenges as the district attempts to cope with the difficulty of providing a high-quality education that can prepare students for the rigors of high school and allow them to compete in a global economy. The district will face increasing financial pressures to maintain and expand instructional programs, address social-emotional issues, and new State mandates, while keeping tax levies affordable. In addition to declining enrollments, school funding laws have realigned aid among districts, causing some to see some funding phasing-out over time. These trends have many districts looking for efficiencies, cost savings, and alternative sources of revenue. Although Andover Regional has taken many steps to operate efficiently and effectively, these steps may be insufficient to cope with the academic and cost consequences of the continuing enrollment declines. For these reasons, the Board of Education sought to have experts examine options to maintain educational quality and operate efficiently, and this study is intended to inform contingency planning for these potential challenges.

The feasibility study will begin by identifying demographic trends that will drive student enrollment in the future. It will then examine the current capacity of Long Pond and what instructional, non-instructional and support spaces will be required to accommodate Burd students. Capacity of the school buildings (the differences between capacity and enrollment) will also be determined for both 2020-21 and 2025-26 (the last year of the projection period).

The report will then look at the educational issues that may flow from such a school consolidation as well as the financial impact of the consolidation versus the "status quo." The Financial Section will also elaborate on the potential cost impacts of consolidating the instructional program into Long Pond and closing Burd. These include cost savings by eliminating redundant functions, and the potential short-term costs of decommissioning a school and moving the operation to Long Pond.

Based on this analysis, the consultants will draw conclusions and make recommendations for moving forward.

II. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

A. Community Descriptions

1. Andover Borough

Located in Sussex County, Andover Borough contains a land area of 1.45 square miles and 0.02 square miles of water area. Historical and projected populations for Andover Borough from 1940-2040 are shown in Table 1. In 2010, Andover Borough had 606 residents, which is 417.9 persons per square mile. From 1940-1980, Andover Borough's population steadily increased, with its greatest gain occurring in the 1950s (+31.1%). However, from 1980-2010, the population reversed trend and declined by nearly 300 persons.

In addition, a population estimate for 2019 is provided in Table 1. The estimated population in 2019 is 563 persons, which is a loss of 43 persons from 2010. The Census Bureau publishes estimates every July 1st following the last decennial census and 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, which were prepared by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Inc. ("NJTPA"), indicate that the population will slowly increase. However, as the 2019 Census estimate reflects a continuation of the declining trend in the borough, the NJTPA likely needs to revise its projections after the 2020 Census results become available. As it currently stands, forecasts project the population to be 656 in 2040, which would be a 16.5% increase from the 2019 population estimate and a gain of 93 persons.

Table 1
Historical and Projected Populations for Andover Borough
1940-2040

Year	Population	Percent Change
Historical¹		
1940	512	N/A
1950	560	+9.4%
1960	734	+31.1%
1970	813	+10.8%
1980	892	+9.7%
1990	700	-21.5%
2000	658	-6.0%
2010	606	-7.9%
2019 (est.)	563	-7.1%
Projected²		
2020	611	+8.5%
2030	621	+1.6%
2040	656	+5.6%

Sources: ¹United States Census Bureau.

²North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Inc. (2017).

2. Andover Township

Andover Township is also located in Sussex County and contains a land area of 19.96 square miles, with an additional 0.73 square miles of water area. Historical and projected populations for Andover Township from 1940-2040 are shown in Table 2. In 2010, the population in Andover Township was 6,319, which is 316.6 persons per square mile. From 1940-2010, Andover Township's population grew more than ten-fold, with its greatest percentage gain occurring in the 1950s (+106.9%) when the population more than doubled. The estimated population in 2019 is 5,870, which is a loss of 449 persons from the 2010 Census count.

While the population projections prepared by the NJTPA are forecasting an increase in the township's population, the 2019 Census estimate reflects a change in trend and a decline in population since 2010. The NJTPA likely needs to revise its projections after the 2020 Census results become available. As it currently stands, forecasts project the population to be 6,667 in 2040, which would be a 13.6% increase from the 2019 population estimate and a gain of 797 persons.

Table 2
Historical and Projected Populations for Andover Township
1940-2040

Year	Population	Percent Change
Historical¹		
1940	591	N/A
1950	1,052	+78.0%
1960	2,177	+106.9%
1970	3,040	+39.6%
1980	4,506	+48.2%
1990	5,438	+20.7%
2000	6,033	+10.9%
2010	6,319	+4.7%
2019 (est.)	5,870	-7.1%
Projected²		
2020	6,348	+8.1%
2030	6,416	+1.1%
2040	6,667	+3.9%

Sources: ¹United States Census Bureau.

²North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Inc. (2017).

B. Relevant Demographic Characteristics

In Table 3, relevant demographic characteristics¹ of Andover Borough and Andover Township are compared from the 2010 Census and the 2006-2010 and 2015-2019 American Community Surveys (“ACS”). While some Census variables account for everyone in the population (e.g., age and race), 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 communities with fewer than 65,000 persons such as these, ACS data represent a sample collected over a five-year time period, where the estimates represent the average characteristics between January 2015 and December 2019, for example. 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 2015 to 2019, 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.

1. Andover Borough

With respect to race, Whites are the largest race in Andover Borough. In the 2015-2019 ACS, Andover Borough was 90.0% White as compared to 88.1% in 2010, which is a gain of 1.9 percentage points. Blacks/African Americans and Asians were tied for the second-largest racial group at 1.4% in the 2015-2019 ACS.

Regarding nativity, 2.7% of Andover Borough residents were foreign-born in the 2015-2019 ACS, a loss of 8.1 percentage points from the 2006-2010 ACS percentage (10.8%). As a point of comparison, New Jersey’s foreign-born resident percentage was 23.4% in the 2019 ACS, which is significantly higher than Andover Borough’s. Since there were so few foreign-born persons in the 2015-2019 ACS, the largest sources (countries) are not reported here.

The median age in Andover Borough increased slightly from 40.4 years in 2010 to 40.9 years in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is similar to the median age in New Jersey (40.2 years). During the same time period, the percentage of people under the age of 18 years, which corresponds predominantly to school-age children, declined from 21.1% to 18.0%, a loss of 3.1 percentage points.

With respect to educational attainment for adults aged 25 and over, 31.5% of the population had a bachelor’s degree or higher in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is a gain of 10.4 percentage points from the 2006-2010 ACS percentage (21.1%). Andover Borough’s percentage of persons having a bachelor’s degree or higher is the lower of the two communities and also lower than that of New Jersey (41.2%). Persons with graduate or professional degrees slightly increased from 7.0% to 7.8% during this time period.

¹ As the number of demographic variables provided by the United States Census Bureau is voluminous, only variables pertinent to the study are shown.

Table 3
Relevant Demographic Characteristics

Race Origin ¹	Andover Borough		Andover Township	
	2006-10 ACS 2010 Census	2015-2019 ACS	2006-10 ACS 2010 Census	2015-2019 ACS
White	534 (88.1%)	530 (90.0%)	5,547 (87.8%)	5,362 (90.1%)
Black or African American	5 (0.8%)	8 (1.4%)	202 (3.2%)	132 (2.2%)
Hispanic or Latino	46 (7.6%)	4 (0.7%)	325 (5.1%)	158 (2.7%)
American Indian and Alaska Native	2 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Asian	8 (1.3%)	8 (1.4%)	164 (2.6%)	255 (4.3%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Other Race	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Two or more Races	10 (1.7%)	39 (6.6%)	76 (1.2%)	42 (0.7%)
Age				
Under 18	21.1%	18.0%	22.1%	16.9%
18-64	66.9%	69.9%	61.9%	59.4%
65 and over	12.0%	12.1%	16.0%	23.7%
Median age (years)	40.4	40.9	45.1	47.9
Nativity				
Foreign-Born	10.8%	2.7%	5.2%	7.1%
Educational Attainment				
Bachelor's degree or higher	21.1%	31.5%	31.7%	38.8%
Graduate or professional degree	7.0%	7.8%	9.6%	11.3%
Income				
Median family income	\$78,889	\$83,958	\$105,554	\$135,052
Percentage of Persons in Poverty ages 5-17	23.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Housing Units				
Total number	263	281	2,181	2,186
Occupied units	241 (91.6%)	245 (87.2%)	2,070 (94.9%)	2,024 (92.6%)
Owner-Occupied units	157 (65.1%)	146 (59.6%)	1,843 (89.0%)	1,786 (88.2%)
Renter-Occupied units	84 (34.9%)	99 (40.4%)	227 (11.0%)	238 (11.8%)
Median value of an owner- occupied unit	\$322,100	\$282,100	\$352,600	\$273,600
Average household size	2.51	2.40	2.70	2.50

Sources: American Community Survey (2006-2010 and 2015-2019), United States Census (2010)

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

Cells shaded orange are from the 2010 Census while cells shaded blue are from the 2006-2010 American Community Survey.

Median family income increased from \$78,889 in the 2006-2010 ACS to \$83,958 in the 2015-2019 ACS, a gain of 6.4%. By comparison, median family income in New Jersey is \$105,705, which is nearly \$22,000 higher than Andover Borough's. During this time period, the percentage of school-age children (5-17) that are in poverty sharply declined from 23.0% to 0.0%.

Regarding housing, there were 281 housing units in Andover Borough in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is a gain of 18 units (+6.8%) from 2010. Over this time period, the overall occupancy rate decreased from 91.6% to 87.2% and the average household size declined from 2.51 to 2.40 persons. The majority of housing units in Andover Borough are owner-occupied (59.6%) according to the 2015-2019 ACS. Renter-occupied units accounted for 40.4% of the housing units in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is a 5.5 percentage-point gain from the 2010 percentage of 34.9%. As a point of comparison, the percentage of renter-occupied units in Andover Borough is slightly higher than that of New Jersey (36.7%). Finally, the median home price of an owner-occupied unit in the 2015-2019 ACS was \$282,100, which is a 12.4% decline from the value reported in the 2006-2010 ACS (\$322,100).

2. Andover Township

In Andover Township, Whites are also the largest race. In the 2015-2019 ACS, Andover Township was 90.1% White, which is a 2.3 percentage-point gain from the 2010 percentage (87.8%). The second-largest race in the 2015-2019 ACS was Asian, representing 4.3% of the population, which is a gain of 1.7 percentage points from the 2010 percentage of 2.6%. Hispanics had been the second-largest race in 2010.

With respect to nativity, 7.1% of Andover Township residents were foreign-born in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is a 1.9 percentage-point increase from the 2006-2010 ACS percentage (5.2%). Like Andover Borough, Andover Township's foreign-born percentage is much lower than that of New Jersey (23.4%). While not shown in the table, place of birth, which serves as a proxy for country of origin, indicates that the Philippines was the largest source of immigrants in the 2015-2019 ACS, accounting for 27.1% of the foreign-born population.

The median age in Andover Township increased from 45.1 years in 2010 to 47.9 years in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is much greater than the median age in New Jersey (40.2 years). During the same time period, the percentage of people under the age of 18, which corresponds predominantly to school-age children, decreased from 22.1% to 16.9%, a loss of 5.2 percentage points.

Regarding educational attainment for adults aged 25 and over, 38.8% of the population had a bachelor's degree or higher in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is a gain of 7.1 percentage points from the 2006-2010 ACS percentage (31.7%). The percentage of residents having a bachelor's degree or higher in Andover Township is slightly lower than that of New Jersey (41.2%). The percentage of persons with a graduate degree increased from 9.6% to 11.3% during this time period.

Median family income increased from \$105,554 in the 2006-2010 ACS to \$135,052 in the 2015-2019 ACS, a 27.9% increase. Median family income in Andover Township is \$29,000 higher than the median family income in New Jersey (\$105,705), and \$51,000 higher than Andover Borough. During this time period, there were no school-age children (ages 5-17) in poverty.

Regarding housing, there were 2,186 housing units in Andover Township in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is nearly unchanged since 2010. Over this time period, the average household size decreased from 2.70 to 2.50 persons and the overall occupancy rate declined from 94.9% to 92.6%. The majority of housing units in Andover Township are owner-occupied (88.2%) according to the 2015-2019 ACS. Renter-occupied units accounted for 11.8% of the occupied units in the 2015-2019 ACS, which is nearly unchanged from the 2010 percentage of 11.0%. The percentage of renter-occupied units in Andover Township is much lower than that of New Jersey (36.7%) and Andover Borough (40.4%). Finally, the median home price of an owner-occupied unit in the 2015-2019 ACS was \$273,600, which is a 22.4% decline from the value reported in the 2006-2010 ACS (\$352,600). The median home price in Andover Borough is slightly higher than that of Andover Township.

C. District Overview

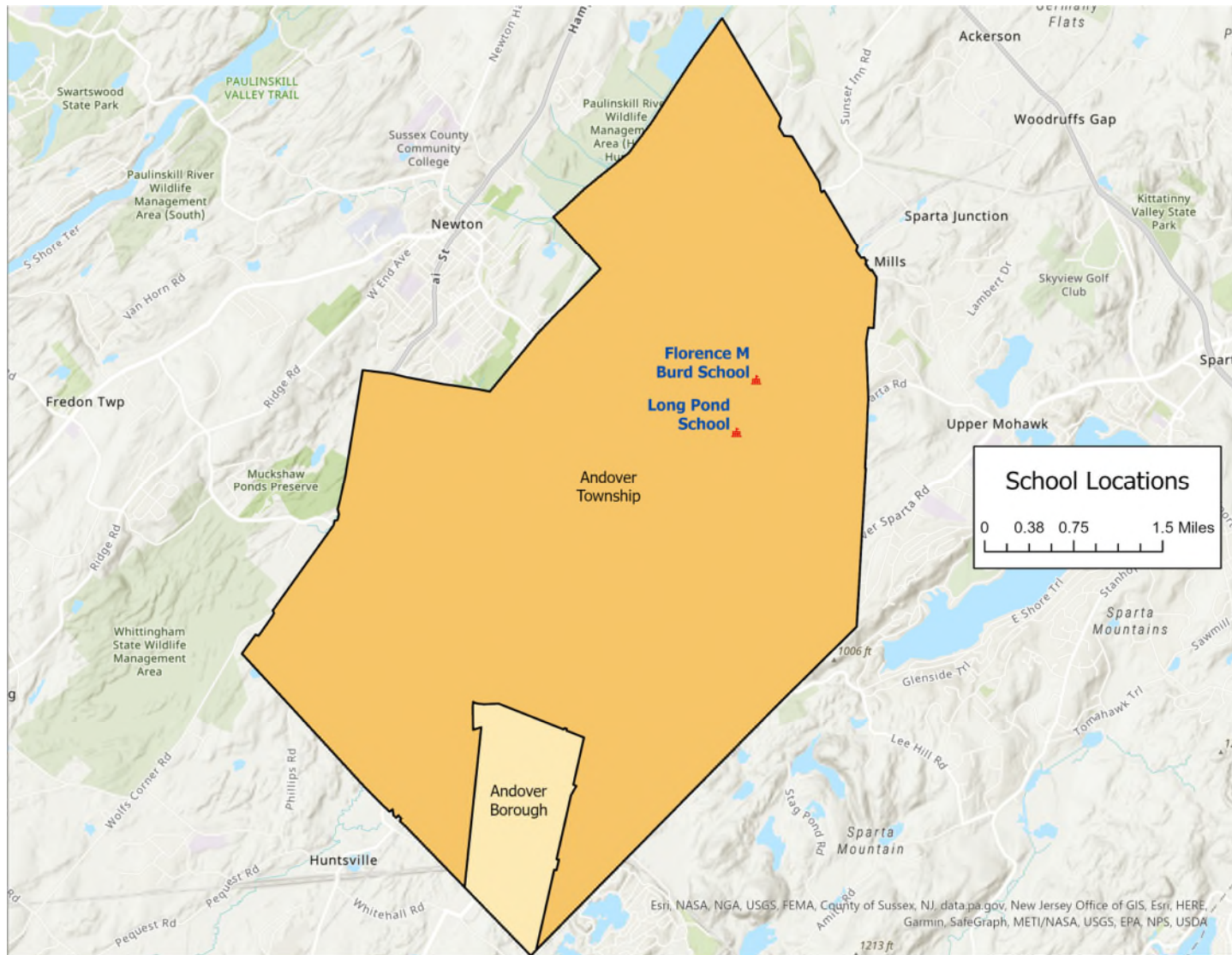
The Andover Regional School District (“Andover Regional”) is a PK-8 school district consisting of two schools. For pre-kindergarten through fourth grade, children attend Florence M. Burd Elementary School (“Burd”). Children then attend Long Pond Middle School (“Long Pond”) for grades 5-8. The locations of the schools are shown in Figure 1.

D. Explanation of the Cohort-Survival Ratio Method

In this study, historical enrollments from 2015-16 through 2020-21 were obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education (“NJDOE”) 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 1.00 indicates stable enrollment, less than 1.00 indicates declining enrollment, and greater than 1.00 indicates increasing enrollment. If, for example, a school district had 100 fourth graders and the next year only had 95 fifth graders, the survival ratio would be 0.95.

The CSR method assumes that what happened in the recent past will also happen in the future. In essence, this method provides a linear projection of the population. 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 or decline not experienced historically (i.e., a change in the historical trend), the CSR method must be modified and supplemented with additional information.

Figure 1
School Locations



E. Historical Enrollment Trends

Historical enrollments for students attending Andover Regional from 2015-16 to 2020-21 are shown in Table 4. Over this time period, enrollments (PK-8) have been slowly declining. Enrollment was 436 in 2020-21, which is a loss of 71 students from the 2015-16 enrollment of 507. Table 4 also shows computed average survival ratios based on the last six years of historical data. 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 project enrollments five years into the future.

Historical enrollments are also shown in Table 4 by grade configuration (PK-4 and 5-8). Self-contained special education/ungraded students were incorporated into the totals by grade configuration. For grades PK-4 at Burd, enrollments declined through 2018-19 before stabilizing. In 2020-21, enrollment is 229, which is a loss of 40 students from the 2015-16 enrollment of 269.

For grades 5-8 at Long Pond, enrollments slowly declined before stabilizing. Enrollment is 207 in 2020-21, which is a loss of 31 students from the 2015-16 enrollment of 238.

Table 4
Andover Regional Historical Enrollments (PK-8)
2015-16 to 2020-21

Year ¹	PK RE ²	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	SE ³	PK-4 Total	5-8 Total	PK-8 Total
2015-16	4	42	43	50	57	55	59	64	65	45	23	269	238	507
2016-17	0	53	44	45	51	58	51	61	62	67	19	266	245	511
2017-18	6	43	45	46	44	53	56	43	59	56	13	244	220	464
2018-19	7	42	38	44	45	42	51	55	44	56	21	225	220	445
2019-20	11	47	43	39	48	48	44	54	56	41	20	244	207	451
2020-21	6	65	34	38	34	46	47	40	56	52	18	229	207	436
Average 6-Year Ratios		0.9240 ⁴	0.9055	0.9960	0.9877	1.0073	0.9764	0.9654	1.0029	0.9487	0.0423 ⁵			

Notes: ¹Data were obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education (<http://www.nj.gov/njded/data/enr/>).

² Pre-kindergarten regular education enrollment.

³ Self-contained special education enrollment/ungraded students.

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

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

F. Birth Data

Kindergarten enrollments were calculated as follows: birth data, lagged five years behind its respective kindergarten class, were used to calculate the survival ratio for each birth-to-kindergarten cohort. For instance, in 2015, there were a total of 53 births in Andover Borough and Andover Township. Five years later (the 2020-21 school year), 65 children enrolled in kindergarten, which is equal to a survival ratio of 1.226 from birth to kindergarten. Birth counts and birth-to-kindergarten survival ratios are displayed in Table 5. Birth-to-kindergarten survival ratios 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 (or home resales), 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, charter, 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 child to a private full-day kindergarten for the first year. Andover Regional has had a full-day kindergarten program through the entire historical enrollment period, 2015-16 to 2020-21. Birth-to-kindergarten survival ratios have been very inconsistent, ranging from 0.724-1.226, and have been below 1.000 in four of the last six years.

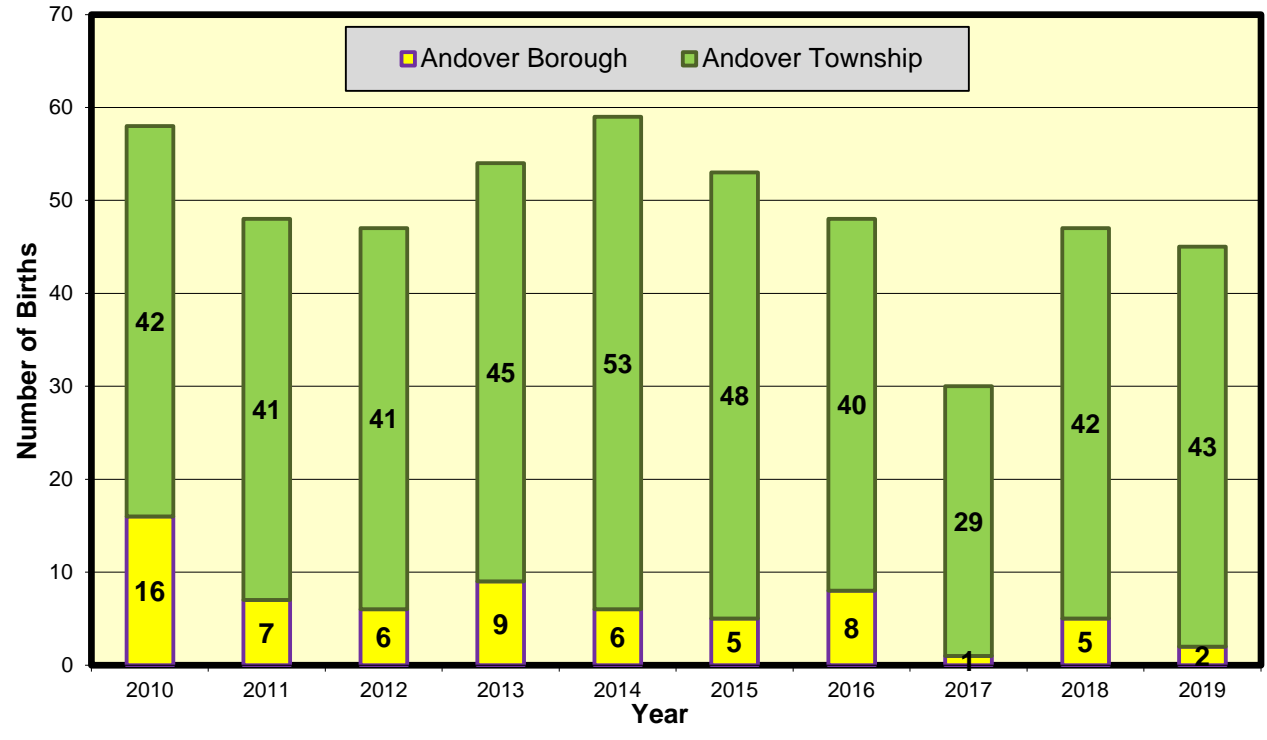
Table 5
Birth Counts and Historical Birth-to-Kindergarten Survival Ratios

Year¹	Andover Borough	Andover Township	Total Number of Births	Kindergarten Students Five Years Later	Birth-to-Kindergarten Survival Ratio
2010	16	42	58	42	0.724
2011	7	41	48	53	1.104
2012	6	41	47	43	0.915
2013	9	45	54	42	0.778
2014	6	53	59	47	0.797
2015	5	48	53	65	1.226
2016	8	40	48	N/A	N/A
2017	1	29	30	N/A	N/A
2018	5	42	47	N/A	N/A
2019	2	43	45	N/A	N/A

Note: ¹Birth data were provided by the New Jersey Center for Health Statistics from 2010-2019

Geocoded birth data were provided by the New Jersey Center for Health Statistics (“NJCHS”) from 2010-2019 by assigning geographic coordinates to a birth mother based on her street address. Births for 2020 were not yet available. Of the two communities, Andover Township consistently has had the greater number of births during this time period. As shown in Figure 2, the annual number of births in Andover Township has ranged from 29-53 while Andover Borough has ranged from 1-16. Combining the data from the two communities, the annual number of births has ranged from 30-59 with no apparent increasing or declining trend.

Figure 2
Historical Birth Counts by Community
2010-2019



G. Potential New Housing

Representatives from Andover Borough and Andover Township provided information regarding current and future development in their respective communities. A list of proposed and approved developments in each municipality, if any, will follow and includes the number of units, housing type, and project status. New houses to be built on single in-fill lots, or the subdivision of existing lots, or homes that are built after the demolition of an existing older home, were excluded. In the latter instance, there is no net gain in the number of housing units.

1. Andover Borough

In Andover Borough, there are no residential developments under construction, nor are there applications for residential subdivisions before the planning board. Future construction is limited as Andover Borough is almost entirely built out and most of the available land is either tax exempt or protected through green space preservation.

Regarding historical new construction, the number of certificates of occupancy (“CO”) is shown for each community from 2016-2020 in Table 6. In the last five years, there were no COs issued for new homes in Andover Borough.

Table 6
Number of Residential Certificates of Occupancy by Year
2016-2020

Year	Andover Borough			Andover Township		
	1&2 Family	Multi-Family/ Mixed Use	Total	1&2 Family	Multi-Family/ Mixed Use	Total
2016	0	0	0	1	1	2
2017	0	0	0	3	1	4
2018	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	0	0	0	1	0	1
2020	0	0	0	5	0	5
Total	0	0	0	10	2	12

Source: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

2. Andover Township

In Andover Township, there are no residential developments under construction, nor are there applications for residential subdivisions before the planning board.

New residential construction has been limited in Andover Township, as only 12 COs were issued over this time period, most of which were for single-family or two-family homes.

H. Enrollment Projections

Enrollments were projected for each grade from 2021-22 through 2025-26. As there are no proposed housing developments in either Andover Borough or Andover Township, the baseline enrollment projections were not modified to account for additional children from new housing developments.

Enrollments for the self-contained special education classes were computed by calculating the historical proportions of special education students with respect to the PK-4 and 5-8 subtotals and then multiplying by the future general education subtotals to estimate the future number of self-contained special education students in the PK-4 and 5-8 grade configurations.

With respect to projecting grade-level pre-kindergarten students, enrollments were projected by computing an average based on historical data from the last four years and using this value throughout the five-year projection period. In the last four years, pre-kindergarten enrollments have been fairly stable, ranging from 6-11 students per year. It was estimated that there would be eight (8) students in the program annually in the future.

On September 10, 2010, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie signed into law the Inter-district School Choice Program (“Choice”), which took effect in the 2011-12 school year. This enables students the choice in attending a school outside their district of residence if the selected school is participating in the choice program. The choice school sets the number of openings per grade level. Andover Regional does not participate in the program and therefore it has no impact on the enrollment projections.

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 Group² (“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. 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. The pre-school program would have been rolled out over a five-year period according to the following schedule:

² Introduced by the New Jersey Department of Education 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.

- 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. Andover Regional is a “Targeted” district since its DFG is “FG” with a concentration of at-risk pupils less than 40 percent (1.78%). In Table 7, the number of total eligible pre-school students is provided with the estimated five-year rollout. For the purpose of this study, it has been assumed that the district would educate its pre-school children in-house. As the table shows, there is the potential for only three (3) pre-kindergarten students as a result of the SFRA, which would have little impact on the district. 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 7
Estimated Number of Eligible Pre-School Students
as Per School Funding Reform Act of 2008

DFG (2000)	% Free/ Reduced Lunch	Total eligible	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
FG	1.78%	3	1	1	2	2	3

Source: New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education.

In a different pre-school initiative, the administration of Governor Phil Murphy announced the availability of Preschool Education Expansion Aid (“PEEA”) in 2018. In September 2018, the first round of funding (\$20.6 million) was publicized, where 31 districts received aid to expand their pre-kindergarten programs. A second round of funding was announced in January 2019, providing 33 additional school districts with roughly \$27 million in funding. The second round targeted districts whose free and reduced lunch percentage is above 20% and who have not previously received State preschool aid. Districts that receive PEEA funding will be expected to develop a plan for implementing all elements of high-quality education across the preschool program in the coming years, including conversion of all half-day slots to full-day slots with a minimum six-hour day and decreasing maximum class size to 15 children. Districts receiving funds also will be expected to provide certified teachers and aides for such programs and to include special needs students in such programs. PEEA is open to all age-eligible children who are residents of the district. PEEA funds can be used to cover costs of transportation for preschoolers, and if the district provides busing for K-12 students, it is required to provide transportation for preschoolers as well. Some districts that were eligible to apply for PEEA would fall under the “Universal” category while others would be considered “Targeted” districts. However, the main difference with this expansion aid is that districts under SFRA were restricted to serve low-income

children where now districts can educate all pre-school age children through PEEA. It appears that the Murphy administration may be moving towards a pre-school program for all children, rather than just for those who are low-income. Andover Regional did not receive a PEEA grant in either the first or second round of funding and therefore has no bearing on the outcome of this study.

Projected PK-8 enrollments for Andover Regional are shown in Table 8. Enrollments (PK-8) are projected to slowly decline throughout the projection period. Enrollment is projected to be 363 in 2025-26, which would be a loss of 73 students from the 2020-21 enrollment of 436. For grades PK-4 at Burd, enrollments are projected to be fairly stable before declining near the end of the projection period. Enrollment is projected to be 198 in 2025-26, which would be a loss of 31 students from the 2020-21 enrollment of 229. For grades 5-8 at Long Pond, enrollments are projected to decline for the next four years before reversing trend. In 2025-26, enrollment is projected to be 165, which would be a loss of 42 students from the 2020-21 enrollment of 207.

Table 8
Andover Regional Projected Enrollments (PK-8)
2021-22 to 2025-26

Year	PK RE ¹	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	SE ²	PK-4 Total	5-8 Total	PK-8 Total
2021-22	8	44	59	34	38	34	45	45	40	53	19	224	195	419
2022-23	8	28	40	59	34	38	33	43	45	38	16	213	169	382
2023-24	8	43	25	40	58	34	37	32	43	43	16	214	165	379
2024-25	8	42	39	25	40	58	33	36	32	41	15	218	151	369
2025-26	8	42	38	39	25	40	57	32	36	30	16	198	165	363

Notes: ¹Pre-kindergarten regular education enrollment.

²Self-contained special education enrollment/ungraded students.

I. Capacity Analysis

Table 9 shows the capacities of the schools in Andover Regional in comparison to the enrollments in 2020-21 and the projected enrollments in 2025-26. Using the capacities computed by the Facilities Efficiency Standards (“FES”) methodology, the differences between building capacity and actual/projected number of students were computed. Positive values indicate available extra seating while negative values indicate inadequate seating, also known as “unhoused students.” It is important to note that the term “unhoused” students is not intended to convey that there will not be available space for students. Instead, this section is an overview of capacity, based upon how the space within the school district currently is being utilized. Districts with unhoused students can accommodate these children by increasing class sizes, which in turn increases the school’s capacity. As such, the capacity of a school is not a fixed value and can be changed depending on how the building is used.

If Andover Regional decides to close Burd and educate all children in Long Pond, the table also shows the differences between capacity and enrollment for 2020-21 (if consolidation had occurred) and in 2025-26, which is the last year of the projection period.

Table 9
Capacity Analysis
Andover Regional School District

School	Capacity ¹	Actual Enrollment 2020-21	Difference	Projected Enrollment 2025-26	Difference
Florence M. Burd E.S. (PK-4)	391	229	+162	198	+193
Long Pond M.S. (5-8)	425	207	+218	165	+260
Long Pond School (PK-8) with Proposed School Consolidation	425	436	-11	363	+62

Note: ¹District Capacity Calculation Methodology using facilities efficiency standards (F.E.S.) at 90% utilization rate for Burd and 85% utilization rate for Long Pond.

In 2020-21, Burd (+162) and Long Pond (+218) have a surplus of seats. If both schools remain open, the number of available seats is projected to increase in each building as enrollments are projected to decline.

If Andover Regional decides to close Burd and educate all children in Long Pond, the school would have been at capacity (-11) in 2020-21. However, due to a projected decline in enrollment, the school is projected to have 62 surplus seats in 2025-26.

The above chart utilizes the NJDOE FES Worksheet calculating the school's capacity. It should be noted that not all spaces in the facility are capacity generating. Depending how the district utilizes the various spaces, may impact the overall capacity.

Table 10 identifies the required number of academic classrooms to accommodate the projected population per grade level for 2025-26 and utilizes the FES class size model. The analysis shows that generally two (2) classrooms per grade are required, with the exception of the 5th grade and Pre-K.

A total of 22 academic classrooms are required to accommodate the Pre-K – 8 and two (2) classrooms for Special Ed and two (2) Science Labs.

In addition to the capacity generating rooms, the facility has non-capacity generating rooms for the district's program. Based on the existing plan, Long Pond has 19 general academic classrooms. This would require the conversion of one of the non-capacity generating spaces into a classroom. As an example, SGI Rooms 157 and 158 can be converted to a general academic classroom or a science lab or a tech room can be used as a capacity generated space to accommodate the total population.

In addition, the school will require three (3) larger rooms with toilets for the PK- K population. The district has three (3) basic options. First is to convert four (4) classrooms into three (3) PK- K rooms, minimum 900 sf. with ADA compliant toilets. Second is to convert three (3) existing classrooms with toilets and obtain a waiver on the required room size. And third is to construct a small addition for the new Kindergarten rooms. This third option would have a significant cost and would add additional but unneeded overall capacity to the school.

We would recommend that the district review its program needs for the Pre-K – 8 facility to identify any other non-capacity spaces that need to be provided. Core spaces are adequate size for a cafeteria and gymnasium.

Based on the above, we have provided a concept plan to house the identified population and program requirements.

Concept Plan A.

The plan identifies the required addition and room utilization. It also shows the elementary school, middle school, shared rooms, core areas and administration areas.

Construction Cost

New Construction		\$3,825,000.00
Renovation	\$	200,000.00
Site Work	\$	325,000.00
		<hr/>
		\$4,350,000.00
Project Cost		\$1,000,000.00
		<hr/>
Total		\$5,350,000.00

Table 10
Detailed Capacity Analysis
Andover Regional

CAPACITY ANALYSIS LONG POND 2025-26					
CAPACITY GENERATING SPACES					
GRADE	ENROLL 25-26	F.E.S.	REQUIRED ROOMS		AVAILABLE CLASSROOM
				Rounded Up	
Pre-k	8	15	0.5	2	
K	42	21	2.0	3	
1	38	21	1.8	2	
2	39	21	1.9	2	
3	25	21	1.2	2	
4	40	23	1.7	2	
5	57	23	2.5	3	
6	32	23	1.4	2	
7	36	23	1.6	2	
8	30	23	1.3	2	
	TOTAL			22	19
SCI LAB	-	23		2	2
SE	16	12	1.3	2	2
	TOTAL	363		26	23
NON-CAPACITY GENERATING SPACES					
Art					1
Music					1
Fam Sci					1
SGL					2
Café					1
GYM					1

Andover Regional – Construction Cost Budgets

The following are construction cost budgets for options available to the district to accommodate the entire population at Long Pond.

Option 1.

Convert four (4) classrooms into 3 PK- K rooms with ADA toilets. Scope of work will require interior demolition and reconstruction of approximately 3,300 sf.

This option eliminates one (1) capacity generating room and can be accommodated by class size policy or using one of the non-capacity generating rooms for classroom.

Opinion of probable cost: \$1,000.000.

Option 2.

Use three (3) existing 800 sf. rooms with toilets as PK- K, and attempt to obtain a waiver on required room size.

Opinion of probable cost: Minimal, depending on DOE waiver requirements.

Option 3.

Construct a small addition to accommodate the three PK- K rooms with ADA toilets and separate entrance. The addition would be approximately 4,500 sf.

Opinion of probable cost: \$2,000.000.

III. EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

A. Introduction

This chapter will examine the educational issues that may flow from the studied school consolidation. The consultants conducted site visits, interviewed key administrators and staff, and studied data concerning student performance, the school environment and operations in order to answer the following research questions:

1. Teaching and Learning: How will student learning and educational outcomes be impacted? How does the potential alternative structure strengthen the district academically? Does Long Pond have suitable spaces to accommodate Burd students' educational needs? How will the consolidation impact articulation across grade levels? How will consolidation impact student transitions? Will additional supports, services, and course offerings be necessary to support students? How will consolidation improve professional development and professional learning? Will there be increased collaboration and mentorship opportunities at the location, for example, by making it easier for teachers to collaborate on curriculum improvements?
2. Special Student Populations: Will students in need of academic and/or behavioral intervention and special education services be impacted by the consolidation in terms of access to programs and services in the least restrictive environment?

3. **School Experience:** How will the in-school experience for students be improved: Will students have access to safe, clean and engaging learning environments? How will the consolidation improve student safety? Will there be an impact on co-curricular offerings such as clubs, athletics, etc.? Will there be social and emotional benefits for students? Will the consolidation lead to the need for greater discipline?
4. **What Needs to Happen For A Successful Consolidation:** In the event the district moves forward on the school reconfiguration, the consultants will also provide our recommendations for the transition. What improvements need to be made to Long Pond's classrooms and facilities to accommodate the educational needs of Burd students? Will there be an impact on staffing?

B. District and School Profiles

Every school district is unique in terms of its mission, points of pride, needs, and strategies for improvement. In order to recognize this uniqueness, this section will provide a broad overview of the Andover Regional School District in terms of its elementary and middle school. This narrative description was developed through the site visits and discussions with school leadership, information from the NJDOE School Performance Reports and district web sites.

The student population at Andover Regional is slightly more than 400 students divided just about equally between the two schools. The district has few socio-economically disadvantaged students or English language learners but a fast-growing number of disabled students requiring Individual Education Plans ("IEPs"). We will discuss the implications of the consolidation regarding special education students later in this chapter.

The mission of the district is to “prepare students to successfully meet the challenges of today and tomorrow by fostering a love of learning. Our safe, supportive, and stimulating environment encourages students to reach their full potential. It is an expectation that all students shall achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards at all grade levels. In Andover Regional, every child catches the learning spirit!”

The district has strived to provide a technology-rich educational environment. Both schools have 1:1 device ratio in all grades and all classrooms have an interactive smart board. Teachers have become technology sophisticated due to the movement to virtual learning during the pandemic (many teachers are still teaching hybrid classrooms) and this may present opportunities for the district to continue to integrate instructional technology into the classroom and foster learning activities outside of the regular school day. The district has developed capacity in this area, including a Network Systems Administrator and a technician who serve both schools. The district also has a NJ Smart (NJDOE reports) coordinator. The district uses Genesis as its student information platform.

1. Burd

Burd serves students in grades PK-4. The school schedule is based on eight-40 minute periods during the school day which runs from 8:55-3:40. In grades PK-2, the school uses a completely self-contained classroom instructional model where one teacher provides instruction

in all core subjects. Grades 3 and 4 use a semi-departmentalized model (co-teach) where two teachers provide instruction in core subjects (one in Math and Science and one in Social Studies and ELA). The co-teach model in the later elementary grades will smooth the transition to a departmentalized model at Long Pond. Specials are provided in a dedicated art room, library/media space, computer lab, and a gym. The school has a full time physical education teacher and a shared health teacher with Long Pond. The school has a half-day integrated pre-school program and a full-day kindergarten program.

Burd has a fee-based before/after school care program that is being operated by the Sussex County YMCA. The program currently uses the all-purpose room and space for this program will need to be accommodated at Long Pond in the event of a school consolidation.

2. Long Pond

Long Pond serves students in grades 5-8. The school uses a block scheduling approach (A-Day/B-Day rotation) based on 75-minute periods. ELA and Math blocks are offered every day and physical education/health and specials are offered 5 times every two weeks.

The school has a dedicated Art Room and General Music Room. The school also has a 21st Century Learning Lab (Design and Build); Research and Computer Application Room; Chorus Room; Band Room; Art Room; World Language Room; Fitness and Conditioning Room; Gymnasium; and Cafeteria. Long Pond's library was converted to a 21st Century classroom consisting of 3D printers, interactive televisions, Mac desktops and a TV broadcast room. A fitness and conditioning room were also added. The students are provided recess time every day at Long Pond. Enrichment opportunities are enhanced through the creation of a new period during the school day.

The school is served by a full-time nurse and a full-time guidance counselor. The district has a full-time social worker and school psychologist who are mostly deployed to the Child Study Team.

Long Pond provides students with the opportunity to participate in many clubs and activities including:

1. Sports: Basketball (Boys & Girls), Field Hockey (Girls), Track and Field (Boys & Girls).
2. Activities: EARTH Club, Yearbook, Peer Leadership, Student Council, Art Club, Intramural Basketball, Intramural Floor Hockey, Intramural Softball and TREP\$. Robotics Club and PEP classes such as Coding, Design and Build, News Broadcast.

Athletics and clubs are an important part of producing well rounded students and in establishing a common school identity and culture. The schools provide a similarly broad offering of co-curricular activities and athletics typical for the ages of the children being served. It is clear that the offerings in these areas provide students with opportunities to support the educational program outside of the classroom. The school consolidation may provide the district with the financial ability, student numbers and staff capacity to increase these opportunities. The consultants also note the importance of athletic programs and clubs in upper elementary grades that can form a bridge to middle school clubs and interscholastic programs, leading to a better

student experience and higher attendance rates. Participation in athletics at the elementary and middle school level provides many benefits such as promoting good citizenship, healthy lifestyles and experiences with diverse populations.

C. Curriculum Development and Implementation

1. Overview

The district currently is implementing the New Jersey Student Learning Standards ("NJSLS") in both schools. The NJSLS are established by the New Jersey State Board of Education and describe what students should know and be able to do upon completion of their education. The academic standards serve as the foundation for local district curricula, scope, sequencing and pacing that is then used by teachers in their daily lesson plans. The standards provide local school districts with clear and specific benchmarks for student achievement in nine content areas and are revised every five years through panels of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and representatives from higher education, business, and the community. The standards define the Constitutional guarantee of a "Thorough and Efficient Education" in order to prepare students for college and careers by emphasizing high-level and real-world skills. Although the foundation for the curriculum and instruction in each school is provided by the NJSLS, each school will implement the standards in different ways dependent on local needs and school capacity. In the following section we will discuss how each school is implementing the NJSLS. This information is pulled directly from the NJDOE School Performance Reports, the district web sites and information provided to us during the site visits.

New Jersey Administrative Code requires that each local board of education "ensure that curriculum and instruction are designed and delivered in such a way that all students are able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills specified by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards." In order to accomplish this, schools will develop curriculum and curriculum guides that provide for scope, pacing and sequencing that is aligned with these standards. Basically, scope, pacing and sequence establish the content of a particular curriculum (scope) and the order in which the curriculum presents that material (sequence) and the recommended number of lessons and amount of time for instruction. The curriculum guide will help teachers to teach the right content at the right time, to connect previous learning to new learning goals, and allow lessons to build on one another. The curriculum guide can then be used to link learning strategies, materials, and texts at the school level as well as guide professional development.

Pacing of instruction is also important to help teachers stay on track and to ensure curricular continuity across grades and schools in the district. Another important consideration for pacing is to ensure that the content that will be tested on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment ("NJSLSA") is taught prior to the testing dates.

In order to facilitate the development of curriculum and curriculum guides, the NJDOE has developed a model curriculum which includes all standards of the grade-level content organized into five units of study, each with targeted student learning objectives, intended for six weeks of instruction each. Sequencing and pacing of the curriculum are also provided. Formative assessments that allow for measuring student proficiency of those target skills are included. Based

on these resources, teachers will be able to develop unit and lesson plans to implement the curriculum. See [Model Curriculum \(nj.gov\)](#). Guidance on scheduling is also referenced. For example, the department recommends that, in order to implement the model curriculum, 90-minutes of uninterrupted literacy instruction for all students in grades K-5, and 80 minutes for grades 6 through 8, should be provided.

However, schools cannot just adopt the model curriculum as their own. It is important for curriculum guides to be developed and driven locally in order to ensure that they meet the specific needs of the school and the students they serve. This is best done through a teacher-led process informed by data and developed through reflection and consensus. The guides must also be continually reviewed and adapted to meet changing needs. It appears that the district is engaged in this type of collegial localized curriculum development and review process supported through the Tri-District Consortium.

For students to learn the curriculum, teachers must be highly adept at monitoring the progress of each student and adjusting instruction accordingly. For this reason, students cannot be moved through the curriculum in mass as this will lead to many students moving from grade level to grade level without sufficient knowledge to understand and master more challenging concepts. Teachers need to adapt the curriculum and differentiate instruction so that individual students move to the next unit only when they exhibit mastery. Teachers must be able to analyze and respond to the individual learning needs of students. An effective evaluation and professional development program tailored to the needs of teachers is important to support these instructional goals and we believe that such processes are currently in place at both schools.

Our review indicates that the district successfully established the required curriculum development process and has adopted and implemented curriculum that is aligned to the content and skills outlined in the NJSLs. The district Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment leads the curriculum development and implementation process across all grade levels. The supervisor also works with colleagues at the Tri-District Consortium on developing curriculum frameworks and best practices which informs curriculum writing by the teachers in each school. Curriculum writing is done throughout the school year and during the summer. Teachers are provided vertical team time to identify and remedy any curriculum gaps between the transitional years (4th Grade and 5th Grade) at the two schools.

Curriculum goals currently include:

- Work with the Tri-District consortium to write a unified Social Studies & Health/PE Curriculum to implement the new standards for 2022-2023.
- Work with the Tri-District consortium to write new World Language & Visual/Performing Arts Curriculum to start in 2021-2022 to implement the new standards.

School consolidation may present a number of opportunities to improve curriculum development, implementation, and tracking student progress regarding the NJSLs. Teachers across all subjects can more easily be involved in writing the curriculum. This level of articulation will be exceptionally helpful to ensure that quality is consistent across all grades.

2. Professional Development

An essential part of curriculum development and implementation is teacher professional development, which should occur as part of a vibrant professional learning community. For example, in order to provide effective instruction, teachers must learn new teaching strategies. By incorporating innovative teaching methods in the classroom, teachers can change the way they engage and teach their students to become life-long learners. The narrative below indicates clearly that each of the schools is committed to professional development through the implementation of best practices. Each school currently has its own Professional Learning Community. The collective bargaining agreement provides for 2 days of professional development per month (whole group).

At Burd school, professional development is offered in-district through the professional learning community. Staff attend professional development outside the district when appropriate. A number of professional development opportunities are provided to the staff within the scheduled day as well.

At Long Pond, professional development is provided weekly in grade level team meetings (Grades 5 and 7; Grades 6 and 8- this reflects shared science in 5/7 and shared social studies in 6/8) and in twice monthly subject area professional learning communities. "Lunch and Learns" are also used to provide professional development opportunities.

The district has developed professional development goals, for example, to continue improving Tier 1 literacy instruction for all grades K-8.

School consolidation could assist the schools in developing and delivering high quality, rigorous and effective professional development through better planning, more high quality professional development opportunities, easier facilitating of professional learning communities based on best practices, and developing online learning opportunities as needed.

3. Student Performance

Performance on the NJSLA is an important indicator for the effectiveness of the curriculum and the instruction being provided in any given school and the need for additional interventions to ensure students are college and career ready. In order to measure student progress toward achieving mastery of the New Jersey Learning Standards in English Language Arts and Math, the State utilizes the New Jersey Learning Assessment (formerly known as the PARCC Subject Area Tests). Student scores are divided into five categories: Not Meeting; Partially Meeting; Approaching; Meeting; and Exceeding Proficiency Expectations. The NJSLA data is very useful in determining the extent to which a given school is successfully implementing the New Jersey Learning Standards.

However, in reviewing NJSLA data, one should be cognizant of the impact of suppression rules (that protect privacy rights of small groups of students) which create difficulties in drawing insights from the disaggregated NJSLA data in some areas. For this reason, data may not be available for some subgroups of students. We will develop a fuller picture of the schools in the sections that follow our review of NJSLA data by reference to other metrics (i.e. chronic absenteeism).

A. Assessment Results and Growth Over Time: Set forth below is aggregated student performance data on the various subject level and grade level State assessments administered during the Spring 2019 administration. The State assessments were not administered in the spring of 2020 nor the spring of 2021 due to the ongoing pandemic. The percentages represent students who met or exceeded state established expectations. The data was obtained from <https://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/results/reports/1819/Spring2019NJSLAResults.shtml>.

The tables provide data indicating the percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations for years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 as well as the change over the period in order to establish growth over time. State average scores for 2019 as well as for change are also provided for comparative purposes.

Table 11
Percentage of Students who Met or Exceeded Expectations on NJSLA

Test	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	State Avg. 2019	Change 2015-2019	State Average Change
ELA 3	26.1	42.9	50.9	42.2	40	50	13.9	6
Math 3	32.6	39.3	56.6	40	44.4	55	11.8	10
ELA 4	57.8	43.1	61.2	57.9	60	57	2.2	6
Math 4	55.6	51	55.1	64.9	57.8	51	2.2	10
ELA 5	36.4	37.3	46.7	45.3	74.1	58	37.7	6
Math 5	50.9	52.9	42.2	48.1	55.6	47	4.7	6
ELA 6	36	40.3	49.1	39	50.9	56	14.9	7
Math 6	30	45.2	47.2	48.8	47.4	41	17.4	0
ELA 7	35.7	47.4	61.4	70.2	88.9	63	53.2	11
Math 7	28.6	35.1	36.8	50.9	71.1	42	42.5	5
ELA 8	65.8	59	49.2	58.2	66.7	63	0.9	11
Math 8	37.3	16.7	14	23.1	41	29	3.7	5
Algebra 1 (8th Gr)	82.4	73.3	83.3	82.4	94.1	75	NA	NA

"Change": The percentage point change of the percent of students who met or exceeded expectations from year one (2015) to year five (2019). **Bold:** Designates Above State Average for 2019 and Change 2015-19.

The district outperformed the State average on 10 of the 13 subjects/grades tested. The district outperformed the State average change over the five year period on 7 of 12 subjects/grades tested.

In addition to the NJSLA data, performance on the Grade 5 Science assessment exceeded the state average in both the 5th (38% District versus 29.2 State Average Levels 3 and 4) and 8th Grade (21% District versus 19.8% State Average Levels 3 and 4) assessments.

It is clear from the State assessment data that Andover students are being provided with a high quality education and the need for additional interventions and remedial programs should not be an issue for the school consolidation.

B. Student Growth: Student growth is a measure of how much students are learning each year. The State calculates a Student Growth Percentile to show how students progressed from grade level to grade level when compared to students Statewide with similar test scores over time. Student Growth Percentile Methodology ("SGP") creates a measure of how students progressed in grades 4 through 8 in Language Arts Literacy and in grades 4 through 7 in Math when compared to other students with a similar test score history. A student's SGP falls between 1 and 99 and can be grouped into three levels: Low Growth: Less than 35; Typical Growth: Between 35 and 65; and High Growth: Greater than 65. If the student growth percentiles for all students in the school are ordered from smallest to largest, the median student growth percentile ("mSGP") for the school is the percentile in the middle of that list. The State average for all subjects will be 50.

Table 12
SGP Scores

School	ELA 2017-18	Math 2017-18	ELA 2018-19	Math 2018-19
Burd	49	64	63	66
Long Pond	46	48	65.5	65

Source: 2018-19 Student Performance Reports.

Note: Due to the cancellation of statewide assessments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, student growth percentile were not calculated for the 2019-20 school year.

Both schools show moderate to high student growth in both ELA and Math, which is very encouraging. If we look at disaggregated growth scores, economically disadvantaged students experience high growth scores at Long Pond (no data for this subgroup was available for Burd) and disabled students showed mostly moderate growth at both schools (except low growth in ELA at Burd).

C. Conclusion: The data provides evidence that the district is effectively implementing the required curriculum and instruction in both schools. Based on this analysis, the authors do not envision any issues for the grade and school consolidation such as the need to accommodate additional programs or interventions or supports in Long Pond to ensure students are college and career ready.

D. Chronic Absenteeism

In order to widen our review of student performance beyond assessment results, we examine in this section data concerning chronic absenteeism, which is defined by the NJDOE as missing 10 percent of the school days (some 18 days for most school districts or two days per month). This is an important student performance indicator as absenteeism negatively affects a student's academic performance. According to Attendance Works ([10 Facts About School Attendance - Attendance Works](#)) students, "who live in communities with high levels of poverty are four times more likely to be chronically absent than others..." The reasons for being absent are often beyond the student's or families control such as "unstable housing, unreliable transportation and a lack of access to health care." However, the school can take steps to improve attendance by forming relationships with students and families and engaging them in positive ways, creating a positive school climate, or providing mentors for chronically absent students. These steps can improve attendance and academic performance.

The following chart demonstrate where chronic absenteeism is a problem. Disaggregated data (by special student populations) is provided for each school to provide insights regarding the students and communities most impacted.

Table 13
Chronic Absenteeism

School	Schoolwide	Schoolwide State Average	Socio-economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities
Burd	10.9	9.2	14.7	15.4
Long Pond	6.4	8.7	10.0	4.3

Source: NJDOE School Performance Reports for 2018-19

The table above indicates that Burd is facing challenges reflected by this statistic, and may want to review current strategies for addressing chronic absenteeism, especially in regards to disadvantaged students and those classified as in need of special education services and programs who appear to be absent from school more often than other students. The consolidations of students in one school may provide greater staff capacity and expertise to focus on the underlying reasons for the absenteeism and the needs of these students.

E. Students In Need of Special Education Programs and Services

In this section we will examine the educational impact of the proposal on students identified as in need of special programs and services. The district has a full time Director of Special Services as well as a full time Child Study Team which serves students in both schools. This structure should facilitate the movement of all special education programs and services to Long Pond in the event of a grade consolidation. The district provides a full continuum of Child Study Team services including OT, PT, Speech, and academic support services.

The classification rate for each school is provided below. Table 14 indicates that Burd has a classification rate higher than the State average but that these rates appear to be declining over time. This decline could provide solid evidence that the interventions being introduced through the Response to Intervention ("RTI") processes are working. For example, the schools are currently focused on improving Tier 1 interventions. Given that approximately half of the new special education referrals come through the RTI process, improvements in interventions will yield solid benefits for Andover Regional children. There are two intervention teachers at Burd and the district is considering adding intervention teachers at Long Pond. Long Pond already has two RTI coordinators.

Table 14
Classification Rate by School

District Name	Classification Rate 2019-20	Classification Rate 2017-18
Burd	21.2	24.2
Long Pond	19.7	21.6
State Average (As of 10/15) (Public and Nonpublic)	17.93	17.39

(Source- School Performance Report; NJDOE Special Education Data)

The district has an integrated pre-school program which includes six autistic children. In order to serve autistic students as they progress in grade level, the district may need to add a specialized program and classroom. Both schools are providing resource room services. There are specialized LLD; MD; ER/BD and OOD classrooms which will also need to be accommodated at Long Pond in the event of the consolidation.

The consultants believe that the school consolidation in Long Pond provides opportunities to better serve students in need of special education programs and services. For example, there will be more flexibility in using staff for in-class supports to deliver the IEP. It will also allow for synergies to be created in the provision of special programs and resource room services. It will also be easier to providing intervention supports across grade levels.

F. School and Class Size

1. School Size

Each of the schools has an enrollment of below 400 students, which would classify them as small schools. The research has found that a small school environment is conducive to learning. In small schools, teachers will interact more often with students and know them better and will thereby take personal responsibility for their success. However, schools can be too small. When classes become too small the group dynamics will be increasingly difficult. (See Lee and Loeb, 2000). For example, individual students more easily dominate the group and disrupt learning. The range of ideas may not be as broad, life experiences as great and perspectives as diverse which may stunt discussion required to get at deeper learning and problem solving. In addition, learning has both social and academic components and having too few students will restrict the ability for friend groups to form and the power of cliques may grow.

A school is too small when it is no longer able to provide a reasonable breadth and depth of courses, enrichment, and curriculars and to provide students with the social and emotional environment brought through a diverse set of classmates. For example, teachers in larger schools have more colleagues on which to draw for advice and discussion, interactions that arguably lead to improved effectiveness.

Andover Regional, although undoubtedly providing a quality education to its students, may need to reflect on what will happen educationally if class sizes continue to drop and whether it will be able to create a learning environment in both schools that will expose students to the breadth

and depth of programs and experiences required for them to enter high school with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed. Consolidating students in one school could ensure a robust classroom and school environment and professional learning community into the future.

2. Class Size

Much of the local concern with a school consolidation will focus on the impact on the number of staff members who will be working with students and how this in turn will impact the student educational experience. For example, parents will want to know whether class sizes (the average number of students in the classroom) will increase.

Table 15
Class Sections and Sizes (Projected for School Year 2021-22)

Grade	Sections	Average Class Size
PK	NA	NA
K	3	17
First	3	17
Second	2	18
Third	2	21
Fourth	2	17
Fifth	3	17
Six	3	16
Seventh	3	15
Eighth	3	19

Source: 2021-22 Budget Presentation to Andover BOE

The average class size for 2021-22 is approximately 17 which is consistent with past years and low in terms of average class sizes throughout New Jersey. The consultants recommend that, in the event of the consolidation of all grades at Long Pond, the district continue to offer the number of sections/class sizes indicated above to reflect the district's continued commitment to low class sizes. We note, however, that future revenue shortfalls due to declining enrollments and State aid may not make this possible.

G. School Safety

An important condition for student success is a safe and secure school environment conducive to learning. The State of New Jersey requires school districts to report on an annual basis the number of incidents of violence, vandalism, weapons, bullying and substance abuse.

Although we should be careful interpreting this data given the low student numbers in some of the schools being studied, it is safe to conclude from this chart that the two schools have similar low incidents of student behavioral issues and are below the state average. It should also be noted that the schools have taken this issue very seriously and have implemented a number of school safety projects and initiatives.

Consolidating all grades into one school could be an asset in implementing both preventive measures such as physical hardening of the one building and campus and in terms of training and processes.

Given the low incidents of HIB at Long Pond, we do not envision any significant problems concerning student bullying and note the administration of Long Pond has indicated that they are considering a school within a school model for the middle grades which would also alleviate some concerns in this area. We are concerned regarding the incidents of violence and substances recorded at Long Pond and would urge a deeper review of this issue by the district.

Table 16
School Safety Indicators

SCHOOL	Incidents Per 100	Incidents Violence, Vandalism, Weapons	Incidents Substances	Incidents HIB	Suspensions % of Students
Burd	0	0	0	0	0
Long Pond	3.21	4	3	0	6.9%

Source: NJDOE School Performance Report 2018-19

H. School Transitions

Transitions from one school to another often pose challenges for students and families both academically and socially. The proposed grade consolidation will reduce the number of transitions from two (Burd to Long Pond to Newton High School) to one (Long Pond to Newton High School). These transitions are important since student achievement often lags the year after the transition to a new school. For example, research suggests that, after the transition to high school, students' grade point averages and attendance often decline. (Barone et al., 1991; Reyes et al, 1994). Alspaugh (1998) found that students experiencing a double transition (where the student moves from elementary to middle and then from middle to high school) experienced a greater achievement loss and higher dropout rates than those experiencing a single transition (from a K-8 school to high school).

Although Burd and Long Pond have taken steps to alleviate the impact of the transition from 4th to 5th Grade (including a process for supporting the rising 4th graders including meetings between the teachers), a transition during the elementary years can be difficult for students and families. A 4th to 5th Grade transition is also not a natural demarcation point in a child's academic progression. For example, curriculum bands involving the later elementary grades leading up to middle school are not easily separated (the State curriculum standards are banded for grades 3-5). Eliminating this transition will provide opportunities to improve teaching and learning as well as the student experience overall.

I. Educational Conclusions & Answers to Research Questions

Andover Regional has much of which it should be proud. Our review has revealed that the schools of the district have put in place the curriculum necessary to support mastery of the learning standards as well as aligned programs and instruction. The schools have made significant investments in professional development, enrichment, co-curricular activities and technology to serve their students and families. The issue that faces the district is the need to keep the pace with changing curriculum expectations and to expand educational opportunity and student potential in the face of declining enrollments and State aid. The district must be able to provide the resources necessary to furnish every child with the opportunity to discover their talents and interests and then prepare them academically to succeed in those aspirations.

The cost of providing the New Jersey Learning Standards is growing every year as instructional Technology and STEM programs continue to be infused into the curriculum. The district must also continue to grow its budget in order to provide for the fast-growing need for programs and services for students with disabilities. The question is whether grade consolidation is a viable option for the district to consider in order to address these challenges and to provide this level of educational opportunity into the future. The consultants believe that the answer to this question is yes. This conclusion is grounded in the consultants' answers to the research questions we posed at the beginning of this chapter.

In order to determine the feasibility of a new structure, the consultants posed the following research questions as noted at the beginning of the chapter.

1. Teaching and Learning: How will student learning and educational outcomes be impacted? How does the potential alternative strengthen the district academically? Does Long Pond have suitable spaces to accommodate Burd's students' educational needs? How will the consolidation impact articulation and student tracking? How will consolidation impact student transitions? Will additional support, services, and course offerings be available to students? How will consolidation improve professional development and professional learning?

The grade consolidation provides the opportunity to enhance teaching and learning in a number of ways. We believe that students in all of the schools will have the opportunity to receive a higher quality education. School consolidation will present distinct advantages for students and will facilitate accomplishing certain critical educational goals. For example, there is a substantial body of research on the characteristics of schools that work which can be summarized as follows:

- A challenging curriculum aligned to the New Jersey Learning Standards;
- A positive school culture where all students matter and can achieve at high levels;
- Instructional practices that engage all students;
- High quality, data infused professional development where teachers work across grades and subjects in professional learning communities;
- Parental support;
- Use of technology for learning;
- Effective school leaders; and
- Strong student support services for special populations.

(See among others, research by the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) which has identified the characteristics of middle schools that work which is set forth on their website (<https://www.sreb.org/publications-3>))

School consolidation will allow the district greater opportunities to put in place those characteristics of successful schools and improve educational outcomes for the students involved. For example, consolidation will eliminate one full transition during a student's progression. It will also eliminate the Grade 4 to 5 unnatural separation in the curriculum given the State curriculum standards are banded for grades 3-5. Finally, students in the lower grades will have access to the specialized spaces at Long Pond such as the 21st Century Classroom with adjoining Media/TV broadcast room.

In addition, a school within a school model will be used in Long Pond, which will provide students most of their courses in one area of the school. This will allow the district to create a

true middle school with a fully departmentalized grades 6-8. The co-teach model currently being implemented in the later elementary grades will smooth the transition to a departmentalized model at the Long Pond school. Interactions between the younger and older students will also be more controlled with this model, which will abate fears regarding bullying and other disciplinary issues.

We also envision greater efficiency in the deployment of staff. For example, shared staff will have more time in the school day without the need to travel between schools. This will result in greater flexibility in the use of staff.

The grade consolidation will make collaboration easier across grade levels. It will provide better opportunities for mentorship. The establishment of Professional Learning Communities by subject area will also be easier. It will be easier for teachers to collaborate on curriculum improvements and to ensure vertical integration of the curriculum.

2. Special Student Populations: Will students in need of intervention and Special Education services be impacted by the consolidation in terms of access to programs and services and inclusion?

Grade consolidation in Long Pond provides opportunities to better serve students in need of special education programs and services. For example, there will be more flexibility in using staff for in-class supports for the IEP. It will also allow for synergies to be created in the provision of special programs and resource room services. It will also be easier to provide intervention supports across grade levels.

The consolidation of special education programs at Long Pond will require adequate spaces. The district has an integrated pre-school program which includes six autistic children. In order to serve said autistic students as they progress in grade level, the district may need to add a specialized program and classroom at Long Pond. Both schools are also providing resource room services as well as specialized LLD; MD; ER/BD and OOD classrooms all of which will need to be accommodated at Long Pond in the event of the consolidation.

The consolidation of students in one school may also provide greater capacity to focus on the underlying reasons for chronic absenteeism and the needs of this student subgroup.

3. School Experience: How will the in-school experience for students be improved? Will students have access to safe, clean and engaging learning environments? How will the consolidation improve student safety? Will there be an impact on co-curricular offerings such as clubs, athletics, etc.? Will there be social and emotional benefits for students? Will the consolidation lead to the need for greater discipline?

The student experience can be improved in many ways through the consolidation. For example, grade consolidation will lead to the consolidation of the district health providers (school nurse, guidance counsellors, social worker and school psychologist) in one location, which will make it easier to support both emergent and routine student health issues including social-emotional needs. Consolidating all grades in one building should provide the health and mental

health professionals with a better opportunity to address student issues across all the grade levels more easily.

Clubs and activities will also be enhanced through the proposed consolidation given that these are mostly focused at Long Pond now but consolidation may provide opportunities for more activities at lower grades.

Student transportation may also be improved. Transportation is provided through a contract with First Student. There are ten routes which pick up students and transport them to/from Burd and Long Pond but in the afternoon the school routes are split between the two schools. Students may see shorter bus times in the morning given that there now will only be one drop off.

4. The final questions involve our recommendations for a successful consolidation and transition.

a. What improvements need to be made to the Long Pond classrooms and facilities to accommodate the educational needs of the FM Burd students?

Although consolidation will provide advantages, Long Pond will need renovations and modernization. For example, there are no bathrooms for early childhood classes. Also, Long Pond has only two Science rooms (one full lab used in Grade 6 and 8 and one partial lab used in Grades 5 and 7). In order to accommodate Science and Technology in the early grades, new STEM classes may be required. Finally, Burd has a fee-based before/after school care program that is being operated by the Sussex County YMCA. The program currently uses the all-purpose room and space for this program will need to be accommodated at Long Pond in the event of a grade consolidation. Long Pond will also likely need to expand broadband capacity and WIFI ports.

b. Will there be an impact on staffing?

Declining enrollments and reduced State aid may require reductions in staffing if steps are not taken to reduce expenditures in the future and school consolidation may reduce the need for further budget reductions. However, the school consolidation in and of itself should not lead to the reduction of instructional staff.

CBA Issues: District teaching staff are currently operating under an expired contract (expired 9/20). In addition, there have been a number of issues under the contract revolving around contact time (for example, how lunch assignments are being handled). The expired contract contains language governing duties and assignments which will be applicable to the grade consolidation at the Long Pond location. These provisions govern hours of the work day, instructional and non-contact time, duty free lunch, etc. Although we do not see any obstacles to consolidation created by the language of the contract, these language provisions will need to be considered as a new schedule is developed.

Licensure Issues: For the most part, teacher licensure should not be an issue in the grade consolidation with the exception of the movement from a self-contained classroom to a departmentalized classroom in the upper elementary grades, which may implicate the need for a subject area endorsement for teachers who have only the elementary certificate. With appropriate planning and scheduling, we do not believe that this will create an issue for the district or for teaching staff.

c. What else needs to happen for a successful consolidation?

The role of the community in the deliberative process is critical to success. The district must also be concerned with the residents' sense of community and how that will be impacted by the school closure. The Board has requested this study to begin the deliberative process on grade configuration. Community and family engagement will be critical in expanding the discussion beyond this report. Staff input and support will also be critical during the deliberative process. It is hoped that this report will provide the technical evaluation of the concept in order to serve as the foundation for a future deliberative process during which the participation of the community will be essential.

J. Educational Recommendation

As to educational impact, the consolidation of all grades PK-8 in Long Pond is a viable option for the district to consider as it looks to address successfully its anticipated future challenges such as declining enrollment, decreases in revenue, the rising costs of specialized programs and services, and the demands of a high quality 21st Century curriculum.

IV. FINANCIAL IMPACT

Andover Regional is assessing the viability and impact of closing the one of its two schools. The Building Section above has identified Burd as the best opportunity for closure. This section examines the financial impact of continuing the school district as it presently exists (the "status quo") compared to the district operating its instructional program completely in Long Pond for grades PK-8.

Many communities in New Jersey have seen decreasing student enrollments. The causes vary from declining birth rates to more educational options including participation in the New Jersey Interdistrict Choice Program, charter schools, and more traditional private and parochial schools. Additionally, districts face increasing financial pressures to maintain and expand instructional programs, address increasing responsibilities of schools to address social-emotional issues, increasing state mandates, while keeping tax levies affordable. New Jersey school funding laws have realigned aid among districts causing some to see certain funding phasing-out over time. These trends have many districts looking for efficiencies, cost savings, and alternative sources of revenue.

As detailed in the Demographic Section, Andover Regional will continue to see reduced enrollments in both buildings over the next five years. As enrollments drops, available capacity increases. With sufficient capacity, Long Pond seems a reasonable option to house the full district enrollment and to move the elementary students from Burd.

The Financial Section will investigate the potential cost impacts of consolidating the instructional program into Long Pond and closing Burd. These include cost savings by eliminating redundant functions, and the potential short-term costs of decommissioning a school and moving the operation to Long Pond.

The Financial Section relies on information obtained from the school district, the NJDOE, and other publicly available resources. It follows a particular methodology and key assumptions to develop conclusions and recommendations. The results are calculated assuming full implementation at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year.

In developing this analysis, the following activities were completed:

- Review of most recent Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the period ending June 30, 2020.
- Examination of the district's expenditure reports for the year ending June 30, 2021.
- Review of user-friendly budgets for the 2020-21 & 2021-22 school years.
- Utilization of the historical enrollment data and projected enrollment data.
- Communications with the business administrators and other district staff to acquire relevant data and operational insights.

- Utilization of various websites to gather relevant data as set forth in various Internet databases maintained by the State of New Jersey.
- Review of the transportation efficiencies and potential alternative routing structures.
- Review of relevant research and academic literature regarding the financial impacts of school closure.

A. Methodology

The starting point for analyzing the financial impact was modeling the existing pattern of revenues and expenditures for the school district based upon the existing level of educational services being provided in the district during the 2020-21 school year. Since this is the last full fiscal year, these data provide a complete look at annual expenses. However, although relatively stable, these unaudited data are subject to revision. It is also important to note the potential impact of the pandemic on district expenditures during the year.

State aid provides considerable funding towards the cost of education in New Jersey. Categorical aid is available for certain types of expenditures, such as transportation and special education costs regardless of income or property wealth. Non-categorical aid, on the other hand, is driven by the district's wealth as determined by equalized property value and/or household income. Since enrollment and community wealth are not impacted by a school closure, state aid is not expected to change based on the new configuration.

B. 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:

- Estimates of future enrollment were prepared using the Cohort-Survival Ratio method.
- Burd's operating costs are assumed to be borne by a new owner or tenant.
- State aid, before and after reconfiguration, will approximate the rate of funding that existed in the 2020-21 school year.
- Educational programs were assumed to be equivalent to those that have existed in the 2020-21 school year.
- Instruction after reconfiguration was assumed to involve approximately the same number of certificated staff per pupil during the 2020-21 school year.
- Programs that have not yet been implemented have not been reflected in this study.

C. Results of the Analysis

Under the proposed scenario, Burd would close, and all district students would be educated in Long Pond for grades PK-8. The analysis differentiates between disposition of Burd by sale or lease.

Projected Savings from Closing Burd

This section will focus on two economic efficiency principals driving the cost reductions associated with a school closure. The first involves efficiency, which leads to direct economic savings that reduce tax levy. These costs include building specific staff, supplies and materials, purchased services, insurance, and other expenses no longer incurred by the district upon closure of the building.

The second financial benefit relates to efficiencies gained by reducing the functions replicated over multiple schools. A good example of the improved efficiency would involve technology. The tasks involved in maintaining the technology infrastructure will be reduced when the district operates only one school building. The reduction is not likely to reduce staffing since the primary tasks of district technicians involve direct student and staff technology. However, the time saved on building-related technology tasks can be deployed to other productive work such as monitoring system performance, shortening repair turnaround times, improving cyber-security defenses, etc. These functions do not necessarily reduce expenses, but still have a positive economic impact on the district's operations.

The efficiency gains involved in this study will generate economic savings resulting in reduced taxes and better functional performance. Obviously, the cost of operating with one building will be lower. However, many of these savings result in improved operational functionality. In other words, although real economic savings, these efficiencies will not be credited exclusively to reduced tax levy but are essentially reinvested in the organization thereby improving performance.

Given the savings detailed below, the Board and administration will need to determine if the size of the savings and improved performance warrant the reconfiguration.

Saving Methodologies

This financial analysis takes a multi-pronged approach to the methodology for determining the savings generated from consolidating into one building. The first approach looks at direct expenditures in Burd that will no longer be incurred if not used by students. These include building specific expenditures such as utilities, custodial supplies, insurance, etc.

The second method to estimate cost savings involves the development of a staffing model, then calculate the costs associated with that model compared to actual expenditures. The consultants used this method to develop cost savings primarily related to administrative and operational staffing.

The third approach uses existing research on the expected economic savings from school closures as compared to the anticipated cost reductions for Andover Regional. This review functioned as a crosscheck to ensure the cost savings identified in the other approaches align with research findings.

Saving Analysis

Table 17 summarizes the cost reductions under two options related the disposition of Burd. The decision to sell or lease the building will have an impact on the direct tax levy reductions.

The consultants scrutinized the expenditures for the 2020-21 school year and identified several direct cost reductions. For example, the Custodial & Operations of Plant line includes utilities. Burd had a total utility expense including natural gas, electric, and solar of about \$67,000, or 32.4% of the district's total utility expense.

The district's chart of accounts does a very good job in allocating expenses by building. However, in some cases the consultants used building square footage to allocate expenses to Burd. On a square footage basis, Burd represents 35.9% of the district's total building inventory. The expenses allocated by square footage included custodial summer help, water and sewer, garbage disposal, and property insurance.

Since the instructional program will move to Long Pond in its entirety, no instructional expenditure lines show any reductions. The consultants explored the potential savings through consolidating special programs such as art, music, physical education, guidance, world language, speech, and resource center and found no economies from combining the grade levels.

Additionally, costs associated directly with student supports are not included in the cost reduction columns. For example, there will be no need for two school nurses. Although one position and associated benefits is eliminated, the vast majority of the health supplies relate to student care and therefore will be needed in Long Pond. The basic administrative supply costs to maintain the nurse's office might not be needed, however, these costs are negligible and not included in the cost reduction numbers.

Similarly, library staffing is impacted, but the library supplies are assumed to be needed to provide materials for the incoming students, and therefore not included in the cost reduction total.

The consultants used a staffing list to determine building specific staff and their respective seniority. The staff reductions and associated benefits were determined for those individuals with the lowest seniority regardless of their current building assignment. Table 17 includes the corresponding cost reductions in the appropriate budget line.

Under a sale of the property, all the building related costs identified will no longer be incurred by the district. However, if the Board decides to lease the building, it would be advisable to maintain certain expenses including property insurance and maintenance. Under the lease option, the analysis assumes the current insurance policy would be maintained. However, school property and casualty policies are driven by intended use and replacement value. Since the renter will carry its own insurance and there will be no district students in the facility, it is likely the cost of a new policy would be considerably less than the current estimate used in the analysis. The consultants advise the district to direct its risk manager to market the policy to obtain a premium estimate.

If leasing, the district also would be advised to consider a triple net lease in which the leaser is responsible for all operational costs of the building. Even under this type of lease, the district would be expected to make repairs to mechanical systems and the building envelop. Therefore, Table 17 includes additional maintenance costs to reflect this ongoing responsibility.

Based on review of the expense reports and other financial records, and applying the methodologies outlined above, the consultants have concluded that closing Burd would result in an overall annual costs reduction of \$696,025 or 4.8% of expenses under the sale option and \$620,311 or 4.3% under the lease option.

Table 17
Estimated Cost Reductions

Account Title	2020-21 Expenses	Sale		Lease	
		Potential Reduction	Percent Reduction	Potential Reduction	Percent Reduction
Regular Programs - Instruction	2,156,689	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Regular Programs - Home Instruction	6,426	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Regular Programs - Undistrib Instruction	179,135	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Special Education - LLD Sel-Contained	242,830	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Special Education - Behavioral Disabled	85,130	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Special Education - Multiply Disabled	276,051	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Special Education - Resource room	610,467	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Special Education - Pre-Sch Disabil P/T	225,016	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Special Education - Home Instruction	1,550	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Basic Skills/Remedial Instruction	197,419	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Bilingual Education Instruction	12,115	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Curricular Activities - Instruction	48,229	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Athletic Programs - Instruction	2,119	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Summer School - Instruction	58,365	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Undistributed Expense - Tuitions	4,124,983	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Attendance and Social Work Sevices	123,968	22,387	18.1%	22,387	18.1%
Health Services - Nurse Office	199,167	77,032	38.7%	77,032	38.7%
Related Services - Speech	166,477	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Extraordinary Services	173,743	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Students - Regular (Guidance)	232,471	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Students - Special Education (CST)	316,304	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Improvement of Instruction	131,113	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Library and Educational Media	156,225	48,435	31.0%	48,435	31.0%
Instructional Staff Training	6,461	350	5.4%	350	5.4%
General Administration	340,983	2,000	0.0%	-	0.0%
School Administration	244,795	148,166	60.5%	148,166	60.5%
Business Services	213,334	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Administrative Information Technology	134,501	-	3.3%	2,000	3.3%
Required Maintenance of Facilities	331,464	70,743	10.5%	25,110	10.5%
Custodial & Operations of Plant	752,310	222,637	29.6%	196,969	29.6%
Care & Upkeep of Grounds	49,737	20,380	41.0%	15,966	41.0%
Security	84,221	26,449	31.4%	26,449	31.4%
Student Transportation Services	947,828	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Employee Benefits	1,671,590	57,447	3.4%	57,447	3.4%
Total	14,503,212	696,025	4.8%	620,311	4.3%

In a paper entitled, “Does Closing Public Schools Save Costs?”, published in 2016, Professor Phuong Nguyen-Hoang, from the University of Iowa, documents the number of school closings nationally. Confronted with fiscal pressures and declining enrollments, many school districts have decided to address these factors by closing schools. During the period 1995-2014 about 15% of public schools were closed nationally.

Using 609 Ohio school districts that closed a school without opening a new school, Hoang finds, “that closing schools are found to reduce the average district’s total operating expenditures per pupil by 10-15 percent.”

Table 17 identifies a 4.8% reduction in actual operating expenses directly impacting tax levy. According to Hoang’s findings, there are an additional five to ten percent more in efficiency savings that improves the district’s operation but does not reduce taxes. Although we have identified some above, other efficiencies would include but are not limited to fewer evaluations, elimination of intra-district travel, reduced state reporting, communications, etc.

The consultants do not estimate that these efficiency savings would represent an additional 5% of in addition to the cost reductions identified in Table 17. However, the research affirms the value and significance of these efficiencies that do not directly reduce the tax levy. It also confirms the conservative approach taken in this analysis.

State Aid Overview

State aid comprises about 9.2% of Andover Regional’s 2021-22 budget. This is down from 2020-21 by about \$288,000 primarily due to the phase-out of adjustment aid. There are two broad types of aid. Equalization aid which is driven by district wealth relative to communities throughout the State, and categorical aid which is driven by enrollment.

Table 18 shows aid by type and the percent increase/(decrease) as well as the percent of total aid. Equalization represents the difference between the local share and the adequacy budget and uses wealth as the major component of the formula. Equalization aid represents only 2% of all aid. Since equalization aid is calculated based on the relationship between local property values compared State-wide, it is unlikely that it will change due to school closure.

Table 18
Unified School District State Aid by Type

Aid Type	2020-21 Budget	2021-22 Budget	\$ Change	% Change	% of Total Aid
Equalization Aid	28,208	28,208	-	0%	2%
Transportation Aid*	542,672	542,672	-	0%	30%
Special Education Aid	532,625	532,625	-	0%	30%
Security Aid	61,429	61,429	-	0%	3%
Adjustment Aid	663,769	390,857	(272,912)	0%	22%
Choice Aid	54,284	41,544	(12,740)	-23%	2%
Debt Service Aid	191,811	189,838	(1,973)	-1%	11%
Total	2,074,798	1,787,173	(287,625)	-14%	100%

Categorical aids are based on factors other than wealth. These aids are calculated using enrollment-based formulas and are the largest type of aid totaling 63%. Since students are moving within the district, any changes to categorical aids would be independent of the school closure.

The State is phasing out the district's adjustment aid as it implements the new funding formula. Indeed, Andover Regional experienced a loss of \$228,103 from 2019-20 to 2020-21, and another \$272,912 from 2020-21 to 2021-22. Adjustment aid reductions are independent of student housing. However, the expected loss of this aid over the next two years contributes to the urgency of finding alternative sources of revenue or cost reductions to maintain instructional programs. In that regard, the reduction in adjustment aid may influence the decision to close Burd.

The district's outstanding debt is funded by tax levy and debt service aid. Current debt service aid is 19.9% of debt service payments. The debt obligation is independent of the disposition of the property. The consultants contend that the State's aid obligation is independent of the district decision to close Burd.

Indebtedness

The 2019-20 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports indicates that the indebtedness, consisting of two bond refunding series from 2012 and 2014, totaled \$5,720,000 as of June 30, 2020. The district made an additional principal payment of \$785,000 in the 2020-21 school year bringing the total outstanding to \$4,935,000 as of June 30, 2021. This amount represents the total indebtedness of buildings, grounds, furnishings, equipment, and additions thereto.

The 2014 bonds retire in February 2025 while the 2012 bonds retire in February 2030. The district will continue to be responsible for these payments and the analysis does not include any debt service savings.

Operations & Maintenance

The Operations Department, or Buildings & Grounds, comprises the functions of custodial, maintenance, grounds keeping, and security. The district uses a mix of in-house and private contractors to perform these services. The analysis identifies reductions of custodial staff and supplies since cleaning the building will no longer be a district responsibility.

The analysis also reduces salaries for groundskeeping proportionally based on building size if the property is sold. These expenses are added back if the building is leased. Additionally, building specific security costs are reduced under both options.

The security accounts specifically associated with Burd have been eliminated. Some of these expenses are further discussed in the technology section.

Privatizing these functions goes beyond the parameters of this study. The decision usually weighs factors other than cost savings, which the Board can debate. Firms that specialize in this area could provide a more detailed analysis and make recommendations accordingly. Therefore, the consultants do not anticipate a change in custodial and maintenance staff in the short term.

Transportation

Andover Regional contracts its general education to/from transportation routes with First Student for the district's two schools. These routes are not tiered but offer little opportunity for cost savings.

Under the current configuration, elementary tiering is not possible since the start times for the two schools are only ten minutes apart. The district contracts ten buses in one tier that pick up all PK-8 students across the district and transports them to/from Burd and Long Pond. This is highly efficient since the student pick up happens in the same area at the same time for all grade levels without the need to revisit the area a second time for the second school.

The district's efficiency rating of 87.1% belies the logistical issues inherent in a district of more than 20 square miles. The NJDOE uses the District Report of Transported Students ("DRTRS") to calculate the district's transportation efficiency. The efficiency measure relates to the number of times a bus gets fully loaded, i.e. 90% of capacity, in a given day. The state target of 120% is achieved when all district routes fill the buses to 120% of capacity, which is accomplished through tiering fully loaded buses. The contracted vehicles are tiered with other districts, but those routes are not credited to Andover Regional's efficiency rating.

It appears that most routes run about 30 minutes, which is reasonable given the students' ages. There are some buses with less than 50% capacity. However, increasing the ridership would necessarily increase the travel time. Travel times in excess of 30 minutes for elementary students may not be desirable.

Although Andover Regional does a good job in coordinating transportation services, Appendix AA provides a document issued by the NJDOE to help districts improve transportation efficiency by implementing various models and practices.

The same routes can be maintained under a one school scenario, the time savings related to the second school drop off is not likely to generate significant cost reductions. Therefore, the consultants do not include transportation costs savings for the consolidated school scenario.

Technology

The consultants investigated the opportunity for technology related savings by shifting the operation from Burd to Long Pond. The areas reviewed include software applications and associated maintenance/subscriptions/memberships, network hardware, connectivity between the buildings, technical support, and telecommunications. Generally, the opportunities for reduced costs in this area are limited.

The most likely cost reductions in technology involves connectivity between the buildings. Currently, the Zayo Group services the dark fiber between Long Pond and Burd, which is also a compelling reason to maintain Long Pond. Pen Tele Data is the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to the district. These services feed into Long Pond and then distributed to Burd through a direct fiber optic line between the schools. The cost to maintain the connectivity between the building through Zayo is \$1,847 per year. Under the lease option, there may be an opportunity for the district to provide Internet connectivity to the new tenant and thereby generate some additional revenue.

Additionally, the district provides visitor management through Raptor Technologies at an annual maintenance fee of \$545. All other software applications use a cost per pupil to calculate the maintenance and support fees. Some software products use a per building allocation as its fee structure as is the case with Raptor. However, the allocations by enrollment will be consistent when students simply move to a new building. Therefore, the cost savings are limited in this area.

The consultants also examined the network hardware to determine the potential for cost reductions. The technology department would repurpose any network switches, battery backups, or other electronics currently in Burd to Long Pond. There are also interactive displays in all district classrooms. This equipment will also be moved to accommodate any new classes required by virtue of the shift in grades. The district staff is fully capable of disconnecting and redeploying this equipment at Long Pond.

The phone system presents limited opportunity for cost reductions. There are phones in every classroom, and any phones required from the relocation can be obtained from the Burd inventory. This inventory can also serve to address future repair and replacement needs. As with the network switches, the inventory represents future savings since it will not be necessary to purchase new equipment. Having available inventory has the added benefit of reducing downtime. Nevertheless, the consultants have not monetized the future equipment or time savings.

Phone lines represent some savings. Since they do not require power to operate, POTS lines (Plain Old Telephone Service) are deployed for emergency, fax, and required fire and burglar

alarm lines. The annual cost per line ranges from \$400 to \$500, which could result in upwards of \$2,500. The analysis uses a value of \$2,000, which is part of the general administration budget line. The security line includes the other savings for the visitor management and fiber optic maintenance.

The consultants do not anticipate any staffing reductions in this area. Much of the technical support focuses on student and teacher workstations. In 2020-21 the technology staff addressed more than 580 work orders. Burd represented 32% of the orders, compared to 42% for Long Pond. The remaining 26% involved the Board offices and district wide issues. Any potential reduction in work orders related to building related hardware will likely be overshadowed by the increasing demands on technology as exemplified by the pandemic.

Disposition of Building

The consultants compare a sale or lease of the building and would advise against holding the building with no ongoing use. The decision on the final disposition has long-term implications. Some of the considerations are outlined in this section.

Sale

Selling the building will bring a one-time infusion of cash with several long-term implications. The manner and method of sale is governed by 18A:18A-45. Financially, the sale can bring much needed capital to pay down existing debt and build up reserves to help fund future capital projects. Depending on the buyer, the property may return to the tax rolls providing a ratable to offset the community's tax burden. Additionally, if the proceeds are used to reduce the district's debt, the smaller debt service would essentially create a stream of cashflows bringing ongoing tax relief.

From a planning perspective, a sale reduces the district's options if enrollment trends reverse, or instructional practices change. Enrollments are cyclical. Although the demographic section projects an enrollment decrease over the five-year period a sale eliminates a district asset for future use. Furthermore, a sale constrains a future Board's policy alternatives including the ability to reduce class size, establish in-district self-contained special education programs, expand preschool offerings, etc.

Many districts have disposed of property only to find a demand for the additional space years in the future. It would be prudent to consider alternative locations or available land in the event the district needs additional space in the future. This would include the viability of expanding Long Pond either horizontally or vertically.

In a December 2009 article in School Planning & Management magazine, Paul Abramson, President of Stanton Leggett and Associates recounted his experiences from the school closing which occurred after the baby boom era where many buildings were sold, and when enrollments increased years later, they were no longer available to be reused. He cautioned that "It is a very shortsighted district that closes and disposes of any of its schools or property without serious consideration both of present alternatives and future needs."

Lease

Leasing the property presents a different set of issues. The Board's primary function involves the education of the community's school-aged children. Leasing the building will put them in the real estate business. Although assistance from industry professionals can assist with the managerial responsibilities, the owner-tenant relationship will draw some attention away from the Board's primary educational responsibilities.

Finding a viable tenant may be limited in the area. Investigating the market will be critical if the Board wants to keep the asset in district hands. Outreach to private schools for the handicapped that service students from area districts may be a viable direction. Satellite locations are often an opportunity for special needs schools to expand their operations, while provide districts with a less restrictive alternative with shorter travel times. Alternatively, some large New Jersey Counties provide vocational programs in multiple locations to reduce transportation times thereby making these programs more accessible.

Some districts have allowed the municipality to occupy and maintain the building for community centers and office expansion. This may save taxpayers from additional bonding costs, while retaining the facility within the public sphere.

An educational use is preferable as it will conform with building use designation and require less renovation thereby making a transition back to a public school easier. However, other educational organizations may present direct competition for the public school system. Private and charter schools may be interested in the space.

Financially, a lease provides a stream of cash flows that enable the district to expand programs and/or reduce taxes while maintaining an asset for potential future use or sale. Based on rental rates in the area, the Board should factor in the costs associated with a lease as indicated in Table 17.

Other Alternatives

The consultants strongly advise against retaining the building for future use without a tenant or mothballing the building. A vacant school site and empty building is a potential liability. The facility will still require upkeep, maintenance, security, and insurance coverage. In fact, empty buildings may be considered an attractive nuisance and may raise insurance costs. Unless the district foresees reopening the school in the near future or is willing to financially support a vacant-school liability, closed schools should be leased or sold outright.

Another option often considered when closing a school is demolition and redevelopment. This may be an option for buildings in disrepair or with significant environmental issues. Burd is in good condition with little to support recommending this option.

Transitional Costs

This section speaks to the additional costs incurred to transition to the new organizational structure. However, the consultants do not anticipate significant costs associated with the consolidation of the education program.

For example, one major task will be to move furniture, technology, supplies, and materials from Burd to Long Pond. District custodial, maintenance, and technology staff can perform this function. Depending on district equipment, a box truck may be needed and could be obtained through the municipality, a neighboring district, or a rental company.

As indicated above, the transportation routes would remain relatively consistent with the elimination of the second drop-off. This would require rebidding the routes, but that is well within the scope of existing practice.

If the building is not leased for immediate occupancy, non-essential items can remain in the building and moved over the course of the year thereby limiting the need for additional staffing, or moving services.

School building storage is usually in short supply. An assessment of equipment storage will need to be conducted to determine if temporary storage such as shipping containers need to be procured. Recently, high demand for these units has generated long lead time for procurement.

The transition will require more parent communication to explain the process and direction. Although some physical correspondence may be needed, recent experience with the pandemic has oriented parents to electronic communications.

Taken in its totality, the consultants do not anticipate a significant cost to transition the students and staff to Long Pond.

D. Financial Conclusion

Andover Regional can generate annual cost reductions through consolidation, which would amount to about \$696,000 or 4.8% of expenses by selling the property and \$620,000 by leasing the property. Both options would yield additional revenue, either in the form of a one-time sale or ongoing rental income. The cost reductions do not impact the instructional programs.

The school closure is not anticipated to impact State aid, and debt service payments will continue on existing bonds. The transition to the new building can be done with in-house resources and would not require significant up-front costs.

V. STUDY CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The consultants' review has revealed that the district has put in place the curriculum necessary to support mastery of the learning standards as well as aligned programs and instruction. The district has made significant investments in professional development, enrichment, co-curricular activities and technology to serve their students and families. However, the issue that faces the district is the need to keep pace with changing curriculum expectations and to expand educational opportunity and student potential in the face of declining enrollments and State aid. For example, the cost of providing the New Jersey Learning Standards is growing every year as instructional Technology and STEM programs continue to be infused into the curriculum. The district must also be able to grow its budget to address the fast-growing need for programs and services for students with disabilities.

In this context, the main question to be answered in this report is whether grade consolidation is a viable option for the district to consider in order to address the budgetary challenges identified above. The consultants believe that the answer to this question is yes.

Enrollment Projections and Building Capacity: As detailed in the Demographic Section, Andover Regional will continue to see reduced enrollments in both buildings over the next five years. As enrollment drops, available capacity increases. Long Pond currently has the capacity to accommodate Burd students and will have excess capacity (+62 students) in 2025-26. For this reason, the consultants believe that Long Pond will provide a viable option to house the full district enrollment upon the closure of Burd.

A total of 20 academic classrooms are required to accommodate the Pre-K – 8 and two (2) classrooms for Special Ed and two (2) Science Labs. In addition to the capacity generating rooms, the facility has non-capacity generating rooms for the district's program. Based on the existing plan, Long Pond has 19 general academic classrooms. This would require the conversion of one of the non-capacity generating spaces into a classroom. As an example, SGI Rooms 157 and 158 can be converted to a general academic classroom or a science lab or a tech room can be used as a capacity generated space to accommodate the total population. In addition, the school will require three (3) larger rooms with toilets for the PK- K population. The district has three (3) basic options. First is to convert four (4) classrooms into three (3) PK- K rooms, minimum 900 sf. with ADA compliant toilets. Second is to convert three (3) existing classrooms with toilets and obtain a waiver on the required room size. And third is to construct a small addition for the new Kindergarten rooms. This option would have a significant cost and would add additional overall capacity to the school not needed.

Educational Impact: The school consolidation provides the opportunity to enhance teaching and learning in a number of ways. We believe that students in all of the schools will have the opportunity to receive a higher quality education. For example, consolidation will eliminate one full school transition during a typical student's progression. School transitions often pose academic, social and emotional issues for students. Eliminating the school transition will also eliminate the unnatural separation in the curriculum between Grade 4 and Grade 5 given the State curriculum standards are banded for grades 3-5. Finally, students in the lower grades will have access to the specialized learning spaces at Long Pond such as the 21st Century Classroom and adjoining Media/TV broadcast room.

The consultants also envision greater efficiency in the deployment of staff. For example, shared staff will have more time in the school day without the need to travel between schools. The grade consolidation will also make staff collaboration easier across grade levels.

The consultants also believe that the grade consolidation in Long Pond will provide opportunities to better serve students in need of special education programs and services. For example, there will be more flexibility in using staff for in-class supports for the IEP. It will also allow for synergies to be created in the provision of special programs and resource room services. It will also be easier to provide intervention supports across grade levels.

Clubs and activities will also be enhanced through the proposed consolidation, given that these are mostly focused at Long Pond now, but consolidation may provide opportunities for more activities at lower grades. Student transportation may also be improved. Students may see shorter bus times in the morning given that there now will only be one drop off.

Although consolidation will provide advantages, Long Pond will need renovations and modernization for educational purposes. For example, the consolidation of special education programs at Long Pond will require adequate spaces. Also, Long Pond has only two Science rooms (one full lab used in Grade 6 and 8 and one partial lab used in Grades 5 and 7). In order to accommodate Science and Technology in the early grades, new STEM classes may be required. Finally, Long Pond will also likely need to expand broadband capacity and WIFI ports.

Impact on teaching staffing: Declining enrollments and reduced State aid may require reductions in staffing if steps are not taken to reduce expenditures in the future. School consolidation in and of itself will not lead to the reduction of instructional staff but may reduce expenditures in the future which could ameliorate the need for such reductions. For the most part, teacher licensure should not be an issue in the school consolidation with the exception of the movement from a self-contained classroom to a departmentalized classroom in the upper elementary grades which may implicate the need for a subject area endorsement for teachers who have only the elementary certificate.

Financial Impact: Andover Regional can generate annual cost reductions through consolidation, about \$700,000, or 4.8% of expenses, by selling Burd and \$620,000 by leasing the property. Both options would yield additional revenue, either in the form of a one-time sale or ongoing rental income. The cost reductions do not impact the instructional programs. The school closure is not anticipated to impact State aid, and debt service payments will continue on existing bonds. The transition to the new building can be done with in-house resources and would not require significant up-front costs.

Recommendation

The consolidation of all grades PK-8 in Long Pond is a viable option for the district to consider as it looks to address future challenges such as declining enrollment, decreases in revenue, the rising costs of specialized programs and services, and the demands of a high quality 21st Century curriculum.

The consultants note, however, that the role of the community in the deliberative process is critical to the success of any proposal, whether involving school consolidation or some other

initiative. For this reason, community and family engagement will be necessary as part of future discussions. Staff input and support will also be critical during the deliberative process. It is hoped that this report will provide the factual basis and technical evaluation of the concept in order to serve as the foundation for a future deliberative process during which the participation of all stakeholders will be essential.

Appendix AA – Transportation Efficiency Models & Practices

To help districts improve its transportation efficiency, the NJDOE has established the following models and practices.

Models of Transportation Efficiency

Local boards of education may utilize a number of methods to increase their use of school vehicles, and, therefore, their transportation efficiency. These practices encourage the more efficient use of vehicles and cost savings.

- Tier school opening and closing times - School opening and closing times should be staggered in such a way as to enable the use of a single vehicle for several routes. The development of additional tiers can result in the need for fewer vehicles to service the same number of students.
- Coordinate school calendars (Public and Nonpublic) - Coordinate the start and end of the school year, as well as school holidays and teacher in-service days, so that school calendars for both public and nonpublic schools are consistent and uniform. This will assist school districts in better coordinating public and nonpublic school transportation, may enable districts to fill a route with both public and nonpublic school students, and may necessitate the use of fewer vehicles to transport the same number of students.
- Provide out of district transportation through a coordinated transportation services agency - Since the number of students attending a specific out of district school is usually fewer than the number of students attending a school within a school district, utilizing coordinated or regionalized transportation services will likely result in a higher capacity utilization of the buses transporting students to that out of district school. One route could service several districts whose students attend the same out of district school.
- Provide services through jointures, either as a host or joiner - When school districts form jointures to provide transportation services, the host district has the opportunity to fill what would have been empty seats on their route, and the joiner is able to provide transportation to their own students without using one of their own buses or contracting for the service while leaving some seats empty.
- Optimizing route design - The design of routes that service the largest numbers of students with the least amount of stops. Such routes may mix public and nonpublic school students and/or have multiple schools as destinations.
- Design routes with multiple destinations - When a route to a certain school passes one or more schools located along that route, the bus will be more fully utilized if children attending those other schools who live along that route can be added to the route. The bus would then stop at each of the schools along the route.
- Mix public and nonpublic school students on the same routes - Public and nonpublic school students living in the same neighborhood and attending schools located close to each other could be placed on the same bus route with both schools as the destination. This would alleviate the need

for two separate routes following the same roadways to similar destinations, and result in fewer vehicles to service the same number of students.

- Standardize ride-time policies for all districts participating in consolidated services - When districts with different ride-time policies (i.e., limits on the length of time a student may ride on a bus) attempt to use the same consolidated transportation services agency, the differences in the policies place constraints on the ability of the agency to provide transportation which meets all of the varying policies. Limiting the transportation for all participants to the shortest ride-time policy of its members could result in the inability of the agency to provide transportation to any of the participants.
- Package bids with tiered routes - The design of bid packages which would require contractors to bid on a package of routes which have been tiered for efficiency. This practice would prevent contractors from picking and choosing the most profitable routes while failing to bid on more demanding routes or routes with a lower profit margin. The packaging of bids with tiered routes enables bulk bidding and leads to volume discounts from school bus contractors wishing to bid on the entire package.
- Use municipal/school district joint bidding for maintenance, fuel, etc. - Savings can be realized by combining the needs of both the municipality and school district into one bid, which would be more likely to result in volume discounts from vendors.

EDUCATION CHAPTER REFERENCES

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CONCEPT PLAN - A

Legend:

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- Shared Learning Space
- Administration / Office
- Support Spaces



ANDOVER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Long Pond School

