

ONONDAGA CITIZENS LEAGUE

Report #4

DECLINING SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS:
OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATIVE ADAPTATIONS

Approved and Issued
by the
Board of Directors
Onondaga Citizens League
July 14, 1982

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PREFACE

From January to June 1982, members of the Onondaga Citizens League studied the subject "Declining School Enrollments: Opportunities for Cooperative Adaptations." Between 1970 and 1980 total public school enrollment in the United States declined from 45.9 million to 40.9 million--or 11 per cent.¹ All but seven states registered declining enrollment during the 1970s, and by 1980 some states had experienced declines as severe as 20-25 per cent. Only western and southern areas of population growth were spared a trend affecting urban, suburban, and rural school districts. During the 1970s declining enrollment was primarily seen in grades K-8, as decreasing numbers entered school. Districts routinely responded by closing elementary schools despite adverse public opinion and minimal savings.² In the 1980s, however, the smaller classes of the 1970s are moving into high school, which presents a new dimension to the problem.

School districts throughout the country are already feeling the impact of declining enrollment at the secondary level, a trend that will accelerate throughout the decade. By the late 1980s secondary enrollment is expected to have declined by an average of 25 per cent--and in some areas as much as 50 per cent--from the peak established in 1976.³ In Onondaga County class-sizes at the elementary and middle-school levels clearly foretell declining enrollment in grades 9-12, although the severity varies widely from district to district. Because high-school enrollment can be accurately projected by examining enrollment in early grades, citizens and school officials have the opportunity to plan future decisions affecting their high schools. In this study the Onondaga Citizens League has attempted to identify problems and recommend solutions so that school districts can adapt to decreasing student populations at the secondary level.

¹Figures from the National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 48; and National Center for Education Statistics, "Early Release: Enrollment Figures," June 25, 1981.

²Y.L. Jack Lam, "School Closure: An Answer to Declining Enrollment?" Educational Horizons, spring, 1982, Vol. 60., no. 3, pp. 111-114.

³Ellen Bussard, "School Closings and Declining Enrollment," (New York: National Committee for Citizens in Education and Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1981), p. 3.

THE ONONDAGA CITIZENS LEAGUE

In 1978 several members of University College's Thursday Morning Roundtable explored the need for, and the feasibility of establishing a broad-based citizen organization to study and make recommendations on long-range problems facing this county. The idea of such a citizens group was inspired by the successful 25-year history of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Citizens League which has been responsible for initiating many of the progressive developments in that metropolitan area.

After many discussions, 21 persons active in the community and interested in the concept were convened to develop plans for an Onondaga Citizens League. These individuals constituted an advisory board to establish guidelines for the organization, to promote membership, to select a topic for study by league members, to prepare and adopt by-laws for operation of the organization, and in general to oversee league functions during its early months.

The Onondaga Citizens League was incorporated in 1980 and received non-profit tax exempt status in 1981. The League's purpose is to encourage citizen education and involvement in public issues and problems. Members of the League study all aspects of selected public problems, determine facts, make considered judgments on approaches and solutions, and develop recommendations presented to appropriate responsible persons or offices. The organization's objective is to forestall the development of problems into real crises, not to promote specific legislation or function as a lobbyist.

The Onondaga Citizens League is open to any resident of the county. While some choose to join to study a specific topic, others join and retain their membership in support of the principle of citizen study of issues of major concern to the community.

The League's first study was "Equality and Fairness in Property Assessment" (June 1979). The second dealt with "Young People in Trouble: Can Our Services Be Organized and Delivered More Effectively?" (May 1980). The third report considered "The County Legislature: Its Functions, Size, Structure" (August 1981).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Board of Directors of the Onondaga Citizens League listed in Appendix I, wishes to acknowledge the important contributions made to this study by the following:

Members of the Study Committee, identified in Appendix II, dedicated many hours of study and discussion to the development of this report. Their sincere concern about public school education and dedicated search for constructive approaches to problems has been a heartening example of the ideals of the Citizen League. The skillfully effective work of Dr. Margaret Charters as chairperson of the committee is especially appreciated.

Those who served as consultants to the study committee gave freely of their time and expertise to assist in clarifying the issues. Appendix IV lists these individuals.

University College provided staff support, office space, telephone and other forms of assistance as a public service to implement the work of the League. Jo-Anne Scammell served as secretary/typist for this project.

Jean Stinchcombe deserves special commendation as coordinator for this study. She also wrote initial and final drafts of this report.

THE 1982 STUDY COMMITTEE

Members of the 1982 Study Committee on Declining School Enrollment began meetings on January 19, 1982. Margaret Charters acted as chairperson with Barbara Withington as coordinator. Following Ms. Withington's resignation in March, Jean Stinchcombe became coordinator.

The Study Committee met most Tuesdays through May 11. Speakers from the State Board of Regents, the State Education Department, and numerous local school districts addressed the group. In May a subcommittee prepared an initial draft of recommendations, which was considered by the entire Study Committee. The appendices to this report include a list of speakers, members of the Study Committee, and members of the Subcommittee. Also included are several pages of enrollment figures and a bibliography.

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DECLINING SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATIVE ADAPTATIONS

This study focuses on declining enrollment at the secondary level, and includes the following subjects:

1. A description of public education in the postwar era, including an analysis of national, regional, and county enrollment trends; an explanation of these trends; and a description of varying enrollment patterns within Onondaga County.
2. An identification of problems that school districts face in a period of contraction.
3. A statement of general conclusions reached by the Study Committee.
4. Specific recommendations addressed to school boards; school administrators; and to state legislators, the Board of Regents, and the State Education Department.

Like previous reports by the Onondaga Citizens League, this study has two purposes: to help citizens understand the problem and to assist decision-makers in taking appropriate action.

HIGHLIGHTS

Problems

1. Piecemeal, improvised adjustments in programs and budgets to meet year's crises.
2. Elimination of low-enrollment programs, including subjects such as third and fourth-year advanced mathematics and science courses.
3. A strong commitment to school district boundaries and local autonomy, which creates both duplication and inequities in services.

Solutions

1. School board and community reassessment of general curriculum guidelines and long-range plans.
2. Sharing of teachers and/or cross-registration of students to maintain a comprehensive program not by individual districts but between districts.
3. Incentives in state aid to encourage school districts to share and substantially aid in transportation costs of sending students from one district to another.

Like many other counties in New York State, Onondaga County lost population between 1970-1980. The city experienced a 13.8 per cent population loss, and most towns in the county also lost population.¹⁰ Considering these influences, the New York State Education Department has projected an 18 per cent decline in total public school enrollment for Onondaga County in the period 1980-1990. At the secondary level, a decline of 33 per cent is forecast. Enrollment trends in Onondaga County are evident in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

TOTAL PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, ONONDAGA COUNTY

1970 - 103,707	1980 - 82,066	
1971 - 103,826	1981 - 78,979	
1972 - 102,836	1982 - 75,970	1982 - 1990
1973 - 101,947	1983 - 73,827	projected
1974 - 100,129	1984 - 72,046	
1975 - 99,654	1985 - 70,701	
1976 - 96,848	1986 - 69,645	
1977 - 93,408	1987 - 68,621	
1978 - 88,968	1988 - 67,671	
1979 - 85,276	1989 - 67,250	
	1990 - 67,463	

*Data: New York State Education Department, Projections of Public and Nonpublic School Enrollment, 1981-92 to 1989-90 (Albany, 1981), p. 11; 1970-1981 figures are from Robert Lutringer, senior statistician, Office of Statistical Services, New York State Education Department.

The magnitude of decline will vary among the county's school districts. Calculations based on straight-line projections--that is, assuming that approximately the number of students now enrolled in grades K-3 will be enrolled in grades 9-12 in 1990--show severe declines at the secondary level in some suburban districts.

¹⁰Population figures from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency; also Debbie Williams, "Onondaga County in the 1980s," SOCPA newsletter, October 1980.

Figure 3.

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE
FOR GRADES 9-12, ONONDAGA COUNTY DISTRICTS, 1981-1990

DISTRICT	Present K-3 as Projected 9-12(1990)	Present 9-12	% Change
BALDWINSVILLE-----	1495	1862	-20 %
CHITTENANGO-----	705	857	-18
EAST SYRACUSE-MINOA-----	947	1549	-39
FABIUS-POMPEY-----	232	367	-37
FAYETTEVILLE-MANLIUS-----	871	1420	-39
LAFAYETTE-----	282	403	-30
LIVERPOOL-----	3061	3483	-13
JAMESVILLE-DEWITT-----	589	1114	-47
JORDAN-ELBRIDGE-----	477	624	-24
MARCELLUS-----	585	735	-20
NORTH SYRACUSE-----	2808	3555	-21
ONONDAGA CENTRAL-----	259	371	-30
SKANEATELES-----	403	727	-44
SOLVAY-----	403	681	-40
SYRACUSE-----	6343	5893	+ 7 *
TULLY-----	319	407	-22
WEST GENESEE-----	1276	2261	-44
WESTHILL-----	300	626	-52
DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE-----	2897	2557	+13

Data: Onondaga-Madison County Board of Cooperative Educational Services provided enrollment figures: Skaneateles figures are from Skaneateles Central School District.

Note: Straight-line projections are considered a useful *estimate but do not take into account all considerations, such as migration, for example, or drop-out rates. See page 7.

City of Syracuse

By comparison to other districts, the Syracuse City School District will remain relatively stable. Straight-line projections show an actual increase in enrollment at the secondary level, but this method fails to take into account the drop-out rate (30 per cent). Considering this factor, the Syracuse City district projects a decline of 10 per cent in high-school enrollment between 1981-1990.¹¹ According to Superintendent Lionel Meno, several considerations have created greater stability in the city's enrollment in recent years: the voluntary integration plan; the increased percentage of students attending public rather than parochial or private schools; and residential mobility.¹²

Suburban Areas

Suburban areas that grew rapidly during the 1950s and 1960s are now aging; residents whose children once filled schools continue to occupy their homes. Many suburbs have little remaining area for development and high real-estate prices have thwarted in-migration--conditions that make for an older population. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of persons ages 60 and over in the city declined by 6 per cent, while the number in this age-bracket in the county (excluding Syracuse) increased by 39 per cent.¹³

The Present Situation

During the period of rising enrollment, the number of school districts in Onondaga County multiplied. Many central school districts--e.g., West Genesee, Jamesville-DeWitt, East Syracuse-Minoa, Fayetteville-Manlius--were created during the halcyon era of growth in the 1950s and 1960s. Onondaga County has now eighteen central school districts in addition to the City of Syracuse and the Catholic Diocese. Independent, popularly elected school boards govern the separate school districts, and in all districts except the City of Syracuse a separate tax levy is set aside for the schools and independent control of the budget granted to the school government. Because of the importance attached to local control, school districts have functioned autonomously, both from other governmental jurisdictions and from each other. During the 1970s Onondaga County's school systems arrived at their own solutions to declining enrollment, primarily by yearly budget adjustments, staff reductions, and closing elementary schools. In the decade of the eighties, however, this method will poorly serve local school districts as declining enrollment is felt at the secondary level.

¹¹Syracuse enrollment projections are included in appendix V to this report.

¹²Superintendent Lionel Meno, address to Onondaga Citizens League, March 23, 1982.

¹³Age data from U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980, analysis of Onondaga County data by John Adams, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency.

THE 1980s: WHY IS DECLINE A PROBLEM?

I. Politics

As the population ages, the proportion who have children age eighteen and under decreases. The percentage of voters who have children in school is dropping rapidly. Instead of one in two voters having children in school as in 1960, the figure is now one in three or, in some areas, one in four. The public schools' constituency is contracting, and the rate of budget defeats is rising. In a fifteen-year period the rate of budget defeats in New York State has gone from 2 to 25 per cent, according to James O'Connell, assistant commissioner for educational finance, management, and school services.¹⁴

II. Money

Decreasing numbers of students do not produce corresponding reductions in school district costs. Schools are organized to serve students collectively by age, grade, and subject area. Despite overall enrollment decline, yearly changes in any one grade or subject area are rarely appreciable enough for districts to achieve significant savings. Schools, moreover, have substantial fixed costs.¹⁵ Seventy-five to eighty-five per cent of a typical district budget goes to personnel costs. Even when staff members are "excessed," seniority means that teachers at the upper end of the salary scale are retained and junior teachers with lower salaries are dismissed. School districts must provide required courses and programs (e.g., for the handicapped) and do so in the face of inflationary pressures. Hence, contrary to the common expectation, school districts pay more for fewer students and fewer teachers.

III. Educational Program

High schools have been organized to offer specialized courses and programs, the number and variety of which "have increased greatly over the past ten years."¹⁶ For several decades administrators, board members, and parents

¹⁴Ellen Bussard on "the larger picture of community change," School Closing and Declining Enrollment, pp. 1-4; James O'Connell, address to the annual meeting of the Onondaga Citizens League, March 31, 1982.

¹⁵Dilemmas described by William H. Wilken and John J. Callahan, "Declining Enrollment: The Cloud and Its Silver Lining," Declining Enrollment: Challenge of the Coming Decade, pp. 267-271.

¹⁶Ellen Bussard and Alan C. Green, Planning for Declining Enrollment in Single High School Districts (Washington, D.C.: Educational Facilities Laboratories and National Institute of Education, 1981), p. 8.

have thought in terms of a "comprehensive" high school serving all interests. Furthermore, the high school is frequently the focus of pride in the local community and school system. About three-quarters of all United States school districts (and all suburban districts in Onondaga County) have only one high school, and thus these districts do not have the choice of closing schools, nor consolidating classes and staffs as readily as they did at the elementary level.¹⁷ As decreasing numbers of students enter secondary school, enrollment will fall off unevenly from courses and programs, and cuts will occur based on student numbers in individual schools.

IV. Teaching Staff

Although a seniority system has served to protect teachers, "the impact of seniority-based reductions can clearly be perverse."¹⁸ Professor James F. Collins described the problem of assigning faculty members "to teach in areas where they may be certified but are totally incompetent." Because of staff attrition by seniority, for example, teachers with dual certifications may be assigned to teach in a secondary area in which they have only "paper" qualifications but neither interest nor experience.¹⁹ In New York State any teacher hired after 1975 gained tenure and seniority within specific disciplines. Prior to 1975, however, teachers accumulated general seniority without reference to a specific discipline. As attrition has eroded faculties by a "reduction-in-force" method, younger teachers with specialized tenure areas have been "excessed," thus jeopardizing educational programs. For example, if a school's least senior teacher is the only Latin teacher and that teacher is "excessed," the Latin program is then eliminated. This system not only displaces younger teachers, it also prevents "new blood" from entering the system.

V. Quality and Equity

As school systems contract, board members and administrators act in response to different enrollment patterns, seniority, and local interest groups to accommodate to changing conditions on a crisis basis. Gradually but inevitably they alter the quality of school programs. Unexplained and

¹⁷Of U.S. districts with enrollments of 300-5,000, 75 per cent are single high school districts; of districts 5,000-10,000, 60 per cent have only one high school, and 20 per cent of districts between 10,000-25,000 are served by only one high school.

¹⁸William H. Wilken and John J. Callahan, "Declining Enrollment: The Cloud and Its Silver Lining," p. 270.

¹⁹Professor James F. Collins, "Declining Enrollments," address to Onondaga Citizens League, March 30, 1982.

unexpected cuts may lead to withdrawal of support from the school or even withdrawal of students.²⁰ As a result of adjustments made within each district, students in one school system may have superior foreign-language programs but lack the competent math and science teachers employed in another district. Because of jurisdictional lines, students in some areas have access to a wide variety of academic and occupational programs, while others do not. The process of retrenchment accentuates discrepancies between school systems. The direction of policy in New York State, however, is to achieve equity in education.²¹ In Levittown v. Nyquist (1978) the State Supreme Court declared the system of school finance unconstitutional as a denial of equal educational opportunity, and the Rubin Commission has recently advanced a variety of proposals to distribute funds equitably and still encourage quality in education.²²

OCL REVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

After reviewing the subject, members of the OCL Study Committee reached several general conclusions and seven specific recommendations for decision-makers. Members of the group shared the following overall conclusions:

1. Declining numbers of students should be considered as an opportunity to enhance educational quality and reform out-moded methods of organizing public education. After decades of struggling to keep pace with a growing influx of students, communities now have the opportunity to focus on quality. Declining numbers should be "used positively to help school districts move to good study and action."²³

2. At the same time financial constraints make it imperative that decisions be carefully prepared. The 1980s' economic "stagflation" and commitment to curtail public services at all levels of government place serious limits on school-finance. The advent of scarcity could easily produce bitter conflict among school systems and educational interest groups, all struggling for their share of the pie. Instead, resource-sharing "can and must happen in the 1980s," as stated by Regent Emlyn I. Griffith.

²⁰Professor James F. Collins, address to Onondaga Citizens League, March 30, 1982.

²¹Professor Thomas Green, address to Onondaga Citizens League, March 16, 1982, on the question of funding and equity.

²²New York State Special Task Force on Equity and Excellence in Education, chaired by Max J. Rubin, Report and Recommendations, February 1982. The OCL Study Committee decided early in its discussions not to concentrate on funding, because this subject is large enough to require separate treatment.

As this report goes to press, the New York State Court of Appeals has just overruled the Levittown decision, 6-1. New York Times, June 24, 1982.

²³Richard Lawless, "Initial Draft of Recommendations for OCL Study Committee on Declining School Enrollments," May 1982.

Resource-sharing not only makes sense in dealing with the "harsh reality of inflation," it will help preserve the common commitment to public schools.²⁴

3. In the era of rising enrollments school districts grew in a crazy-quilt pattern. Boundary lines were drawn and schools located without careful forecasts of demographic and economic trends; incremental budgeting brought yearly program additions to satisfy changing interests and demands. In the period of contraction, school officials and citizens should avoid the reverse process: a gradual, unplanned dismantling of the educational program in the county's separate school systems. Instead of improvised adjustments reached autonomously, decisions should be planned by school systems and, equally important, between school systems.

Bearing these points in mind, the Onondaga Citizens League Study Committee addresses the following recommendations to specific groups of decision-makers: school boards; school administrators; state legislators; the Board of Regents; and the State Education Department. All of these groups--and local citizens and community organizations--are important to the discussion and implementation of these recommendations, however. The recommendations appear on separate pages.

²⁴Emlyn I. Griffith, New York State Board of Regents, "The Decade of the 80s: A Time for Sharing Educational Resources," address to the Onondaga Citizens League, November 25, 1981.

TO SCHOOL BOARDS

Recommendation #1. EACH SCHOOL BOARD SHOULD RE-EXAMINE ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND DEFINE ITS GENERAL CURRICULUM GOALS ANEW. School boards need to consider all offerings to determine what is important and what is not. Each school board must ask itself the fundamental questions: what do we as a community want our high school to be in the next ten years? What do we want our students to learn in high school?²⁵ Concern for quality is of primary importance, but communities themselves must define quality.

* As elected bodies, school boards should assume responsibility for a new debate concerning the purpose of the public schools and, specifically, the objectives of secondary education in each district.

* The debate about purpose should involve community-wide discussions, not just by school officials and parents but the broadest possible participation; the dwindling percentage of parents of school-age children cannot sustain support for the schools without the commitment of other citizens. The new discussion of educational goals and educational quality should rekindle community interest in public education.

* School boards should develop guidelines for choices in a period of retrenchment. These guidelines will indicate what each community cares most about, while maintaining educational opportunity for each child. In the absence of these standards, cuts are likely to occur at points of least resistance--those areas not well protected by administrative interests, teachers' unions, or local lobbies.

²⁵ Cf. Ellen Bussard and Alan C. Green, Planning for Declining Enrollment in Single High School Districts, p. 10.

TO SCHOOL BOARDS

Recommendation #2. HAVING DETERMINED PRIORITIES, SCHOOL BOARDS SHOULD PLAN PROGRAMS IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER DISTRICTS. A school district can offer a comprehensive secondary program without having it in one building or one district.

* School districts can develop a "talent bank" to share services of part-time teachers effectively. For example, a foreign-language teacher can be shared between two districts, with one district hiring the teachers and the other district paying half the cost. Specialist part-time teachers might be shared by several districts.²⁶

* Cooperation by school districts that have complementary needs is a way to preserve programs; school districts can use their own assets and draw on the strengths of other districts. A school district might send its students to another district for advanced math courses, while cross-registering that district's students in its third- and fourth-year French classes, for example.

* School districts might even divide responsibilities for programs at the secondary level: one district's high school might specialize in science, another in literature and languages, and students could cross-register as they wished.

* Cooperative plans can be developed according to the preference of local school boards, which are free to pick and choose compatible arrangements.

* Although these cooperative arrangements may require time and experimentation to develop, they make more sense than a rigid adherence to school

²⁶ These arrangements are already being used in various places. Bussard and Green, Planning for Declining Enrollment in Single High School Districts.

boundaries arbitrarily determined in the 1950s and 1960s, or a politically-futile effort to redraw district lines.

TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Recommendation #3. IN AN ERA OF CONTRACTION SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHOULD CAREFULLY MONITOR DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS: MODERN LONG-RANGE PLANNING AND BUDGETING ARE NOW IMPERATIVE.

* Administrators should devote careful attention to demographic, economic, and social trends affecting their districts; declining enrollment cannot be understood apart from these realities. Many school districts have lacked facilities or personnel for demographic forecasting, and school district planning is often short-term and crisis-oriented.²⁷

* Because of the isolation of school districts from each other as well as other governmental jurisdictions and educational institutions, school officials should make maximum use of the data available at the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency in the form of vital statistics; age, sex, race, and household data from the 1980 census, ultimately to be followed by 1980 social-economic information; migration data, and mid-decade surveys.

* School administrators should make cooperative arrangements to gather information on the social-economic characteristics of their communities and the surrounding region; the biennial census conducted by school districts should be periodically used to gather additional information concerning such points as age and length of residence. More specifically, each district should carefully assess its own enrollment patterns and projections at every

²⁷This statement applies to school districts generally, not simply to districts in Onondaga County. The point is discussed by Paul Berman and Milbrey McLaughlin, "The Management of Decline: Problems, Opportunities, and Research Questions," Declining Enrollment: Challenge, p. 307.

level; problems at the secondary level should be identified well in advance. Long-range plans should project what administrators anticipate in the five-and ten-year periods.

* Cost-benefit rather than incremental budgeting should be used as a means of assessing each district's priorities. Past budgeting practices have typically added increased revenues to the previous year's budget. If retrenchment is handled in the same fashion, two possibilities exist: a general peeling away of the system by across-the-board cuts, or unjustified elimination of vulnerable programs. Instead, school districts should move to revised budgeting practices, in order to evaluate programs; reveal trade-offs, i.e., what is sacrificed in one area to meet needs in another; and project long-range spending plans.

therapy and psychology.²⁹

* The OCL Study Committee sees the use of the BOCES itinerant teacher as one alternative available to school districts but recommends that BOCES be used mainly for efficient support services and management assistance as well as the occupational and special educational programs in which the organization has established its reputation.

²⁹Information on BOCES from Steven Grossman, Director of Planning and Research, Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Onondaga-Madison Counties, address to the Onondaga Citizens League, March 9, 1982; this topic will also be considered in Recommendation #5.

TO STATE LEGISLATORS, THE BOARD OF REGENTS,
AND THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Recommendation #5. STATE LEGISLATION SHOULD ENCOURAGE ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUITY IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES.

* State-aid formulas should make it economically advantageous for school districts to share services. At present districts can establish cooperative arrangements to share teachers or students, but the state offers no financial incentive for their doing so. By contrast, the state offers reimbursement for BOCES programs, according to the state-aid ratio for the particular school district using them, and also reimburses 90 per cent of BOCES-related transportation costs; school systems using BOCES itinerant teachers also have the advantage of state-aid, according to the formula for the particular district.

* The financial rewards of using BOCES' services should not make BOCES the only means of cooperation by school districts. The possibilities for school-district sharing are many and varied, including arrangements between two school systems, a consortium of several districts, and cooperative arrangements with local colleges, universities, and extension services. Financial-incentives should encourage cooperative adaptations in these areas, and BOCES should not extend its academic offerings or pre-empt the field of shared services simply because it is now the economically advantageous choice.

* A further reservation about an extension of BOCES' responsibilities relates to democratic principles and accountability. Because BOCES' governing board is elected by member school boards, it is one step removed from public control. If BOCES were to become heavily involved in the appointment

of teachers in academic areas, it would lack the public scrutiny possible in local school districts as well as direct acquaintance with community expectations or desired quality in academic fields.

* Legislation for BOCES should be amended to extend its services in the organizations's primary area, occupational education. Senator Tarky Lombardi has twice introduced a bill to include the Syracuse City District in Onondaga-Madison BOCES, but this proposal has yet to pass both houses of the legislature. In the words of Syracuse Superintendent Meno, "Having two occupational programs to serve the same county makes little sense."³⁰ If Syracuse were included in BOCES, city students would have a choice of 35 occupational education programs instead of the 17 offered by the Syracuse district.

³⁰ Superintendent Lionel Meno, address to the Onondaga Citizens League, March 23, 1982.

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TO STATE LEGISLATORS, THE BOARD OF REGENTS,

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AND THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Recommendation #6. EXISTING TENURE AND CERTIFICATION PROVISIONS FOR TEACHERS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY REVIEWED AND RE-EVALUATED: CURRENT COMPETENCE SHOULD BE THE FOREMOST CONCERN.

* The protection provided by tenure and seniority is abused when these provisions are applied indiscriminately without regard to teacher competence or program balance and quality.

* Certification is merely the legal verification that the state considers a teacher qualified to practice at the time that the certificate was issued. Certification indicated that a teacher has met a minimal array of requirements at a particular time but does not imply competence.

* Emphasis should be shifted to competence and quality. Local school districts should be encouraged to institute and update evaluation systems to review the competence of their staffs. Some states, including Wisconsin, Colorado, and Wyoming, are considering proposals to require the testing of current teachers as well as teaching candidates.³¹ Because of declining enrollment, school systems have few opportunities to recruit new teachers. Mobility is low, and the increasing average age of faculties makes a review of competence all the more critical.³²

³¹National Center for Education Statistics, Condition of Education, 1981, p. 51.

³²"Increases in the average age of teaching staffs" are among the major consequences of declining enrollment. Frederick L. Dembowski, Geneva Gay, and Jeffery Owings. "Sober Facts Spell Out the Impact of Enrollment Decline," American School Board Journal (August 1980), p. 30.

* Teachers should be encouraged to continue their training after tenure; competence in two areas and in-service training are desirable.

* The adverse effect of tenure and seniority can be partly offset by making retirement-inducement plans more generous. Furthermore, leaves of absence, summer support, schedule changes and modified class assignments can all be used as incentives for retraining current teachers.

TO STATE LEGISLATORS, THE BOARD OF REGENTS,
AND THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Recommendation #7. STATE OFFICIALS SHOULD CONSIDER A RELAXATION IN THE SPECIFICITY OF REQUIREMENTS IN REGARD TO THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL-YEAR, SCHOOL-DAY, REQUIRED CREDIT-HOURS WITHOUT LOWERING EXPECTED RESULTS, THEREBY ALLOWING GREATER EXPERIMENTATION BY LOCAL DISTRICTS.

* A rigid adherence to the 180-day school-year, the five-day school-week, and the 45-minute period prevents consideration of other possibilities. For example, a foreign language might be better offered in several months' intensive study rather than one period per day throughout a semester or year.

* Shorter semesters might be used to increase the number of courses offered or experiment with different classes and programs.

* The schedule of the school day might be altered to suit community preferences and to expedite cooperation with other districts.

* A four-day regular school schedule, for example, might serve to facilitate joint programs with other districts on a fifth day, or make use of other community resources more feasible.³³

³³Some of these variations have been tried in other parts of the country. Cf. Bussard and Green, Planning for Declining Enrollment in Single High School Districts.

APPENDIX I

THE ONONDAGA CITIZENS LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1982-83

Joseph T. Ash
Niagara Mohawk

Katherine Benedict
County Board of Election

June Brower
University College

Joyce Carmen
Civic Volunteer

Daniel Casey
Library Trustee

Max Casper
Syracuse University
School of Social Work

Margaret Charters
Syracuse University
College of Human Development

Carter Chase
Hiscock, Lee, Rogers,
Henley & Barclay

Davice Chimene
University College

Howard Gartner
Gartner Equipment Company

John E. Hayes, Jr.
Macalaster Bicknell Company

John Hennigan
Onondaga County Department
of Public Works

Robert Hennigan
College of Environmental
Science & Forestry

Richard N. Hueber
Westcott Cordials

Leo Jivoff
Upstate Medical Center

James Konski
Konski Engineers

Stephen Kraatz
Cooperative Extension

John LaVine
Real Estate

Richard Lawless
Catholic Diocese

Marilyn Pinsky
City-County Youth Bureau

Jean Reeve
Volunteer Center

Roberta Schofield
The Salvation Army

Barbara Wicks
City-County Youth Bureau

Frank Woolever
Family Matters

Ralph Wright
Volunteer

Martin Yenawine
Eastern Ambulance

Helen Zych
Regional Learning Service

OFFICERS

Jean Reeve, President

Robert Hennigan, Vice President

Carter Chase, Treasurer

Davice Chimene, Secretary

Lee Smith, Executive Vice President

APPENDIX II

ONONDAGA CITIZENS LEAGUE STUDY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST, 1982

Joseph T. Ash
Niagara Mohawk

Robert Bellandi
Volunteer

Katherine Benedict
County Board of Election

June Brower
University College

Helen Buck
University College

Joyce Carmen
Civic Volunteer

Margaret Charters, Chairperson
Syracuse University
College of Human Development

Davice Chimene
University College

Judith Christie
Volunteer

Zoe Cornwall
Human Rights Commission

Paula Freedman
Volunteer

John E. Hayes, Jr.
Macalaster Bicknell Company

Robert Hennigan
College of Environmental
Science & Forestry

Stephen Kraatz
Cooperative Extension

Richard Lawless
Catholic Diocese

Jerry Mager
Syracuse University
School of Education

Nancy McCarty
Onondaga Community College

Gladys McElroy
Cooperative Extension

Sarah Stuart McIlvain
Volunteer

Jean Reeve
Volunteer Center

Jack Shaw
Superintendent, Tully Schools

Lee Smith
University College

Jean Stinchcombe
Study Coordinator

Frank Woolever
Family Matters

Ralph Wright
Volunteer

Helen Zych
Regional Learning Service

APPENDIX III

OCL Subcommittee to Draft
Initial Statement of Recommendations

June Brower

Joyce Carmen

Richard Lawless

Jerry Mager

Sarah Stuart McIlvain

Jean Stinchcombe

APPENDIX V

Map of Onondaga County School Districts

Syracuse City Schools, Enrollment Projections, 1981-1991

Enrollment Figures for Onondaga County Schools, 1981-1982

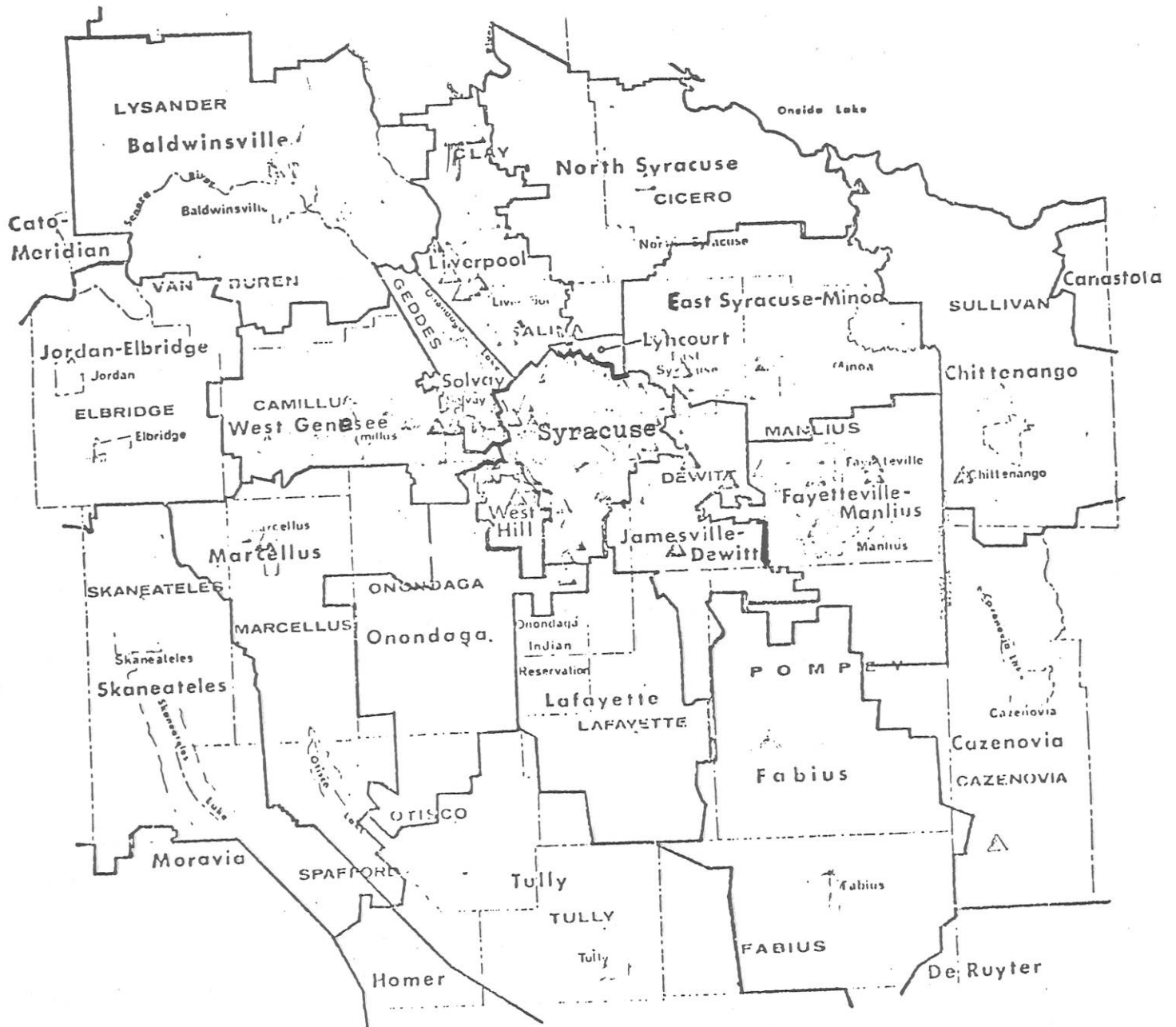
APPENDIX V

Map of Onondaga County School Districts

Syracuse City Schools, Enrollment Projections, 1981-1991

Enrollment Figures for Onondaga County Schools, 1981-1982

SCHOOL DISTRICTS ONONDAGA COUNTY



Source: Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Syracuse, New York

SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOLS
ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS 1981-1991
(No increase in births)

School Year	GRADE GROUPING			
	K - 5	6 - 8	9 - 12	K - 12
1981	9375	4701	5894	19,970
1982	9190	4731	5765	19,686
1983	9084	4471	5797	19,352
1984	9002	4172	5776	18,950
1985	9036	3977	5718	18,731
1986	*9087	3943	5519	18,549
1982 - 1986	-288 3.1%	-758 16.1%	-375 6.4%	-1421 7.1%
1987	*9201	3843	5262	18,306
1988	*9196	3869	4998	18,063
1989	*9299	3809	4842	17,950
1990	*9369	3834	4732	19,935
1991	*9369	3833	4760	17,962
1987 - 1991	+282 3.1%	-110 2.8%	-759 13.7%	-587 3.2%
1982 - 1991	-6 -	-868 18.5%	-1134 19.2%	-2008 10.0%

*K-5 enrollment projections for 1986 thru 1991 reflect an assumption of no change in the birth rate for the periods 1981 thru 1986.

Grades 6-8 and 9-12 projections thru 1991 are based on known population parameters.

SOURCE: Syracuse City Schools
Evaluation Department

ONONDAGA-MADISON BOCES, 6820 THOMPSON ROAD, SYRACUSE, NY 13211

1981-82 ENROLLMENT

K	1-3	4	5	6	7-8	9	10	11	12	K-12	
BALDWINVILLE	331	1164	406	421	425	877	465	478	489	430	5486
*CAZENOVIA	101	366	131	134	171	308	147	165	151	198	1872
CHITTENANGO	154	551	182	223	224	464	252	216	210	179	2655
EAST SYRACUSE	229	718	254	292	344	710	363	382	392	412	4096
FABIUS-POMPEY	60	172	71	80	70	175	91	92	108	76	995
FAYETTEVILLE-MANLIUS	187	684	265	271	326	679	355	329	376	360	3832
LAFAYETTE	62	220	74	89	104	218	114	100	96	93	1170
LIVERPOOL	702	2314	792	915	998	1872	918	857	861	847	11076
LYNCOURT	23	111	33	52	44	47	102				412
JAMESVILLE-DEWITT	119	470	172	225	234	489	240	272	287	315	2823
JORDAN ELBRIDGE	121	356	132	182	159	330	158	177	153	136	1904
MARCELLUS	141	444	146	183	190	403	177	186	178	194	2242
NORTH SYRACUSE	597	2211	734	803	886	1560	874	901	841	939	10346
ONONDAGA CENTRAL	61	198	82	90	100	177	109	79	91	92	1079
SOLVAY	94	309	115	119	129	268	199	161	160	161	1715
SYRACUSE	1568	4775	1432	1601	1634	3067	1748	1672	1373	1100	19970
TULLY	84	235	91	82	101	203	95	114	96	102	1203
WEST GENESEE	277	999	339	420	488	1001	540	559	543	619	5785
WESTHILL	60	240	80	100	96	235	171	164	145	146	1437
DIOCESE OF SYR.	714	2183	708	763	852	1692	636	677	623	621	9469
Total, BOCES, Diocese	5685	18720	6239	7045	7575	14775	7754	7581	7173	7020	89929
*Skaneateles	100	303	132	146	139	336	182	185	178	179	1880
TOTAL	5785	19023	6371	7191	7714	15114	7936	7766	7351	7199	91809

*Skaneateles is not part of Onondaga-Madison BOCES.

*Cazenovia is not in Onondaga County.

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