

Voorheesville Central School District Strategic Plan Draft 2016-21

I. Introduction and Executive Summary

A. Introduction

This Strategic Plan document represents the culmination of a year long process. Presentations were made at board of education meetings, and community forums were held that covered every aspect of the district's programs and operations. These events were conducted throughout the 2015-16 school year. This document synthesizes the information gathered and options expressed regarding the future direction of the Voorheesville School District. The Strategic Plan provides a road map to the future for our school district.

B. Executive Summary

1. The district goals may be briefly summarized as follows:

- High quality instruction for all students
- Increased academic achievement for all students
- Improved district communications with all stakeholders
- Effective stewardship of the community's resources

2. District enrollment has declined 12% in the past 15 years. It shows signs of leveling off, and may even increase in future years. The demographics of the community have shifted slightly as shown by an increase in free and reduced lunch eligible students.

3. Instructional improvement

Key strategies for instructional improvement in the District will include:

- Enhanced provision of professional development opportunities for District teachers and staff
- Further integration of technology into district instructional practices
- Enhancement of active student engagement through individualized educational programs and through project based learning
- Improve monitoring of student progress and provide timely assistance to students who struggle

4. Facilities Maintenance and Improvement

Key strategies for facilities maintenance and improvement will include

- Enhancement of school safety through installation of
 1. Intruder hardware on all classroom and office doors throughout the district
 2. Vestibule entrances at the main entrance to each school
 3. Additional security cameras on each campus

- Address critical facilities needs identified in the district's Building Condition Survey by
 1. Prioritizing items identified on the Building Condition Survey
 2. Planning for a Capital Project to coincide with the retirement of bonds from the 2002 and 2007 projects in 2020 and 2021
 - Examine the facilities impacts of the potentially increasing Elementary School enrollment, as well as the possible renovations of Middle School and High School science and technology labs for instructional improvement
 - Develop a regular maintenance schedule for all district facilities including athletic facilities
5. Extracurricular and Interscholastic Athletic Programs
- Extracurricular and athletic programs generally have strong student participation
 - There are a few interscholastic sports that have lower participation; a few may be candidates for a merged sports program with another school district
 - Extracurricular programs have strong student participation. New programs have been added and more programs may be considered in the future to engage students' interests.
6. District Finance
- The district has become increasingly reliant on the tax levy as its primary source of revenue.
 - The state aid cuts during the Great Recession resulted in program losses, particularly at the secondary level.
 - The district's current financial position is sound, as evidenced by its reserves, conservative budgeting practices, and modest projected budget gaps in the 5 year budget illustration.
 - The district must plan for a significant capital project to address critical facilities needs in the next 2 to 4 years. Reserves must be maintained to offset the impact of the project, and the project must be timed to coincide with the retirement of bonded indebtedness from earlier projects.
7. Overall Recommendations
- Provide support for on-going professional development for the teachers and staff of the district
 - Enhance the opportunities of students to take more challenging and engaging coursework
 - Provide systematic support for students who may be at risk
 - Enhance the support for and use of teaching techniques that actively engage students
 - Plan for a capital project that addresses the building needs identified in the Building Condition Survey and for program improvements
 - Monitor and adjust the district budgeting process to ensure that the financial health of the district is maintained
 - Enhance district communications to better inform stakeholders, including improvements to the district's website

II. District Goals

The district goals for the Voorheesville Central School District are established annually by the Board of Education. The draft goals being considered by the Board for the 2016-17 school year are as follows:

VCSD District Goals 2016-17

Goal 1

The district will create an academic culture of openness and continuous improvement, including continuous teacher development, and high quality instruction across all grade levels.

The Purposes, Goals, and Intentionality of Instruction		
<u>Action Step</u>	<u>Who is Responsible</u>	<u>Timeline for Implementation</u>
Provide professional development for Consultant Teacher Program Implementation	Karen Jones, Principals, Faculty and Staff	July/August – initial training September-June – monthly sessions from the Staff Developer
Pilot on-line professional development	Karen Conroy, Principals, selected staff members	A staff member from each building is identified and provided with on-line staff development in September 2016 Monitor progress throughout the year
Empower department chairs and leaders empowered as instructional leaders	Karen Conroy, Laura Schmitz, Brian Hunt, Department chairs and leaders	Establish regular meetings with chairs/leaders - September
Make professional development readily available from a variety of sources	Karen Conroy, Brian Hunt	Pass on out of district PD opportunities to all relevant staff members. Plan PD in district superintendent’s conference days aligning with the district goals.
Review the 6-12 grade to grade transitions and make adjustments to enhance student success	Laura Schmitz, Jen Drautz, Karen Conroy, Department chairs/leaders	Administrative, department, and grade level meetings topic; review of classroom grading policy guidelines in the fall. Discuss possible changes in the spring. Report to Curriculum Committee every two months on progress.

Creating a Culture of Inquiry to Support Teachers to Develop and Implement High Quality Instruction: Using Data to Support Student Growth		
<u>Action Step</u>	<u>Who is Responsible</u>	<u>Timeline for Implementation</u>
Complete revisions to the district RTI plan	Karen Jones, Karen Conroy, Faculty and Staff	Complete revisions and refer to curriculum committee for board consideration by February 1, 2017
Install technology and safety equipment when the Smart Schools	Rob Carte, staff	Pending NYSED approval of the district’s Smart Schools Plan. Phase I projects to be completed by June 2017

Investment plan receives NYSED approval		
Use faculty, department, and grade level meetings to support instructional improvement	Principals, Department Chairs and Leaders	Regular meetings September – June.
Provide dedicated time for data analysis and goal setting at grade levels and across grade levels	Principals, Faculty and Staff	Monthly department and grade level meetings – September - June
Review the changes in the scheduling process at the HS to determine effectiveness and consider further changes	Laura Schmitz, Department chairs/leaders	Regular department meetings September - June

Using Effective Classroom Practices to Foster Deep Student Engagement and Growth		
<u>Action Step</u>	<u>Who is Responsible</u>	<u>Timeline for Implementation</u>
Provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff in all buildings (for student engagement and project based learning)	Karen Conroy, Brian Hunt	Opportunities offered in the summer and throughout the school year. Form a PD committee to review options and make recommendations. PD committee to review and update district PD plan.
Provide summer curriculum work time targeted to district goals	Karen Conroy, Summer Curriculum Committee	July and August 2016 – all summer curriculum work completed, reports forwarded to Karen Conroy; she approves prior to payment
Provide support to faculty and staff members to actively engage learners K-12	Principals, Karen Conroy, Brian Hunt	Provide individual specific mentoring and/or professional development for continuous improvement

Selecting and Analyzing a Range of Assessments to Drive Instructional Decision-making and to Improve Student Learning: Reflecting on Data Used to Inform Teaching		
<u>Action Step</u>	<u>Who is Responsible</u>	<u>Timeline for Implementation</u>
Complete the District RTI plan and submit to the Board for Approval	Karen Jones, Karen Conroy, RTI Committee	Complete plan and submit to the Board by February 1, 2017
Establish a K-12 assessment committee	Brian Hunt, faculty and staff	Form Committee in fall 2016. Review current assessment practices and recommend possible changes by May.

Goal 2:

The district will support student achievement by developing students'

- **Potential for scholarship, curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving**
- **Capacity for independent, self-directed learning**
- **Social and emotional growth and well being**

Provide a Wider Range of Diversified Program Offerings and Supports for Students		
<u>Action Step</u>	<u>Who is Responsible</u>	<u>Timeline for Implementation</u>
Provide options for high school students in academic programs	Laura Schmitz, Brian Hunt, Karen Conroy, Jeannie Young, faculty and staff	Mo-Tech and CTE offerings at Mohonasen – September – June Work Based Learning – individualized program for each student – September – June PLTW at MS and HS implemented Sept 2016
Provide additional opportunities for middle school students for enrichment and acceleration both within and outside of their academic programs	Jen Drautz, Brian Hunt, Karen Conroy, Faculty and Staff	Convene MS Scheduling Committee – September Develop options and make recommendations for program enhancement, enrichment, and acceleration – possible staffing and budget implications identified by the end of January. Report on progress to the Curriculum Committee every two months.
Provide additional opportunities for enrichment for elementary students both within and outside of their academic programs	Jeff Vivenzio, Brian Hunt, Karen Conroy, faculty and staff	Discuss at Faculty and Administrative meetings. Develop list of possible enrichment activities for ES students
Develop structures at	Jen Drautz, Laura	Arrange for professional development designed

the grades 6-12 level that foster instructional program and guidance department integration	Schmitz, Karen Jones, Karen Conroy	specifically for counselors – September – January.
Enhance high school electives	Laura Schmitz, Department Chairs/Leaders	Meet on elective possibilities in the fall, develop list for consideration in the budget process January – April.
Enhance and extend after-school offerings K-12 for students	Principals, Faculty and Staff	Discuss at Faculty and Administrative meetings. Develop list of possible enrichment activities for MS and HS students
Review MS and HS scheduling processes, and coordination of HS after school review classes	Laura Schmitz, Jen Drautz, Department Chairs/Leaders	Discuss at Department meetings in the fall; implement refinements for the scheduling process in the spring. Report on progress to the Curriculum Committee every two months.

Attend to Students’ Social and Emotional Growth through Inter-personal Inter-connectedness		
<u>Action Step</u>	<u>Who is Responsible</u>	<u>Timeline for Implementation</u>
Train selected staff members in each building as Handle with Care trainers	Brian Hunt, Karen Conroy, Staff Members	Training in December 2016 at BOCES De-escalation workshop for all faculty and staff March 2017
Revitalize the Natural Helpers program at the HS	Laura Schmitz, Natural Helpers Co-advisors	Advisors and principals to discuss initiatives for the Natural Helpers to engage in for the year.
Review structures and supports for students to connect with staff and to know who they can ask for support	All staff	Review at faculty, department and grade level meetings
Continue Homecoming and Spirit Day events K-12	Laura Schmitz, Joe Sapienza	Plan and implement in the fall.

Goal 3:

The district will enhance communication strategies to engage all community members in student learning.

Extend Communication		
<u>Action Step</u>	<u>Who is Responsible</u>	<u>Timeline for Implementation</u>
Continue parent information nights at ES, MS, and HS	Principals, Counselors	Parent information nights for incoming Kdg., 6 th , 9 th , and 10 th graders January - June
Continue the Course Expo at the HS	Laura Schmitz, Department Chairs and Leaders, Faculty and Staff	January 2017
Review the guidelines for grading and reporting grades on the Parent Portal	Laura Schmitz, Jen Drautz, Karen Conroy, faculty and staff, Curriculum Committee	Discuss at faculty and department meetings in the fall; review with curriculum committee in the winter.
Open Houses at all buildings	Principals, Faculty and Staff	September-October
Implement Board Docs	Jessica Tabakian, Brian Hunt	September-October

Goal 4:

The District will be faithful stewards of the community's financial commitment to the children and will be responsible in managing all resources.

Managing Resources		
<u>Action Step</u>	<u>Who is Responsible</u>	<u>Timeline for Implementation</u>
Develop and refine the plan and timeline for the upcoming Capital Project	Jim Franchini, Brian Hunt, Facilities Committee, Board of Education	September – review preliminary list
Monitor budgetary trends throughout the school year	Jim Franchini, Brian Hunt, Board of Education	On-going throughout the school year.
Identify facilities projects for under \$100,000 for inclusion in future budgets	Jim Franchini, Brian Hunt, Facilities Committee	Review with Facilities in the fall, present for board consideration during the budget process January - April
Identify and pursue necessary repair projects	Jim Franchini, Mike Goyer, Facilities Committee	On-going review using the Blackbird Pride list and review at monthly Facilities meetings.

Investigate opportunities to improve energy efficiency and pursue if warranted	Jim Franchini, Brian Hunt, Facilities Committee	Review in the fall. Consider vendor selection process in the spring.
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These goals form the basis for the strategic plan for the district. In the areas addressed below, the district goals and action steps form the framework to address the needs of the students, staff, parents, and community members.

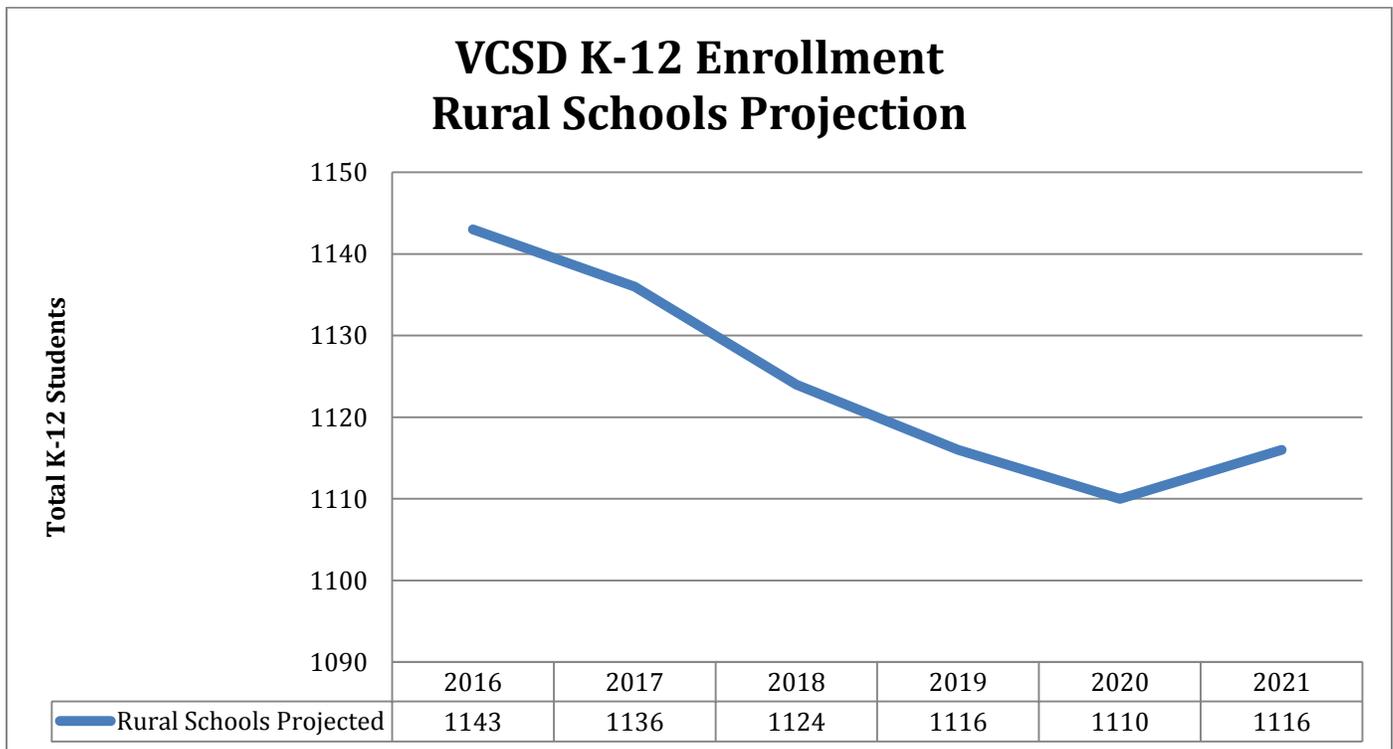
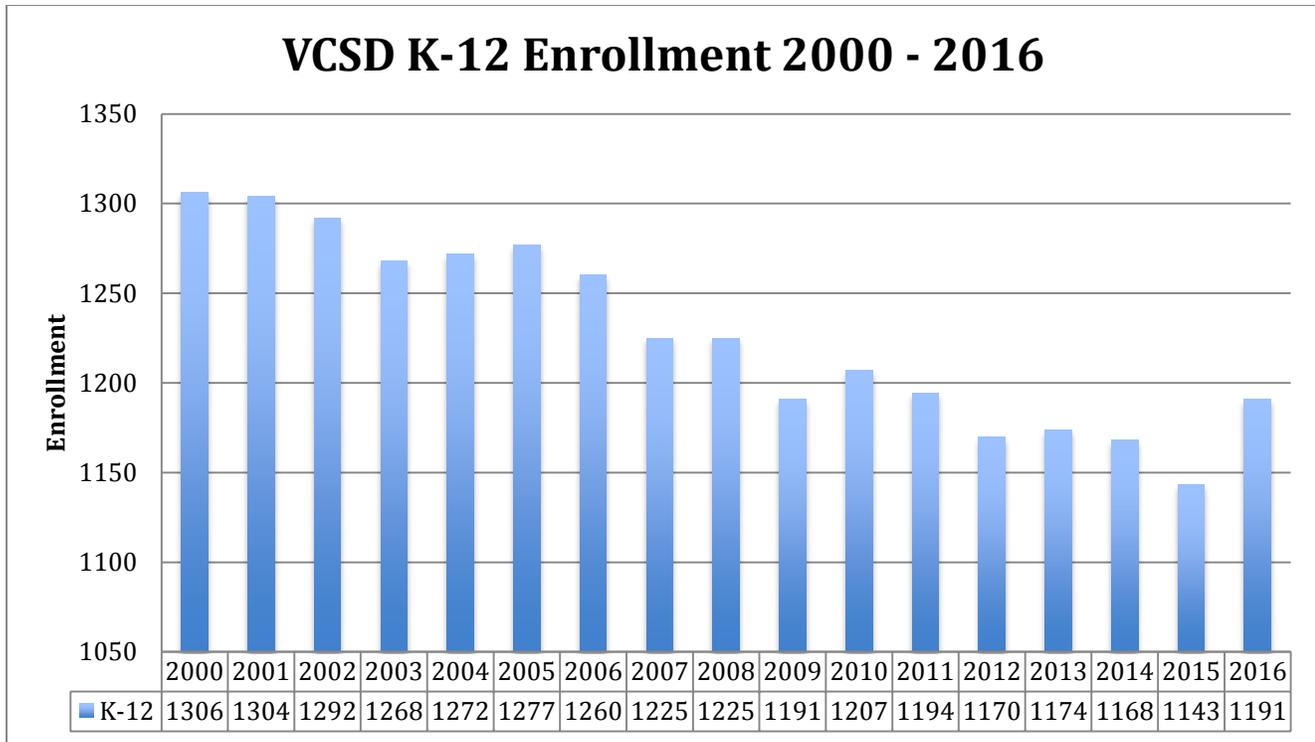
III. Student Enrollment and Demographics

Serving our students is the heart of our school district’s purpose. The data below provide an overview of our student population.

A. Enrollment

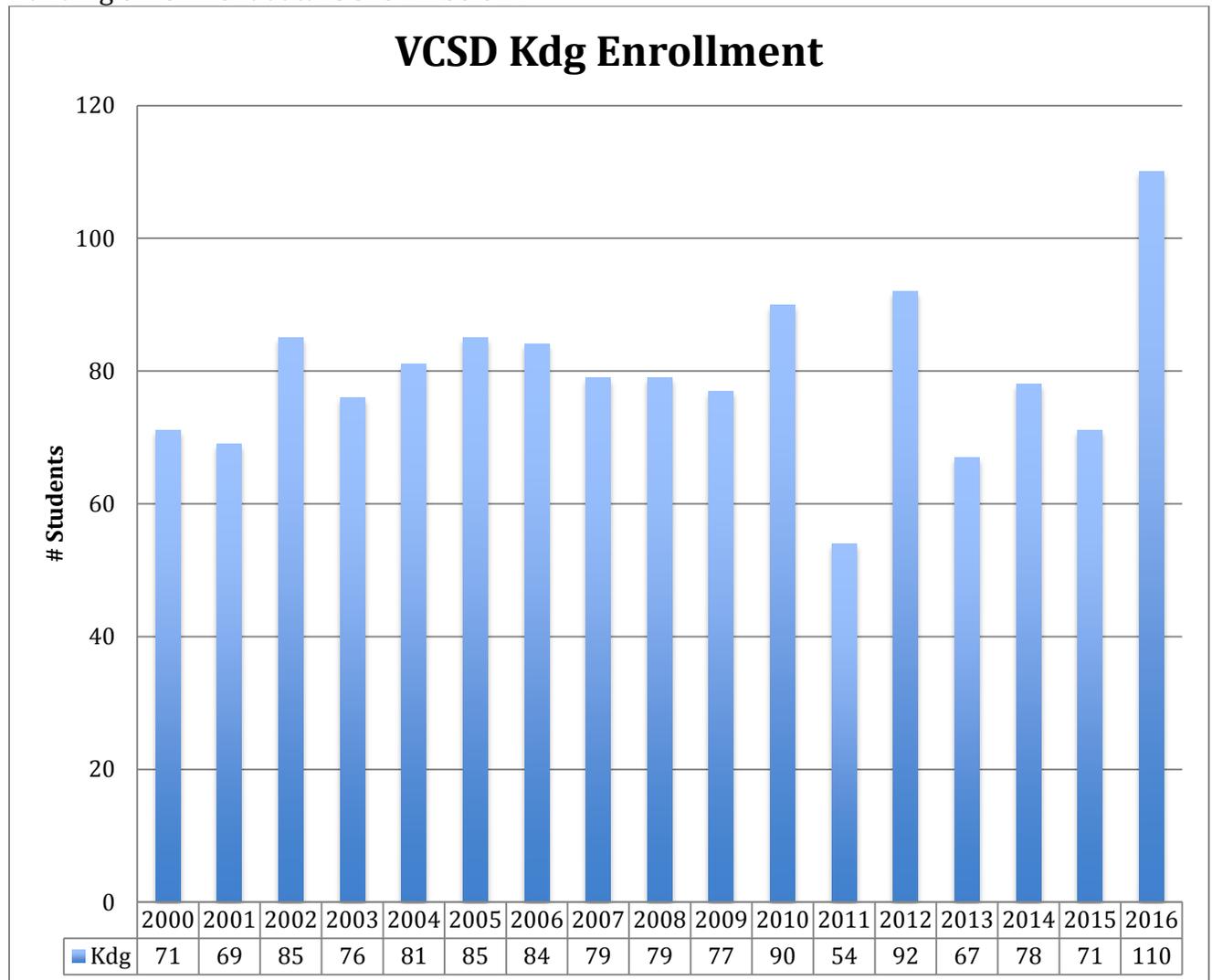
The data on Voorheesville Central School District total K-12 enrollment is presented below:

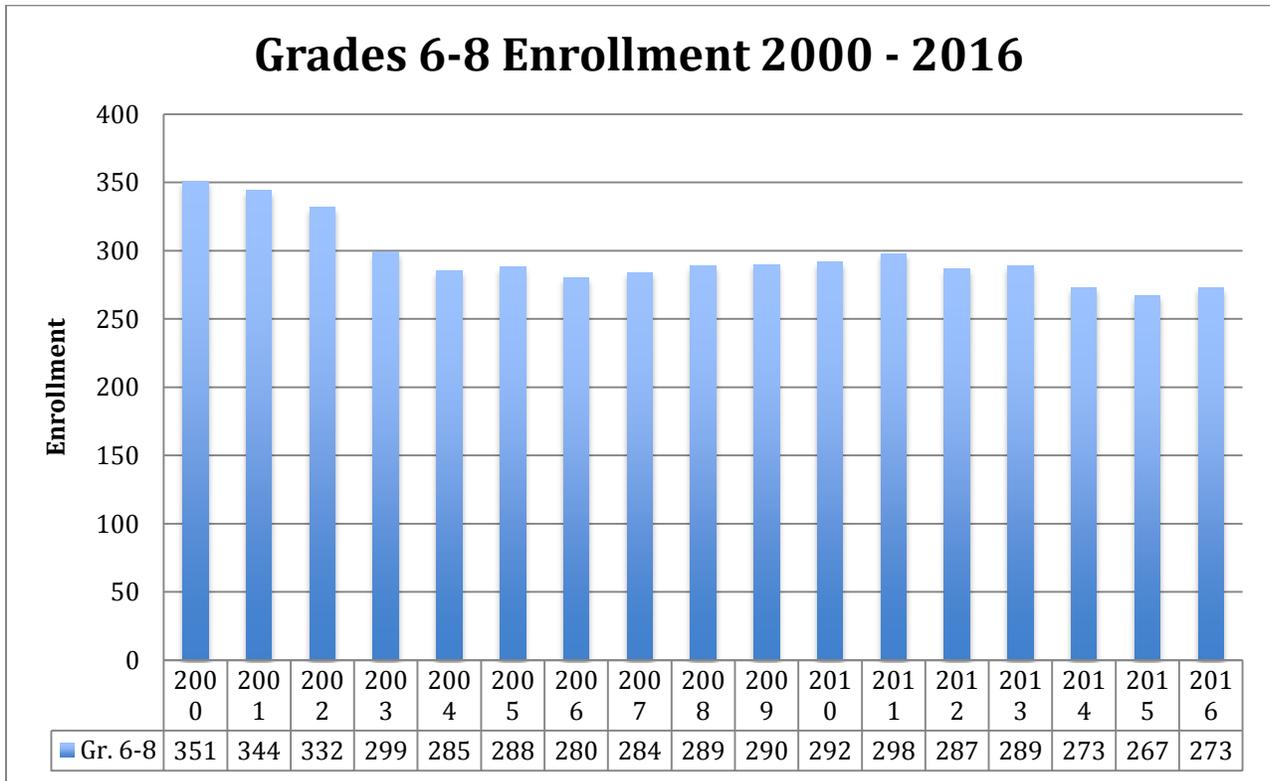
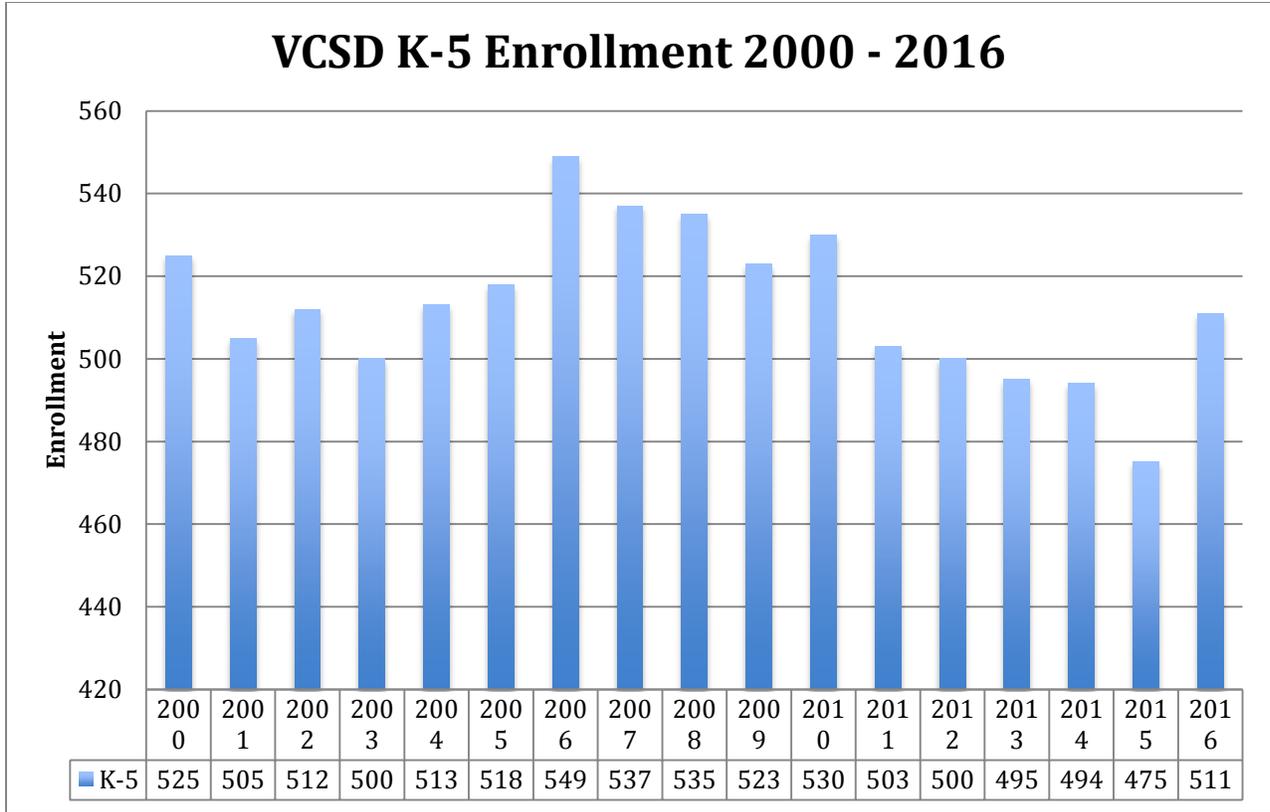
<u>VCSD Enrollment</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Fall</u>
<u>Grade</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Kdg	78	71	110
1st	65	75	81
2nd	96	63	80
3rd	66	98	66
4th	102	66	107
5th	87	102	67
6th	82	87	100
7th	96	84	91
8th	95	96	82
9th	109	99	98
10th	96	109	101
11th	97	96	107
12th	99	97	101
Total Enrollment	1168	1143	1191



Based on the K-12 enrollment data presented above, it is apparent that the district has experienced a decline in total enrollment of approximately 12% in the past 15 years. According to a projection done by the NYS Rural Schools Association in 2015, VCSD enrollment will level off at just over 1100 students within the next few years. However, the registration for kindergarten students entering in the fall of 2016 has exceeded the average kindergarten enrollment by about 30 students. Average kindergarten enrollment over the past 15 years has been 79 students, whereas the number of kindergartners enrolled for the fall of 2016 is 110. If higher kindergarten enrollment were to become a trend over the next several years, the projection for our future enrollment would change significantly.

Building enrollment data is shown below:





Building Enrollment Trends

The most significant decline in enrollment has occurred at the Middle School: approximately a 20% decrease in the past 15 years. The Elementary and High School declines in enrollment are in the 5-10% range. Based on the Rural Schools projection shown above, the enrollment decline at the MS and HS would continue for the next few years, and the enrollment for the ES and for the district would level off. Based on the incoming kindergarten class of 110 students, which is 30 students above the 15 year kindergarten enrollment average, the decline may be reversing at the Elementary School to the point where enrollment could increase if kindergarten enrollments continue to be in the 100+ student range – that remains to be seen.

There are significant housing developments in the district, totaling over 200 housing units approved. In a conversation with the Town of New Scotland Building Department, the following information was shared regarding the 3 major developments:

Amedore's development near the Colonie Country Club contains 16 total lots. As of September 2016, 4 or 5 houses are under construction. Buildout of this development could take approximately 3 years. The houses in this development are expensive, and may not have as many young families.

The Lavie Farm development contains 18 total lots. There are no houses currently being constructed. The roadway for this development is under construction as of September 2016, and should be completed within the year. Buildout of this development is estimated to be 3-5 years. The houses will be more expensive, and may not have as many young families.

Kensington Woods is a larger development off of Hilton Road. It is approved for 169 housing units. There are no houses currently being constructed, but the roadway is under construction as of September 2016. Phase 1 of this development contains 65 housing units, including some townhomes as well as single families homes at various price levels. Buildout of phase 1 should take 3-5 years, and the houses could be more attractive to young families due to price. Buildout of the entire development is a longer term proposition; it may take 15 years or more.

The average number of new houses constructed in the Town of New Scotland has been 20-25 houses for the past several years. That may increase to 40-50 new houses per year in the next 3 to 5 years.

The increase in new housing could fuel enrollment growth in the district in the next several years. That enrollment growth, if it occurs, could impact the Elementary School. As of the fall of 2016, there are 25 classrooms used for regular class instruction. Increased enrollment at the Elementary School would require addition classroom space.

As part of the 2007 building project, the Board, through its Facilities Committee, reviewed the pupil capacity of the Elementary building. Based on the availability of 31 classrooms for regular instruction and an average class size of 22 students, the capacity of the building was estimated to be approximately 680 students. (Per NYS Education Department guidelines, building capacity for elementary school is estimated using an average of 27 students per classroom).

Since 2007, several classrooms have been repurposed for uses other than regular class instruction. Some of those spaces can be converted back into regular class instruction; however, it is unlikely that the district could return to 31 regular classrooms without significantly disrupting programs such as Kids Club, the science lab, and small group instruction. A reasonable balance of the varied needs suggests that 28 classrooms is probably the number of rooms that could be used for regular class instruction. This would result in a pupil capacity of approximately 620 students. Current elementary

enrollment is approximately 510 students (as of the fall of 2016). If the incoming kindergarten classes in the future are in the 100 pupil range, enrollment would increase to approximately 600 students over the next 5 years. If kindergarten enrollments were to be 110 students, the total enrollment would reach approximately 660 students over the next 5 years, which would stretch the capacity of the Elementary building.

During the 2007 building project, two ideas were considered to increase the classroom space at the elementary school. The first idea, which was more fully developed in the plans, considered adding a new gymnasium in the courtyard and converting the lower gymnasium into 3 classrooms. This idea was rejected due to several factors including the lost of windows in several classrooms and cost (the cost was estimated at just under \$2,000,000 for this project in 2007). Another idea was discussed, which would have converted the existing bus garage to a cafeteria and kitchen, and converted the existing kitchen and cafeteria into classrooms. This would also require building a new bus garage at a different site. There were no plans or cost estimates developed for this idea in 2007; presumably cost was a consideration.

The elementary building is limited in terms of options for expansion due to its location between the Vly Creek and the National Grid right of way. This will present a challenge if enrollment increases significantly at the elementary level.

Demographics

Voorheesville is classified as a Low Needs school district based on the NYS Education Department criteria. This is primarily due to the educational attainment in the community and the low rates for free and reduced lunch eligibility. However, there are signs that this may be changing. The number of free and reduced lunch students at the Elementary School has increased from 27 students in 2009-10 to 46 students in 2015-16. Breakfast has been implemented in the Elementary School to help meet the needs of students. A backpack food program will be implemented for students K-12 in the fall of 2016.

IV. Instructional Programs

The world our current students will inhabit is likely to be very different from the world we are used to. Technological changes continue to transform our society and economy. Digital technology and automation will change the nature and purpose of work for our students, and our programs must change to prepare our students for this new world. Some key ideas that will guide these changes are discussed below.

Our academic programs provide a solid foundation for our students in math, language arts, natural sciences, social sciences, and the arts. The delivery of instruction should be modified to emphasize student centered and student driven learning, collaboration, creativity, and project based learning.

Another key area for improvement is services to help students who may struggle. The Response to Intervention protocol is a researched based method to identify and assist struggling learners so that they can meet the demands of the curriculum.

Key Strategies for Instructional Improvement:

1. Enhanced and ongoing professional development for our teachers

Action Step: increased funding for district provided professional development, focusing on instructional techniques such as active student engagement, project based learning, social and emotional learning, and integration of technology.

2. Further integration of technology into daily instruction

Action Step: the district's Smart Schools Investment Plan specifies \$323,000 to be spent to upgrade and enhance instructional technology resources. Items to be purchased include Chromebooks, laptop and desktop computers, and projection devices.

3. Enhance active student engagement and increase student opportunities through implementation of new instructional programs

Action Steps:

- A. Project Lead the Way (PLTW) will be implemented in the 2016-17 school year in the Middle School. This will expose all 8th graders to Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Robotics. The first High School Project Lead the Way course, Introduction to Engineering Design, will be implemented in the 2016-17 school year. The next two High School PLTW courses will be implemented over the next two school years as follows: Computer Integrated Manufacturing in 2017-18, and Principles of Engineering in 2018-19. All three PLTW courses are full year High school elective courses that prepare students for further post-secondary study in engineering and related fields.
- B. Digital Literacy is a course offered to Middle School students in neighboring districts. This course covers topics such as responsible use of social media, research and plagiarism, and digital project based learning. This course would help prepare our students for the society and workforce they will enter. There is no mandated state curriculum for this course, which would allow us to tailor the course to our students' needs and interests. This would probably require increased staff.
- C. Computer Science and coding are not offered at the secondary level in our school district. Computer courses could be offered to High School students on Distance Learning. The district could also consider adding staff if the budget allows.
- D. Distance Learning (DL) has been added back to our High School program for the 2016-17 school year. At this time our district can only receive courses (this reduces the annual cost of the service). DL provides additional elective courses for HS students.
- E. Work Based Learning is a program that will allow high school students to design their own individualized experience in workplaces of their choosing to better prepare for post secondary education and for the workforce. This program is being implemented in 2016-17.
- F. Increase our HS students' awareness of the new Career and Technical course offerings at the BOCES Center for Advanced Technology in areas such as Advanced Manufacturing and Sterile Medical Processing.
- G. Offer the BOCES HS summer school program to HS students who fail courses required for graduation (implemented summer 2016)
- H. Offer the Mo-Tech program to selected 9th and 10th grade students who show an interest in Career and Technical Education and who may struggle in the regular HS academic program. This is being implemented in 2016-17.
- I. Develop additional elective courses to enhance academic options for students.

- J. Develop maker spaces in each building to engage students in self-initiated, independent projects.
4. Systematic tracking of each student's performance to provide for each student's needs.
- Action Steps:
- A. Universal screening – assessment of every student at the beginning of each school year. This is currently in place for Elementary students in ELA and is beginning to be implemented for math. Assessments for the secondary level should be considered.
 - B. Response to Intervention – implement RTI to assist students who struggle in all grades. The RTI plan is to be completed and sent to the Board of Education for approval in 2017.
 - C. Continuous progress monitoring of all students throughout the school year, through grade level, subject area, or departmental teams, to ensure timely responses to student needs.
5. Plan for Longer Term Program Improvements
- Action Steps:
- A. Scheduling options
Convene a Middle School Scheduling Committee to explore scheduling options to enhance the instructional program at the MS
 - B. Consider the potential uses for additional staff positions at all buildings
To accommodate potentially increasing Elementary enrollment, and for MS and HS program improvements
 - C. Consider potential changes to facilities to enhance the instructional program
 - 1. Review room utilization at the ES to cope with potential enrollment increases
 - 2. Review possible improvements to the science and technology labs to enhance instruction

V. Facilities and Operations

School Safety

The district conducted an active shooter drill in conjunction with the Albany County Sheriff's Department in March 2016. As a result of this drill, as well as on going review of safety issues, the following action steps are recommended:

- A. Purchase and install intruder hardware on all classroom doors, office doors, and large common spaces (gymnasiums, the Commons, cafeterias, LGI, etc.) in the district – this is included in Phase I of the District's Smart Schools Investment Plan that was submitted to NYSED in May 2016.
- B. Increase security camera coverage in all buildings – included in Smart Schools Phase I.
- C. Create secure vestibule entrances in all school building main entrances – this will be included in Phase II of the Smart Schools Investment Plan to be submitted to NYSED in 2017.

Building Condition Survey

The Building Condition Survey (BCS) is completed every five years to give the district the information we need to plan and prioritize the facilities needs for the district. There are 23 items identified in the 2016 VCSD Building Condition Survey. The Facilities Committee and the Board of Education have reviewed the BCS and have prioritized the facilities needs for a future capital project as follows.

Phase I

- Replace heating system boilers in all buildings - \$1,170,000
Rationale – boilers are almost 30 years old and are reaching the end of their useful life. They are also less efficient than modern boilers.
- High School Unit Ventilators - \$442,000
Rationale - these units are original to the 1958 and 1968 areas of the building. They are beyond their useful life, inefficient, noisy, and negatively impact classroom air quality.
- High School Temperature Control System - \$292,000
Rationale – the temperature control system is original to the 1958 and 1968 areas of the building. They are beyond their useful life, functionally obsolete, and inefficient.

Total estimated cost of Phase I (as of March 2016) = \$1,904,000

Phase II

- High School window replacement - \$418,000
Rationale – the existing windows are original to the 1958 and 1968 areas of the building. They are beyond their useful life and are energy inefficient.
- High School fire alarm system - \$390,000
Rationale – the existing system is original to the 1958 and 1968 areas of the building. This system does not meet current code, and is not addressable to be able to identify specific alarm locations.
- Elementary School Roof - \$400,000
Rationale – the sections of the roof needing replacement are 20 years old and are out of warranty. A roof scan in 2016 revealed minor imperfections, but the issues will multiply as time goes on.
- High School emergency lights - \$195,000
Rationale – the existing emergency lights are original to the 1958 and 1968 areas of the building. These lights do not meet current code, do not provide adequate lighting, and are inefficient.
- High School ceiling tiles - \$153,000
Rationale – the existing tiles are over 25 years old in the 1958 and 1968 areas of the building. They are stained and damaged, and have poor lighting and acoustical properties.
- Lighting and Sound Upgrades in the PAC, LGI, and MS Gym - \$245,000

Rationale – the lighting systems in these areas are inefficient and do not provide good lighting. Sound deadening is needed in the LGI, which is used for music instruction and for events. Replacement of these systems will result in better energy efficiency and better sound and lighting for activities occurring in these spaces.

Total estimated cost of Phase II (as of March 2016) = \$1,556,000

It is possible that some of the above projects could be included in an Energy Performance Contract, which would allow them to be paid for by energy savings. This is being reviewed by the Facilities Committee in the fall of 2016 and may result in selection of a vendor to move forward with an Energy Performance Contract in 2017. Also, some of the lower cost items in the Building Condition Survey such as the PAC air conditioner, Middle School exterior stairs, and pool mechanical room ventilation should be included in the annual budgets over the next few years. Such projects that do not exceed \$100,000 per budget year are eligible for state aid if included in the annual budget.

Capital Project

The preliminary timeline for a capital project has been developed to coincide with the retirement of bonds from the 2002 and 2007 projects in 2020 and 2021. The preliminary timeline to address the repairs and renovations needed is as follows:

Action	Date
Building Condition Survey	December 2015
BCS is reviewed, approved, and is used as basis for future projects	May 2016
BOE approves bringing new capital project to voters (advertising starts 45 days prior to vote)	March 2018
Vote is held	May 2018
Work with architect to develop/submit plans to SED	Spring-Summer 2018
Plans submitted to SED	September 2018
SED Approval	September 2019
Bids Awarded	November 2019
BAN is issued for the project (payment of interest due June	Winter-Spring 2020

2021); Construction begins	
Project Completion	Fall 2021

Additional Facilities Considerations

- A. Elementary classrooms may need to be reconfigured/renovated to accommodate potential enrollment increases.
- B. Science labs in the Middle School and High School may require renovations to enhance the instructional program.
- C. Technology rooms may need renovations to accommodate the new programs in technology that are being implemented.

These items may be included in the capital project depending on an assessment of need for these improvements. Cost estimates would need to be done for these items if they are included in the capital project.

Maintenance Schedules

Regular maintenance schedules should be developed for all district facilities. The Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations has implemented the 'Blackbird Pride List' for 2015-16 to address facilities needs. As the immediate issues are taken care of, this list will form the basis for a routine maintenance schedule for future years.

The Athletic Director has developed the following list of regular maintenance items for athletic facilities:

Athletic Facilities Maintenance Schedule

Equipment.	Service/purchase	Date to Service
Colorado touch-pad timing system	2016	2021*
Outdoor football/ lax. Scoreboard Can use for softball	2000	2021*
High School gym scoreboards	2000	2021*
Soccer scoreboard	2005	2021*
Track resurface	2013	2021*
Pool filter sand and water replacement	2016	2023

Middle School Gym Scoreboard	2010/16	2021*
Baseball field scoreboard	2016	2021*
High School Gym repainting	2016	2024-2026
MS/ES gym repainting		2017
Outdoor playing surfaces	Annual	Fall
Tennis Court resurface	2012	2020
Gym floors	Annual	Summer

* Items that may be included in the Capital Project

V. Extra-Curricular Activities and Interscholastic Sports

Participation in the District’s extra-curricular and interscholastic sports programs is high overall. Here is the data on sports participation in 2015-16:

Fall Sport - number of students	Fall Sport - number of students
Varsity Cheerleading - 15	Varsity Football - 23
Modified Cheerleading - 20	Modified Football - 32
Girls’ Varsity Soccer - 19	Girls’ Varsity Volleyball - 9
Boys’ Varsity Soccer - 20	Girls’ JV Volleyball - 9
Boys’ JV Soccer - 14	Varsity Cross Country - 21
Girls’ JV Soccer - 20	Modified Cross Country - 5

Girls' Modified Soccer - 12	Girls' Varsity Swimming - 7
Boys' Modified Soccer - 18	Varsity Golf - 12
Winter Sport – number of students	Winter Sport – number of students
Boys' Varsity Basketball - 14	Wrestling - 2
Boys' JV Basketball - 13	Boys' Swimming - 2
Boys' Freshmen Basketball - 12	Bowling - 12
Girls' Varsity Basketball - 11	Varsity Cheerleading - 19
Girls' JV Basketball - 12	JV Cheerleading - 16
Boys' Varsity Volleyball - 13	Freshmen Cheerleading - 12
Spring Sport – number of students	Spring Sport – number of students
Varsity Track – 46	Varsity Softball - 11
Modified Track - 33	JV Softball - 11
Varsity Baseball - 17	Boys' Tennis - 17
JV Baseball - 16	Varsity Lacrosse - 20

Trends in the Athletic Program

In the fall of 2015, we had 256 students in grades 7-12 participating in interscholastic sports.

In the winter of 2015-16, we had 138 students participating in interscholastic sports.

In the spring of 2016, we had 171 students participating in interscholastic sports.

We have merged swim teams with Guilderland. This is the longest standing merged sports program in Section II.

A merger of Boys' Hockey was approved by the board of education to begin in the winter of 2016-17.

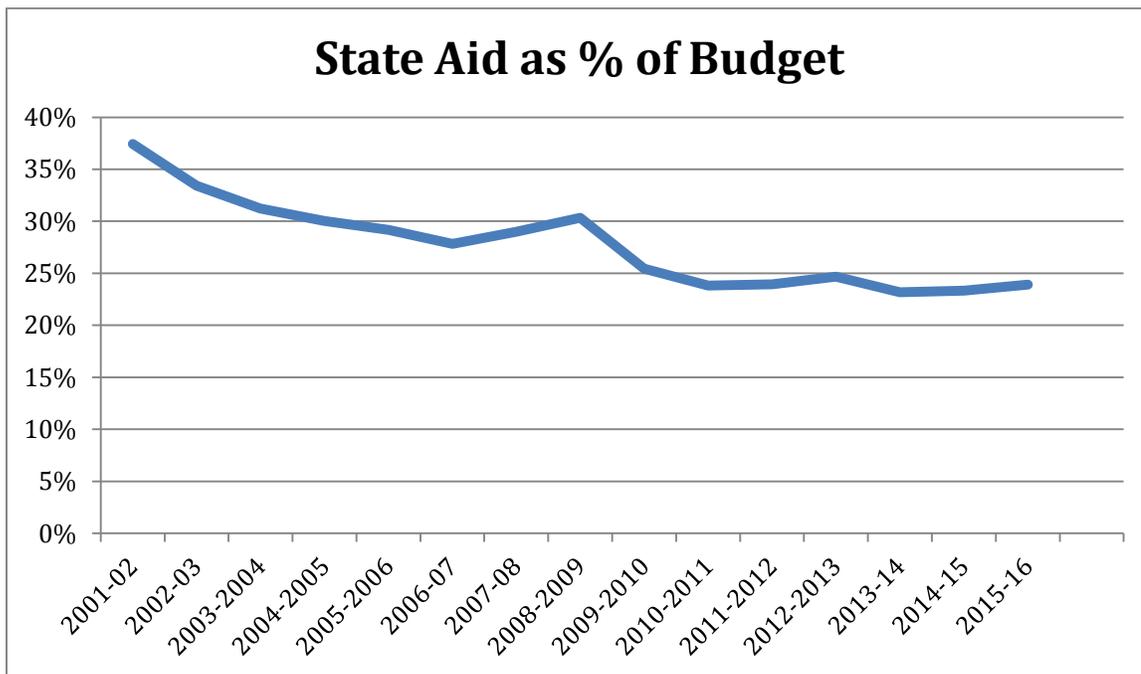
A merger of Wrestling was approved by the board of education to begin in the winter of 2016-17.

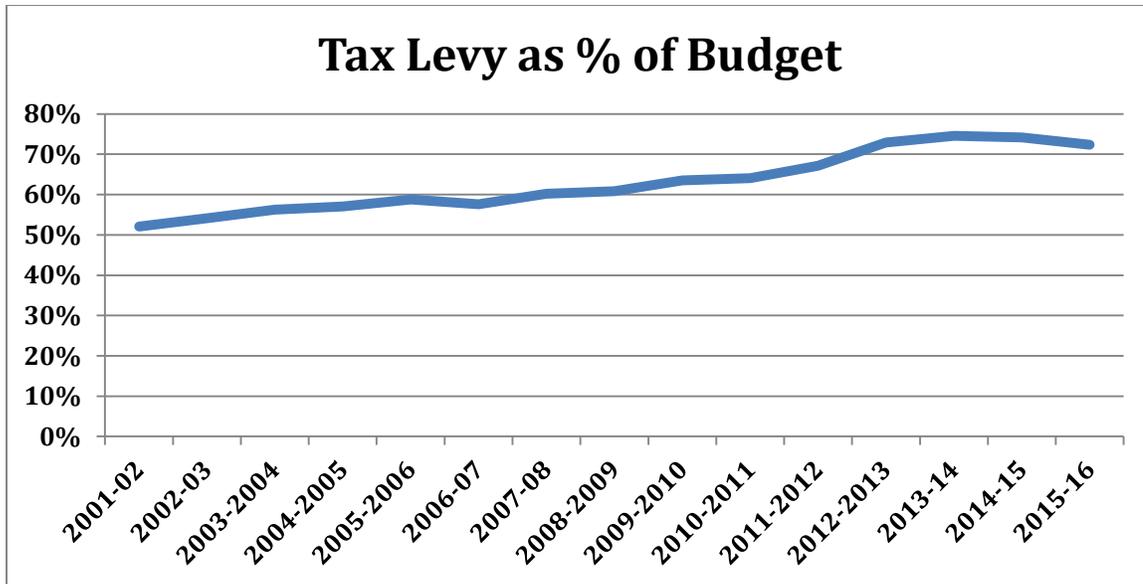
Extracurricular Activities

The district has strong participation in extracurricular activities. Several new activities have been added recently, including MS Jazz Ensemble, 5th grade writing club, and MS and HS Robotics. The district should continue to look to expand extracurricular activities that engage students' interests.

VI. District Finances

District Budget Trends





District Financial Reserves

VCSD Reserves	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Capital Reserve	0	\$450,000	\$555,000	\$880,000	\$1,040,000	\$1,099,000
Unemployment Reserve	\$100,000	\$85,033	\$60,000	\$30,000.00	\$30,000	\$30,000
Repair Reserve	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$250,000	\$151,112	\$175,832
Reserve for Encumbrances	\$345,211	\$429,708	\$167,731	\$231,347	\$249,746	\$200,000
Unappropriated Fund Balance	\$834,851	\$787,859	\$891,001	\$896,893	\$913,689	\$905,076
Other Reserves (Land, Certiori)	\$232,654	0	0	0	0	0
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$636,000	\$600,000	\$700,000	\$600,000	\$493,000	\$325,000
Total Reserves	\$1,712,716	\$1,952,600	\$1,873,732	\$2,288,240	\$2,384,547	\$2,735,072

Discussion of the District’s Reserves

The district’s reserves are adequate to ensure the longer-term financial health of the district. One additional step that should be considered is to establish a new capital reserve fund to prepare for the capital project. The current capital reserve fund is at its maximum limit. A new capital reserve would allow the district to put aside funds in the next few years that would lessen the impact of the capital project on the district’s property taxpayers.

5 Year Budget Illustration

The illustration below is based on these assumptions for the budget years of 2017-18 through 2020-21:

2.5% Total Expenditure increases annually

4.0% Total State Aid increases annually

1.5% Tax Levy Limit increases annually

These assumptions are meant to be conservative and consistent with longer-term budget trends. Unforeseen circumstances could cause the actual rates of change in expenditures and revenues to vary from these assumptions.

Budget Year	Total Expenditures (% increase)	Amount of State Aid Increase (% increase)	Tax Levy (% increase)	Projected Budget Gap
2015-16	\$23,149,000 (4.4% increase)	\$407,000 (7% increase)	\$16,740,000 (1.88% increase)	N/A
2016-17	\$23,796,000 (3.1% increase)	\$559,000 (8% increase)	\$16,901,000 (0.9% increase)	N/A
2017-18	\$24,391,000 (2.5% increase)	\$248,000 (4% increase)	\$17,154,000 (1.5% increase)	(\$119,000)
2018-19	\$25,001,000 (2.5% increase)	\$258,000 (4% increase)	\$17,411,000 (1.5% increase)	(\$120,000)
2019-20	\$25,626,000 (2.5% increase)	\$268,000 (4% increase)	\$17,673,000 (1.5% increase)	(\$121,000)

2020-21	\$26,266,000 (2.5% increase)	\$279,000 (4% increase)	\$17,938,000 (1.5% increase)	(\$122,000)
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The budget gaps illustrated above are modest. Relatively small increases in for state aid and/or the levy limit, combined with modest reductions in spending, could close the gaps shown in the illustration. If the actual changes vary from the assumed changes in expenditures or revenues, the gap would change also.

Discussion of the District's Financial Position

The period of 2010-2015 was very difficult for public schools in New York. State budget shortfalls and the resulting Gap Elimination Adjustment resulted in deep cuts to state aid to schools. With the elimination of the GEA in the 2016-17 budget, the aid picture appears to be more stable going forward. Caution is warranted, however, in that the size of aid increases in future years should not be expected continue at the 8% increase level the district saw in 2016. Future aid increases are likely to be much more modest (the illustration above assumes a 4.0% annual increase in state aid).

The tax levy limit is also a significant factor in determining district revenues. 70% of the district's revenue comes from the levy. Due to the tax levy limit, the district's revenue is likely to be limited in the next few years, although the formula does vary from year to year due to a variety of factors.

VII. Overall Recommendations

The information presented and discussed throughout the 2015-16 school year has resulted in the following ideas and recommendations for the VCSD Board of Education to consider:

- Provide support for on-going professional development for the teachers and staff of the district
- Enhance the opportunities of students to take more challenging and engaging coursework
- Provide systematic support for students who may be at risk
- Enhance the support for and use of teaching techniques that actively engage students
- Plan for a capital project that addresses the building needs identified in the Building Condition Survey and for enrollment and program needs

- Monitor and adjust the district budgeting process to ensure that the financial health of the district is maintained, and to ensure that sufficient reserves are available to meet the district's future needs
- Enhance district communications to better inform stakeholders, including improvements to the district's website to provide more information in a more easily accessible format, and implementation of Board Docs to increase the flow of information to the public