Facilities Utilization Study

Greenfield Community School Corporation

February 22, 2024

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1. Methodology

Based on the assignment provided on January 8, 2024, Administrator Assistance was tasked with answering the following 4 questions:

- What is the best educational structure for grades/tiers with our existing facilities?
- What can be done to increase our facility use efficiency?
- What suggestions do you have to help us decrease our operational costs?
- What can be done to increase our efficiency in these areas: (1) Administration structure, (2) Special programs?

Following an initial meeting with the GCCSC administration, the team activities to complete the study included the following:

- On January 30 and 31, the team visited all the GCCSC buildings and talked with the principals/directors in charge.
- On February 7, the team had one-on-one interviews with the following people:
    a. All school principals
    b. The Mayor
    c. The Executive Director of the Economic Development Council
    d. Director of Transportation
    e. Director of Student Services
    f. Director of Early Learning
    g. Treasurer
    h. Director of Buildings and Grounds
    i. Director of Food Services

  In these interviews, we asked a series of questions of questions to gain an understanding of the school district. See the list of questions in Appendix A.

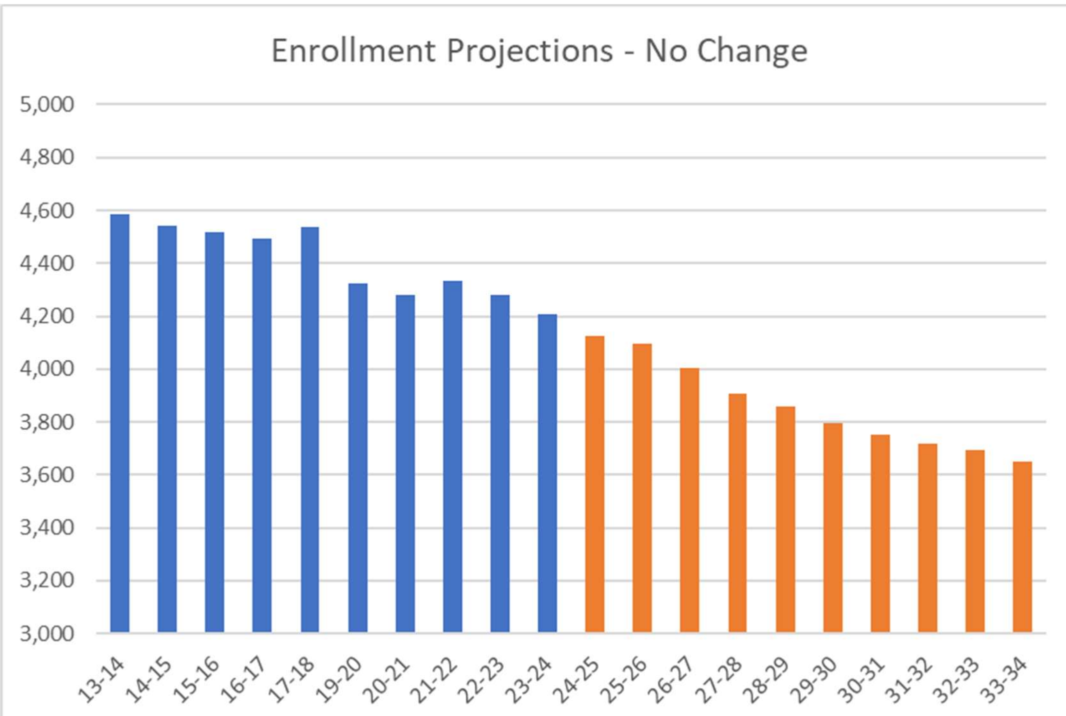
- The team also used a variety of data provided by the administration, including class sizes, administrative structure, district map, enrollment, transfer students, etc. We also received data from the Economic Development Council.
- Following the preparation of a draft report, this was reviewed with the administration on February 20.
- A second draft was provided for all to review on February 22.
- The final report was provided on __________.

The team appreciates the excellent cooperation we received from all the GCCSC staff we worked with. We were very impressed with the quality of your staff, as well as their friendliness and their willingness to allow us to take time out of their busy schedules. It was also obvious that the staff was comfortable with the presence of central office administrators in their buildings – this leads to the inference that they are present in buildings on a regular basis.

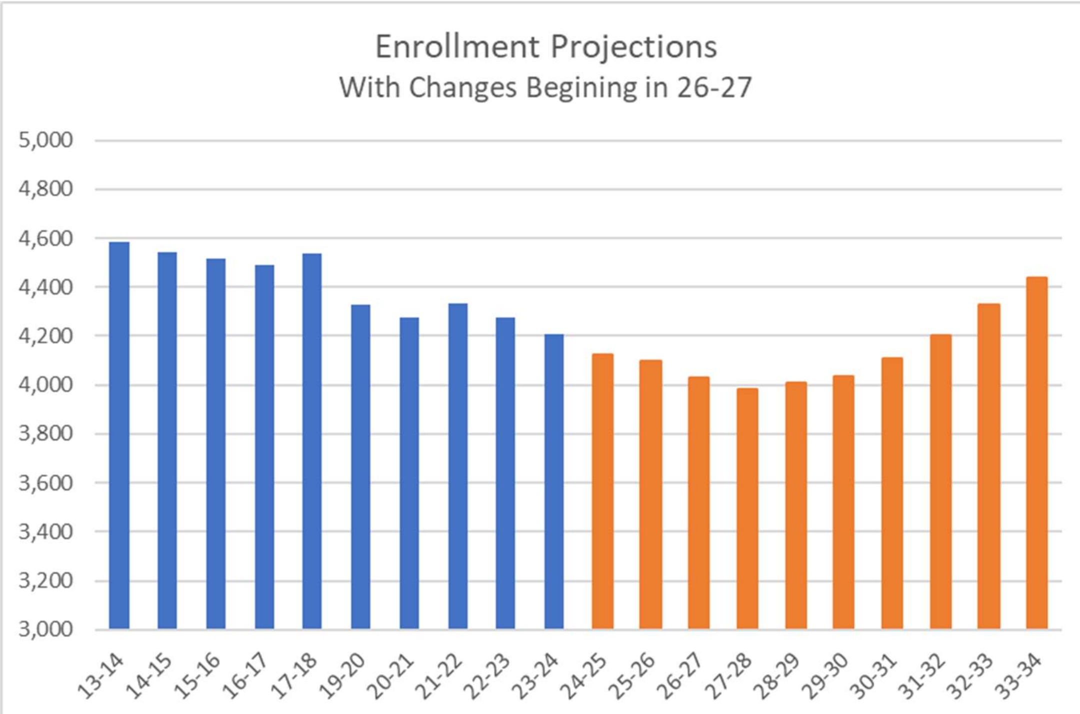
2. Background Information

Enrollment

CGCCSC provided the team with historical enrollment by grade. We also obtained trend data on birth rates in Hancock County and the percentage of these births that ultimately generate a Kindergarten class. Simple Grade Advancement Ratio projections were then completed. The chart below shows these projections and makes no assumptions about anything changing in the future. That is, GCCSC makes no changes to impact this chart and nothing happens externally to impact it. In other words, the past alone predicts the future. The raw data that generated this chart is shown in Appendix C.



However, we feel that another scenario is very possible. In this scenario, GCCSC implements strategies to generate more students, and/or economic development generates additional homes and students. To quantify this scenario, we have added 25 more students in the 2026-27 school year, 50 in 2027-28, 75 in 28-29, and so on until 200 in 33-34. We believe that this is a very attainable goal, and it generates future enrollments as follows:

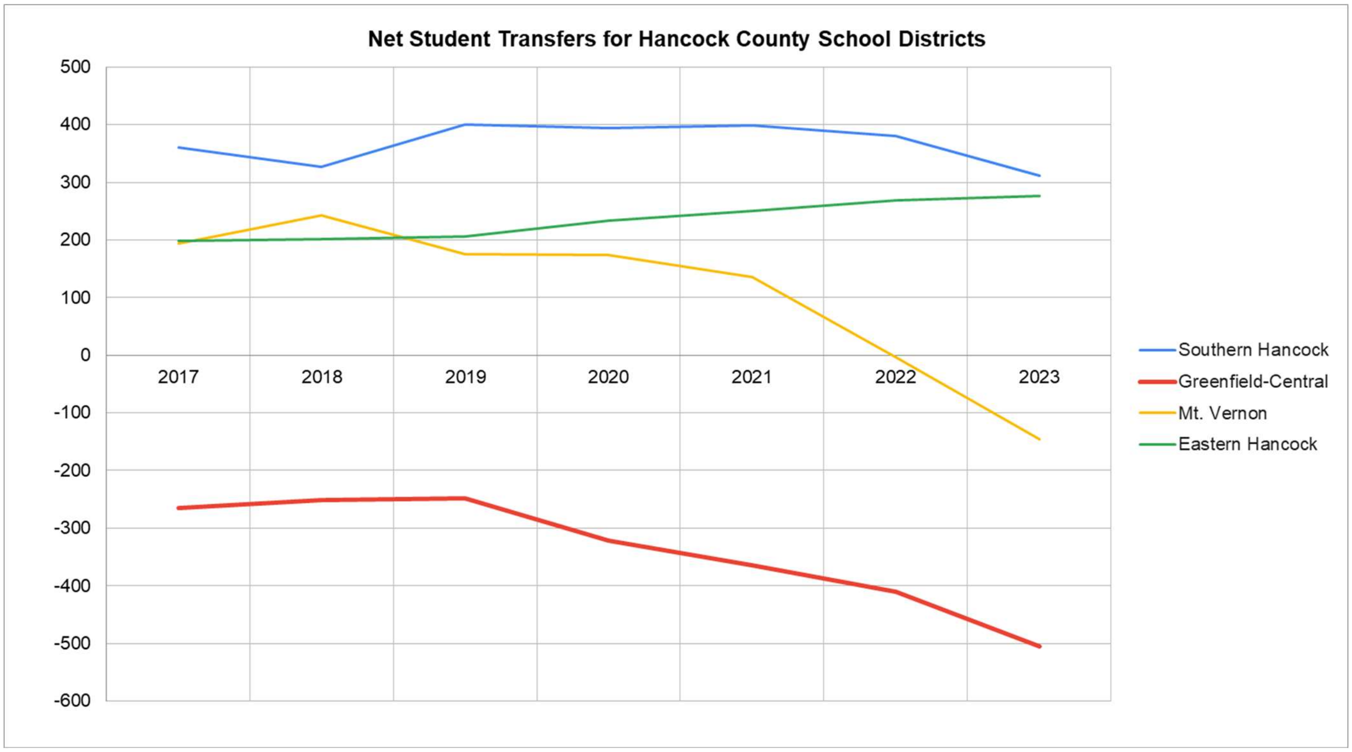


Later in the report, we will discuss what these changes might be to generate this scenario. We understand that the district has engaged a professional demographer to complete a more thorough demographic study.

Transfer Students

The loss of Greenfield students transferring to another district represents a significant problem for GCCSC. The administration has provided us with a great deal of data, and it is clear that they are very knowledgeable about this issue. We do not see the need to repeat all the data here, but to provide an example, in 2023-24, an accumulated total of 762 students transferred out of the district, of which 388 went to the other 3 Hancock County districts. The district receiving the most students was Eastern Hancock, which received 207 students. Based on feedback from our interviews, the reasons for this appear to be: (1) the strength of their FFA program, and (2) some people just want to be in a small school district.

The following chart shows the best picture of what has been happening. Note the GCCSC is the only district in the county that has a net loss of students every year, but it is similar to other school districts in county seats.



We believe that this trend can be reversed. The administration will need to take specific action to attack this issue, and this will be discussed in our recommendations.

Financial Condition

Although the team did not make a formal review of the district's financial condition, we did observe that the district's finances are in excellent shape and this should be part of the positive story that you tell about GCCSC. Some of the indicators we noticed that speak to your financial condition include:

- **Level tax rate:** The district has maintained a level tax rate of around $1.00 since at least 2019 and expects to continue this in the future.
- **Solid cash balance:** The district has more than sufficient cash balance to carry it through in emergencies that may arise.
- **Debt Service Rate Less than $.60:** This means that the district will not need to go through extra steps (that some other districts do) that make bonds harder to sell.
- **Some existing bonds will be paid off:** Because the district has existing debt that will go away, they have the ability to sell small bonds in the future to help with maintenance needs and small building projects.
- **Low tax cap losses:** The tax cap losses that reduce district revenue are very small compared to many other districts. They amount to only 3% of the Operations Fund tax revenue in 2023.

- **No deferred maintenance:** The administration reports no significant deferred maintenance. This puts the district in better shape than many districts with buildings as old as yours.
- **No operating referendum:** The fact that the administration has not had to resort to an operating referendum to achieve their financial results shows solid management of their existing resources. It also means they will not need to deal with a referendum renewal in the future.

Taken together, these indicators paint a picture of excellent financial management and a positive outlook for the future. This needs to be part of the GCCSC story that is told to the community.

Class Sizes

Once again, the administration has provided us with a great deal of data in this area, which they are obviously very familiar with. Below is a summary of class sizes at the elementary level. It is clear that these class sizes are very small and would be the envy of many other school districts. This is a message that needs to get out to the community as one of the strengths of GCCSC. This also provides the district with opportunities for more efficiency as the district grows.

Summary of Class Size Data Grades KG to 6th

	KG	1st	2nd	3rd	AVG	MIN	MAX
Eden	2	2	2	2	21.3	15	24
Harris	4	3	3	4	21.4	16	24
JBS	5	5	5	5	21.8	20	23
Weston	4	4	4	4	19.3	17	20
Average	19.2	21.2	22.6	18.9	20.9		

	4th	5th	6th	AVG	MIN	MAX
G I S	7	7	7	21.3	17	25
M I S	7	7	7	22.0	17	28
Average	20.3	21.9	22.8	21.6		

Blue shaded boxes show the number of sections

All other numbers show number of students

3. Facility Reviews

The team spent two days touring all GCCSC buildings and talking with the principals/directors in charge. We were very impressed with the condition of the buildings. They were very clean and well-maintained, both inside and outside. We were particularly impressed with the interior finishes. These can easily be ignored in favor of other projects, but for GCCSC they provide an updated and consistent “look and feel”, even in buildings with multiple additions/renovations.

There is no visible evidence of any deferred maintenance, which can be a significant problem for older buildings. In talking with the Business Manager and Director of Buildings and Grounds, a great deal of effort has been spent on building systems (plumbing, HVAC, electrical, roofs, etc.) in the last 5 years. It appears that maintenance plans are in place to continue this effort in the future.

As discussed later, all buildings have some excess capacity, which positions the district for future growth without needing to build new buildings.

There are two areas with renovation potential that should be mentioned:

- **Maxwell Intermediate Gymnasium Locker Room Area:** This area adjacent to the gym is not currently being used, except for some occasional storage. Although it is possible to renovate it for some other use, the team would not recommend that at this time. We recommend not using this space for a few years, until you see what happens with enrollment or potential grade level restructuring. Note that the cost of construction in this area would be extremely high, and the building is currently at only 75% of capacity.
- **High School Old Auditorium:** This space will have a great deal of potential for renovation and reuse when the new auditorium opens. The administration is wise to not make an immediate decision about how this will be used. A long-term perspective on the high school needs to be taken. Some of the factors that impact this decision include:
  ** The high school is currently at 97% of capacity. How will any future growth in students impact the building needs?
  ** What additional course offerings might be needed at the high school in the future?
  ** How will the new career center impact high school course offerings and space needs? Will it create the need for more classrooms, or free up some classroom space? Will it have a positive impact on enrollment?
  ** Is the teacher’s classroom used during their planning time? Is there a department office or similar space that can be used for planning?

4. Interviews

The team conducted 17 interviews with GCCSC administrators. We appreciate the openness and honesty from everyone we interviewed. Administrative staff were very open and did not hesitate to answer questions. We found the administrators to be very proud of the accomplishments of their schools and of the district. Each team member took notes from each interview. Each team member summarized the common threads from their own interviews, and then the key ideas are combined into the list below. Note that these are not listed in any priority order.

STRENGTHS

- Well maintained buildings
- Low class sizes
- Size of district -Not too large – not too small
- Performing Arts
- Stable financials
- Effective/diverse academic offerings
- Caring Central Office
- Willingness to improve

CHALLENGES

- No long range plan
- Discipline perception
- Lack of 6^{th} grade athletics
- School climate
- School clarity/vision
- Middle school model (6-8)
- Losing students to other districts
- Under-utilized facilities

OPPORTUNITIES

- Lots of economic development in the county and potential explosive growth
- Inexpensive land prices will likely lead to housing developments
- Utilities can support growth
- Growth can generally occur without major building projects
- Mayor and Economic Development Director are very positive about the school district

In addition, please note two overall observations that came out of these interviews. First, the most commonly expressed concern that came from these interviews was about the number of students who transfer out. And second, based on the interviews as well as the team's overall knowledge and experience in other districts, there is no evidence that there are too many administrators or that we could recommend any changes in administrative structure.

5. Recommendations

1. **Develop and implement a long-term plan (strategic plan) to guide the district through the next ten years.** Planning should be to have a five-year plan with the distinct probability of a second five year plan. There are too many unknown variables to think past this time frame.

2. **Employ a marketing firm, or marketing specialist, to work with the district on developing and implementing a marketing plan.** This is not be confused with public relations. Public relations is usually promoting a one-time event or happening. A marketing plan would identify the district's strengths, develop "sound bites" or slogans, etc. to be emphasized repeatedly over time to establish the perception that the district wants to have. An example might be: “Greenfield Central is an award winning district.” You might identify blue ribbon schools, four star schools, family friendly schools(one of only a few districts that have all schools identified), band, performing arts, etc. What you want is for people to think when they hear of an award, wow, they won another award. Staff we met are proud of the schools and getting them moving in this direction would be welcomed. Right now, the prevailing feeling is that we're a good, but humble district.

3. **Expand curricular offerings:** Expanding CTE offerings will allow high school students to be prepared to take maximum advantage of the soon-to-be-opened career center. In order to strengthen the offerings for college-bound students, more AP courses need to be offered and an analysis of credit earning rates and how to improve outcomes. In conjunction with this, more dual-credit courses are needed, so partnerships with universities need to be improved. If a majority of students who are college-bound, can graduate with a semester or more of college credit, it saves the families money and improves the chances for college success.

4. **Consider grade reorganization changes:** The team has looked a various possible grade/school reorganizations and presents below 4 options for consideration. These are not necessarily in priority order:

(A) Shift fourth grade back to the elementary schools. This maximizes building utilization at the K-4 level, and while grades 5-8 would be in buildings with empty space, if these recommendations prove successful, then those buildings have the space to accommodate the growth. This configuration could likely also handle growth from future housing developments. Having the students for five years and creating a "we are family" feel would go a long way in keeping students in Greenfield, rather than go elsewhere. In conjunction with this, we would recommend beginning band and orchestra in grade 5 in order to further maximize a district strength.

The following chart shows the impact of this change on each building.

Greenfield-Central Enrollment Among the Eight Schools...(2023-2024 School Year)

	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	School Total	School Capacity	Percent Utilization
Eden	43	44	31	44										162	450	36.0%
Harris	85	50	66	89										290	500	58.0%
JBS	104	108	116	106										434	650	66.8%
Weston	78	78	80	75										311	550	56.5%
G I S					146	160	153							459	600	76.5%
M I S					145	145	168							458	600	76.3%
GCJHS								338	328					666	840	79.3%
GCHS										396	382	339	344	1,461	1,500	97.4%
Total by Grade	310	280	293	314	291	305	321	338	328	396	382	339	344	4,241	5,690	74.5%

Greenfield-Central Enrollment Among the Eight Schools...(Moving the 4th Grade)

	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	School Total	School Capacity	Percent Utilization
Eden	43	44	31	44	44									206	450	45.8%
Harris	85	50	66	89	82									372	500	74.4%
JBS	104	108	116	106	82									516	650	79.4%
Weston	78	78	80	75	83									394	550	71.6%
G I S						160	153							313	600	52.2%
M I S						145	168							313	600	52.2%
GCJHS								338	328					666	840	79.3%
GCHS										396	382	339	344	1,461	1,500	97.4%
Total by Grade	310	280	293	314	291	305	321	338	328	396	382	339	344	4,241	5,690	74.5%

As you can see each building remains under its capacity. The high school is getting close, but with the opening of the new performing arts center, there will be some additional space available in this building.

(B) Move pre-K into each elementary school. Remodel 2 classrooms at each elementary school to accommodate Pre-K classes (perhaps 3 rooms will be needed at JB Stevens). This would result in a net increase of one or two pre-school sections, but would accommodate the existing waiting list and could offer childcare instruction to staff and some community members. However, this move would include putting 4th grade in intermediate and putting 6th grade students in junior high, and there is not enough space to do this at this time. See the chart below. We believe there are many benefits to this plan, both academically and in terms of keeping parents connected with schools. This may be a move to make at a future time, depending on how well efforts work to keep students from transferring out and building additions are needed.

Greenfield-Central Enrollment Among the Eight Schools: Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12

	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	School Total	School Capacity	Percent Utilization
Eden	43	44	31											118	450	26.2%
Harris	85	50	66											201	500	40.2%
JBS	104	108	116											328	650	50.5%
Weston	78	78	80											236	550	42.9%
GIS				157	146	160								463	600	77.2%
MIS				157	145	145								447	600	74.5%
GCJHS							321	338	328					987	840	117.5%
GCHS										396	382	339	344	1461	1,500	97.4%
Total by Grade	310	280	293	314	291	305	321	338	328	396	382	339	344	4,241	5,690	74.5%

(Pre-K students in the elementary schools would take up additional space.)

(C) Repurpose Weston Elementary as a Pre-K and daycare Center. Repurpose Weston Elementary School into an early childhood center for consolidating pre-school and expanding preschool and child care options, as demand warrants. The initial configuration could include 10 pre-K classrooms at Weston in addition to the 2 at the Education Center. Weston students would then be re-assigned to JBS and Harris, with about a 50/50 split. The elementary configuration would remain K-3.

This would likely have a positive benefit to the schools and community. First and foremost, it would immediately expand the pre-K program to service all those currently on a waiting list. Further, we would expect some reduction in administrative and shared services costs by moving from 4 elementary schools to 3. This option also has space for growth in all buildings, and if the other recommendations are implemented and prove successful, would permit the district to plan for the next five years what the building plans might be when capacity is reached at any level. The price points of new housing might determine at which level the bulk of new students would occur.

Greenfield-Central Enrollment Among the Eight Schools… Repurpose Weston Elementary

	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	School Total	School Capacity	Percent Utilization
Eden	43	44	31	44										162	450	36.0%
Harris	124	89	106	126										445	500	89.0%
JBS	143	147	156	144										590	650	90.8%
Weston	**(Repurposed as a Pre-K and childcare center)**													0	550	0.0%
G I S					146	160	153							459	600	76.5%
M I S					145	145	168							458	600	76.3%
GCJHS								338	328					666	840	79.3%
GCHS										396	382	339	344	1,461	1,500	97.4%
Total by Grade	310	280	293	314	291	305	321	338	328	396	382	339	344	4,241	5,690	74.5%

Weston students split 50/50 between JBS and Harris

(D) Everything in option (C) plus: change GIS to an elementary school, move to K-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-12 structure: Since Eden has 13.5% of all current grades K to 3, assume they would get 13.5% of grade 4. The GIS/Harris complex would be converted into a single elementary school. Move current GIS 5-6 students to MIS, which would be the only intermediate school. Then take all K-4 students not at Eden and distribute them equally by grade across GIS/Harris and JBS.

This has all the benefits of Option C. It would allow for a more fluid sharing of resources between the GIS/Harris sides of the building. At the intermediate level, there could be some savings by moving from two intermediate buildings to just one. It would also make it easier to expand fine arts and 6th grade athletics if the district decides to move in that direction.

In looking at the accompanying chart, the capacity at MIS does not appear to be able to house all of the 5-6 grade students, without "finding" additional classroom space through repurposing some of the non-classroom space into instructional space. Additionally, if students do not transfer out-of-district in the quantity that they do now, the intermediate school would likely be the first school impacted by larger enrollment. A quicker building program might be necessary with this option.

Greenfield-Central Enrollment Among the Eight Schools... Repurpose Weston Elementary

	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	School Total	School Capacity	Percent Utilization
Eden	43	44	31	44	39									201	450	44.7%
Harris G I S	134	118	131	135	126									644	1,100	58.5%
JBS	133	118	131	135	126									643	650	98.9%
Weston	(Repurposed as a Pre-K and childcare center)													0	550	0.0%
M I S						305	321							626	600	104.3%
GCJHS								338	328					666	840	79.3%
GCHS										396	382	339	344	1461	1,500	97.4%
Total by Grade	310	280	293	314	291	305	321	338	328	396	382	339	344	4,241	5,690	74.5%

Eden currently has 13.5% of students in K-3; assume they would get 13.5% of grade 4

Remaining students in K-4 split equally in each grade between (Harris/GIS) as one school and JBS as another

6. Conclusion

Administrator Assistance is pleased to have been invited to complete this study, by an administration that recognizes they have opportunities to improve.

The team feels that Greenfield Central is a “hidden gem” in Hancock County: stable finances, great buildings, very small class size, friendly and committed staff, and has won many awards. It has the potential to be a magnet and attract students from the surrounding area. We believe these recommendations will help the school and the community.

Appendices

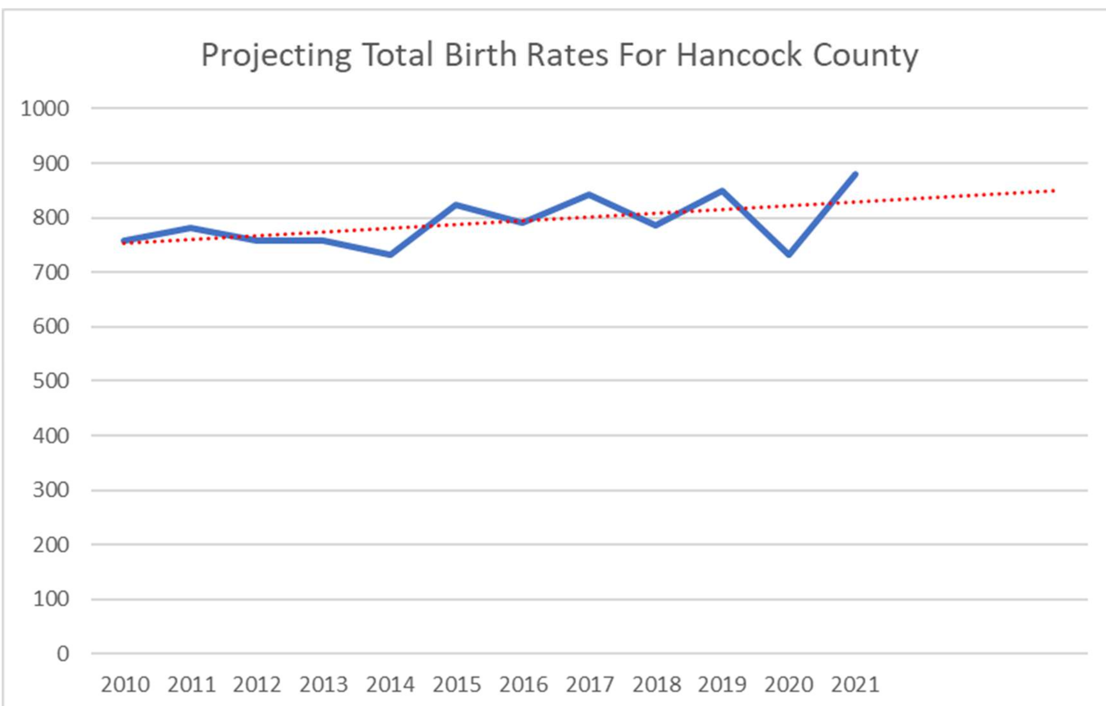
Appendix A: Interview Questions

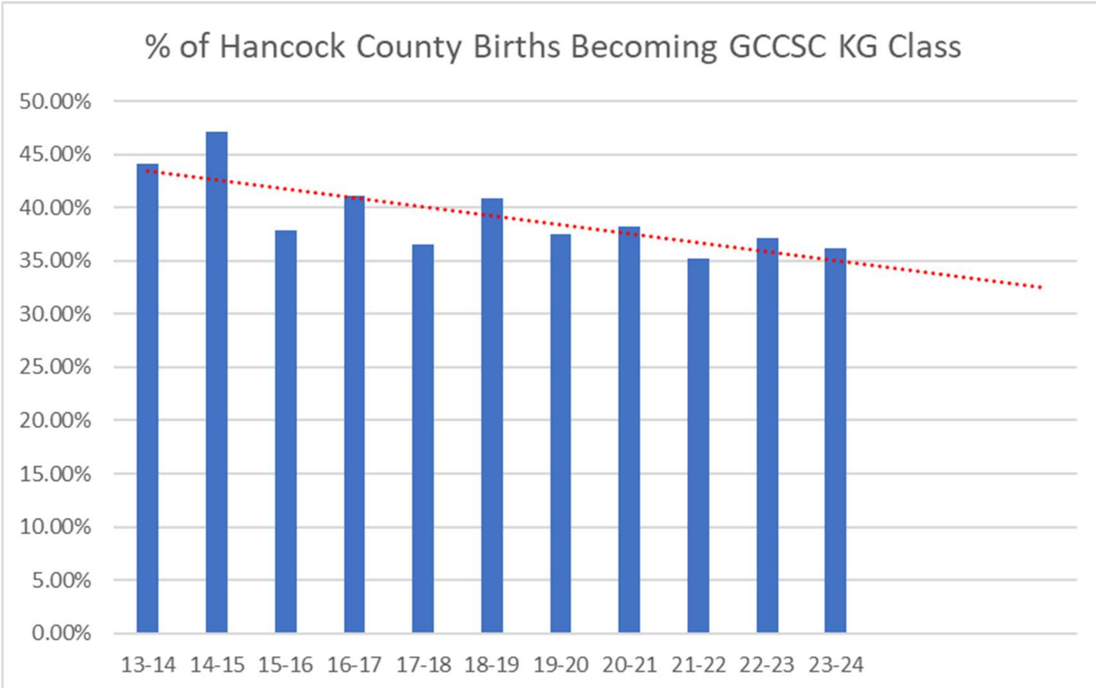
Position being interviewed:________________________

Name of person interviewed:_______________________

1. How long have you been in your present position?
   How long in the district?
   How long in education?
2. What are some successes of your school(or of the district)?
3. What are challenges in your building(or the district)?
4. Why do you think families are attracted to Greenfield schools? Why are some reasons they may choose to transfer to a neighboring school district?
5. What is the climate like in the Greenfield schools?
6. How would you describe the communications between the central office, buildings and staff?
7. What would be your ideal grade level configuration in the district, regardless of building configuration?
8. What programs would you look at adding to either enhance the student's education or attract students from neighboring districts?

Appendix B: Birth Rate Information




% of Hancock County Births Becoming GCCSC KG Class
50.00%
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
13-14
14-15
15-16
16-17
17-18
18-19
19-20
20-21
21-22
22-23
23-24

Appendix C: Enrollment Projections – No Change Scenario

Enrollment Projections Using Kindergarten Data

Year	Births	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total	K - 3 Total	4 - 6 Total	7 - 8 Total	9 - 12 Total
18-19	824	299	295	323	309	345	362	342	362	386	363	358	346	386	4476	1226	1049	748	1453
19-20	790	309	308	307	320	315	363	363	346	374	390	349	352	336	4326	1244	1041	720	1427
20-21	843	302	295	299	301	315	307	359	352	351	380	382	338	345	4278	1197	981	703	1445
21-22	787	297	311	301	285	308	326	314	359	358	373	387	377	337	4333	1194	948	717	1474
22-23	850	292	310	304	307	297	304	327	308	367	375	351	364	372	4278	1213	928	675	1462
23-24	732	307	282	294	318	291	307	317	338	324	392	376	329	333	4208	1201	915	662	1430
24-25	880	256	307	276	294	318	293	311	316	347	340	386	360	319	4123	1133	922	663	1405
25-26	830	299	256	300	276	294	320	297	310	324	364	335	370	349	4095	1131	911	634	1418
26-27	840	266	299	251	300	276	296	325	296	318	340	358	321	359	4005	1115	897	615	1378
27-28	850	269	265	293	250	300	278	300	324	304	334	335	344	311	3906	1077	878	628	1323
28-29	855	272	268	260	293	250	302	282	299	332	319	329	321	333	3860	1093	835	631	1302
29-30	860	274	272	263	260	292	252	307	281	307	348	314	315	311	3796	1068	851	588	1289
30-31	865	275	273	266	263	260	295	256	305	288	322	343	301	306	3753	1077	810	594	1272
31-32	870	277	275	268	266	263	261	299	255	313	302	317	329	292	3717	1085	823	568	1240
32-33	875	278	276	269	267	266	265	265	298	262	329	298	304	319	3696	1091	796	559	1250
33-34	880	280	278	271	269	267	268	268	264	305	274	324	286	295	3649	1098	804	570	1178