May 8, 2013

Orange County Board of Education

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Dear County Commissioners:

Attached is the March 14, 2012 letter from our Board to the BoCC. Albeit from last year, this letter explains projections used by our Board as we compiled our 2013-23 Capital Investment Plan (CIP). We acknowledge that, as with all estimates, some of our projections from last year need to be refined based on a number of things. However, our Board still stands behind the major philosophies and facility needs outlined in the attached letter. In addition, we offer the following updates and observations for your consideration.

Student Membership Projections

As stated last year, multi-family dwellings generate as many, if not more, students than single-family dwellings in our District. The draft 2013 Annual SAPFO Report prepared by Orange County Planning validates our thoughts:

> *"Both Orange County Schools and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools have recognized a larger increase in students generated from developments in both districts, particularly the multi-family housing."*

With that said, the majority of new construction coming on line in our district in the near future are multi-family dwellings. We anticipate the opening of Hampton Pointe apartments this June will bear out our expectations on this front.

We also cannot stress enough how difficult, if not impossible, it is for our District to have solid student projection models, because of the unknowns associated with new housing development in Mebane. We are pleased to see the following recommendation in the draft 2013 Annual SAPFO Report:

> *"More than ten years of projection results are now available. Analysis on the accuracy of the results is showing that some models have better results in one district while others have better results in the other district. The historic growth rate is recorded by the models but projected future growth is more difficult to accurately quantify. In all areas of the county, proposed growth is not included in the SAPFO projection system until actual students begin enrollment. The system is updated in November of each year, becoming part of the historical projection base.* ***This is especially pertinent in the Orange County School District which serves students living within the Orange County portion of the City of Mebane which had had little historic enrollment impact. The significant proposed residential growth occurring within Mebane's jurisdiction has yet to be fully entered into the historically based projection methods. Although construction activity in this portion of the county has slowed, there are still a substantial number of approved but undeveloped residential lots."***

"OCS currently has capacity to serve additional growth, but it is possible that development in the Orange County portion of Mebane could quickly encumber available capacity."

Elementary #8

It is important to note the following for OCS elementary level of service as projected by the most recent SAPFO projections:

- SAPFO Average Projection Model projects that elementary capacity for OCS would exceed 100% in 2018-19 and exceed 105% in 2022-23.
- SAPFO Tischler Projection Model reflects that elementary capacity for OCS would exceed 100% in 2017-18 and exceed 105% in 2020-21.

Pre-K Impact

For several years now, we have made the point that since 2007, our District has been very committed to a strong Pre-K program. We currently serve 139 at-risk and exceptional children ages three and four years in nine of our elementary classrooms.

Current elementary capacity numbers for our district as reflected in SAPFO are overstated, because they do not take into account classrooms dedicated to the Pre-K program – i.e. classrooms that do not serve children in our SAPFO membership for grades K through 5. Based on State elementary class size mandates, we estimate this total "loss" to be between 168 and 192 seats.

Additional Comments Regarding Elementary School Capacity and Level of Service

All of these things considered, our Board stands behind our position as stated last year. Given that the average length of time to locate suitable land and plan/design/construct an elementary school is between 36 and 48 months, we feel strongly that we must begin planning for Elementary #8 this year in order to accommodate anticipated capacity needs that lie in our not so distant future. As a reminder, the availability of suitable property in our district (i.e. available water and sewer infrastructure) likely means that our search for land may extend the 36 to 48 month projection.

High School Capacity

Last year at this time, we were in the midst of having the capacity of Orange High reassessed. The result of the completed study was a loss of 119 seats. Based on updated SAPFO projections, our high school capacity will exceed 100% in 2018-17.

Our Board is fully aware that the Level of Service (LOS) for high schools is 110% and that our total high school student population according to SAPFO average begins to meet that mark in 2022-23. We would highlight that planning and construction time for the Cedar Ridge High School (CRHS) wing would be between 24 and 36 months. If we started planning now, we would succeed in opening the new CRHS wing at exactly the time SAPFO anticipates the additional space to be needed.

There are two other important points to consider regarding high school capacity.

- Current SAPFO membership numbers show that CRHS is already 77 students above its current capacity of 1,000 students. This equates to a Level of Service of 108% for that school.

- The number of seats in our alternative schools overstates core high school capacity for both districts. Since Partnership, OCS' alternative school, serves a special purpose and specific students, it is not a fair comparison to show seats in those schools as part of the total high school capacity. For example, according to SAPFO capacity numbers, OCS has 40 seats available at Partnership Academy for high school students. Instead, our Board would say that those seats are not readily available for all high school students. With that said, we would argue that instead of having 124 high school seats available at 100% LOS, we, in all actuality, have 108 core high school seats available.

For more than 10 years, our Cedar Ridge students, parents and faculty have made do without an auxiliary gym even as membership and athletic offerings have grown. In 2002, CRHS opened with 689 students, core facilities for 1,500 and one gymnasium. Next school year, with 400 students more than in 2002, our students, parents and staff still await the addition of the auxiliary gymnasium.

The lack of space for athletic functions causes very late practices and games for our student athletes. It has also resulted in numerous inconveniences for our parents and faculty members and, given the nature of the roads in rural Orange County, has created dangerous late night driving situations for our students.

If Commissioners feel compelled to move a project up in the CIP, our Board would push for completing the wing addition and auxiliary gym at Cedar Ridge High School. The need for this project is as important to our District as the Arts Wing was for Carrboro High (Arts Wing constructed only three years after Carrboro High opening) or the Science Wing at Culbreth Middle School.

There has also been much talk among BoCC about how costly it is to maintain older facilities. We certainly agree with that line of thought. Here are some considerations from the OCS perspective.

- Older facilities require an additional level of support to maintain and a considerable amount of CIP funding to achieve parity with our newer schools. The average age of our schools is 37.2 years. Forty-one percent of our students attend class in our five schools that are 50+ years old. While all schools, whether new or old, require constant support and maintenance, it is becoming increasingly expensive to maintain the 50+ year old schools. For example, within the past several months the 50-year-old steam lines that provide heat to the main building at Orange High School have begun to leak and must be replaced. Preliminary cost estimates to replace these underground lines approaches $1 million.

- Four elementary schools in the two school districts in Orange County were constructed in 1952 – more than 60 years ago. These four schools house 1,669 students. More than one third of OCS elementary school students attend class in schools that are more than 60 years old while less than ten percent of CHCCS elementary students are in a similar situation. The chart below offers more detail:

Elementary Schools in Excess of 60 Years Old

School	Original Construction Year	District	11/15/2012 SAPFO Membership [1]	Total Elementary Students (By District) [1]	Total Students (By District) Attending Class in 60+ Year Old Buildings [1]	% Students (By District) Attending Class in 60+ Year Old Buildings (By District)
Central	1952	OCS	278			
Efland Cheeks	1952	OCS	458	3,348	1,160	34.6%
Hillsborough	1952	OCS	424			
Glenwood	1952	CHCCS	509	5,543	509	9.2%

[1] Per 11/15/2012 SAPFO Certifications

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this information, which hopefully will enhance your understanding of our District's needs. We understand the difficult task you undertake each year as you strive to balance the very differing capital and operational needs of the two Districts; and appreciate that you have consistently provided funding for quality educational opportunities for all students—regardless of where they live in the County. The somewhat tenacious manner in which comparisons were drawn and alternatives to delivering capital projects were presented during the April 25 joint meeting serves to underscore the passion that we all feel for the children we represent. While we were somewhat taken aback at the tone of the comments offered by the Chapel Hill Carrboro City School Board members, we understand their desire to provide the best facilities possible for their students. We share that desire for the students in the Orange County Schools District as well.

In closing, we hope that the County Commissioners will recognize that while both Districts may have similar needs, both Districts do not have similar resources with which to meet those needs. Our District is all too familiar with reprioritizing projects in order to use our limited resources to address those most urgent. The Chapel Hill/Carrboro District is fortunate to have an alternative to addressing their critical capital needs through their District tax. Incidentally, neither of these mechanisms would increase the indebtedness of the County nor penalize OCS students by reducing our available operational funding. We hope you will consider allowing them to utilize either of these funding alternatives to address their desire to construct the Science Wing at Culbreth Middle School earlier than provided in the recommended CIP.

Sincerely,

Donna Coffey

Donna Coffey, Chair
Orange County Board of Education

/pmc
Attachments: 1
cc: Board of Education Members
CHCCS Board of Education Chair
CHCCS Superintendent
Frank Clifton, County Manager, Orange County

Orange County
Board of
Education

Board Members:

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March 14, 2012

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200 South Cameron Street
Post Office Box 8181
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Dear County Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to elaborate on our District's quickly emerging capital needs – in particular the construction of a new elementary school and the addition of a new wing and auxiliary gymnasium at Cedar Ridge High School.

Student Membership Projections

As predicted for many years now, our district has started to see a rise in the number of students that we serve – in particular those living in the western area of the county near Mebane. While it is not possible to anticipate the number of students coming from developments located within the Mebane Planning jurisdiction, because Mebane is not a SAPFO partner, we do see evidence of growth. For example, one reliable indicator of children coming from particular areas is the number of buses that service those areas. Since this year's first day of school, our district has increased the number of buses running routes to these areas from three to seven. Assuming that the four additional buses transport at least 50 children each, we estimate the increased number of students from this area to be at least 200. The majority of these students originate from the Ashbury and Collington Farm subdivisions, and we believe that many of them live in multi-family dwellings.

Historically, single-family dwellings have generated more students than multi-family dwellings. However, we have seen a reversal of that trend during the current economic downturn, and now we are seeing more families residing in multi-family dwellings. Our Board appreciates the fact that the Orange County Planning Department recognizes the change in trend and is ready to have the current Student Generation Rates re-assessed. We look forward to reviewing the results of the planned study and using the tool to project more accurately student membership.

Elementary School #8

While our Board acknowledges the fact that the Average Projection Model is the County's standard model used for student membership projections, we feel confident that our future elementary student growth will outpace the average and reflect trends we are currently experiencing which are more in line with SAPFO's Three Year Projection Model. In addition, NC DPI projects our elementary population for the upcoming school year will increase at an even higher rate than any of the SAPFO models.

Elementary School Student Membership Projections

	2012-13 Membership Increase Projection
SAPFO - Average Model	90
SAPFO - 3 Year Model	124
NC DPI Projection	173

It is important to note that for each of the past six years, actual OCS elementary student enrollment has exceeded state projections for a cumulative total of 202 students in excess of state projections – an average of more than 33 each year.

Chart 1 (attached) compares our District's elementary student membership projections with elementary capacity. In summary:

- SAPFO's Average Projection Model projects that elementary capacity for OCS would exceed 100% in 2016-17 and exceed 105% in 2020-21.
- SAPFO's Three Year Projection Model reflects that elementary capacity for OCS would exceed 100% in 2015-16 and exceed 105% in 2018-19.

While we did not chart growth projections using the NC DPI projection, we would deduce that the need for Elementary #8 would be greatly accelerated with this model, since NC DPI's projection is much higher than either of the two SAPFO charted projections.

Our Board also feels it is important to mention that since 2007 our District has been very committed to a strong Pre-K Program. We currently serve 154 at-risk and exceptional children, ages three and four years, in nine of our elementary classrooms. Four rooms are used as regular Pre-K classrooms, three are used for the Head Start program, and two are used for exceptional children classrooms. At the time SAPFO was approved originally, Pre-K programs did not exist, and capacity numbers have never been updated to reflect the loss of

classroom space. Therefore, the current capacity numbers for our district as reflected in SAPFO are overstated, because they do not take into account classrooms dedicated to that program – i.e. classrooms that do not serve children in K through 5. Based on elementary class size mandates, we estimate this total "loss" of seats to be between 189 and 220 seats.

All of these considerations led our Board to request funding for Elementary #8 sooner rather than later. Given that the average length of time to locate suitable land and plan/design/construct an elementary school is between 36 and 48 months, our Board feels strongly that we must begin planning for Elementary #8 in the upcoming year (2012-13) in order to accommodate anticipated capacity needs that lie in our not so distant future.

High School Capacity

As our Board recently reviewed the November 15, 2011 SAPFO square footage and capacity numbers for our high schools, we discovered some interesting facts.

- Orange High School's total square feet is less than both Chapel Hill High and East Chapel Hill High; however, OHS's SAPFO student capacity is almost identical to the two schools. With that said, the square feet per student is between 18 and 31 square feet *less* at OHS than at either of the two built out high schools in CHCCS. (It did not seem equitable to compare OHS to Cedar Ridge or to Carrboro High, since neither school is built out to their core capacity at this time.)

Square Feet Per Student (per SAPFO)

	Total Square Feet	SAPFO Capacity	Square Feet Per Student
Chapel Hill High	241,111	1,520	158.63
East Chapel Hill High	259,869	1,515	171.53
Orange High	213,509	1,518	140.65

In light of this discovery, our Board has requested that staff from NC DPI re-examine OHS to determine its current capacity. That assessment is scheduled for later this month. We plan to update you when we receive the results of the study.

- Should the assessment determine that OHS's capacity is more in line with Chapel Hill and East Chapel Hill high schools, the result would be a loss of approximately 225 high school seats for our district.

Chart 2 (attached) compares how the anticipated reduction of seats would affect our District's high school student membership projections with high school capacity. In summary:

- Using SAPFO's Average Projection Model, the anticipated loss of 225 seats would mean that OCS would exceed 100% of high school capacity year after next in 2013-14 and exceed 110% in 2019-20.

- Using SAPFO's Three Year Projection Model, the anticipated loss of 225 seats would mean that OCS would exceed 100% of high school capacity in the *upcoming school year*, 2012-13, and exceed 110% in 2015-16.

Again, our Board feels it important to keep our eye on projections generated using the Three Year Projection Model due to the factors stated earlier related to growth in the western area of the county.

In reviewing the SAPFO projections and anticipating the outcome of the upcoming OHS space re-assessment, it became clear to our Board that there is an immediate need to move forward with an expansion at Cedar Ridge High School. Cedar Ridge High School (CRHS), originally constructed in 2001, has classroom capacity for 1,000 students and core facilities, such as library, cafeteria, etc., to accommodate 1,500 students. During original construction, the site was prepped for additional classroom space (to accommodate 500 students) and an auxiliary gymnasium. Thus the reason this expansion project now is reflected in our CIP.

Evidence of the growth our district is experiencing can be found in the 2010 Census data for total housing unit changes – examples include a 36% increase in Cheeks Township between 2000-10, 21% increase in Hillsborough during that period, increase of 20% in Little River Township, etc. These trends coupled with anticipated growth promulgated by the completion of the Efland Sewer project in the near future equate to a growing number of students for our District – growth for which we all must be prepared. We look forward to an opportunity to share our thoughts and ideas about Orange County Schools' future capital needs.

Sincerely,

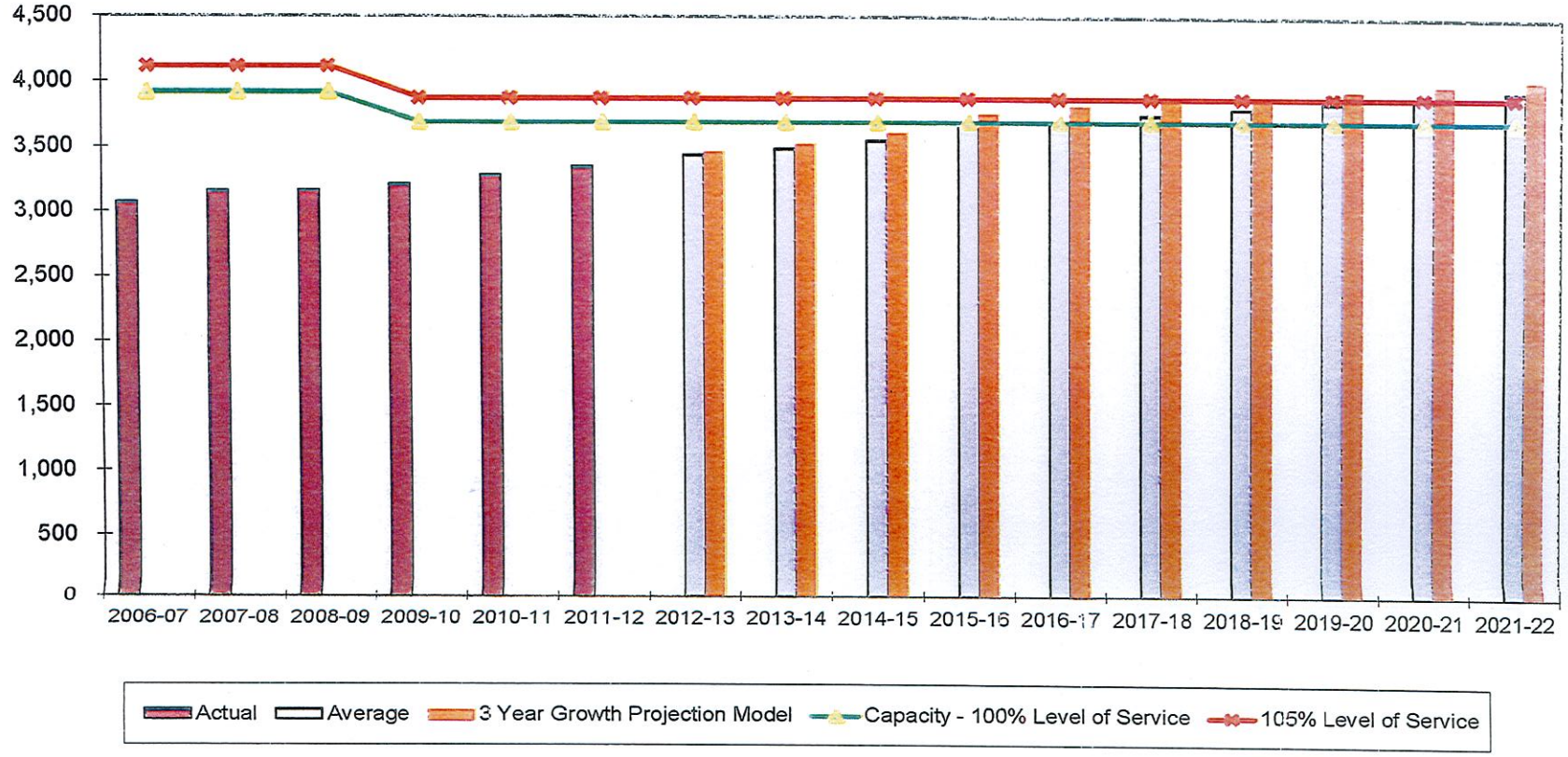
Donna Coffey
Chair

Stephen H. Halkiotis
Vice Chair

cc: Frank Clifton, County Manager, Orange County
Enclosures (2)

Chart 1. Orange County Schools - Elementary Student Projections Average and 3 Year Projection Models(1)

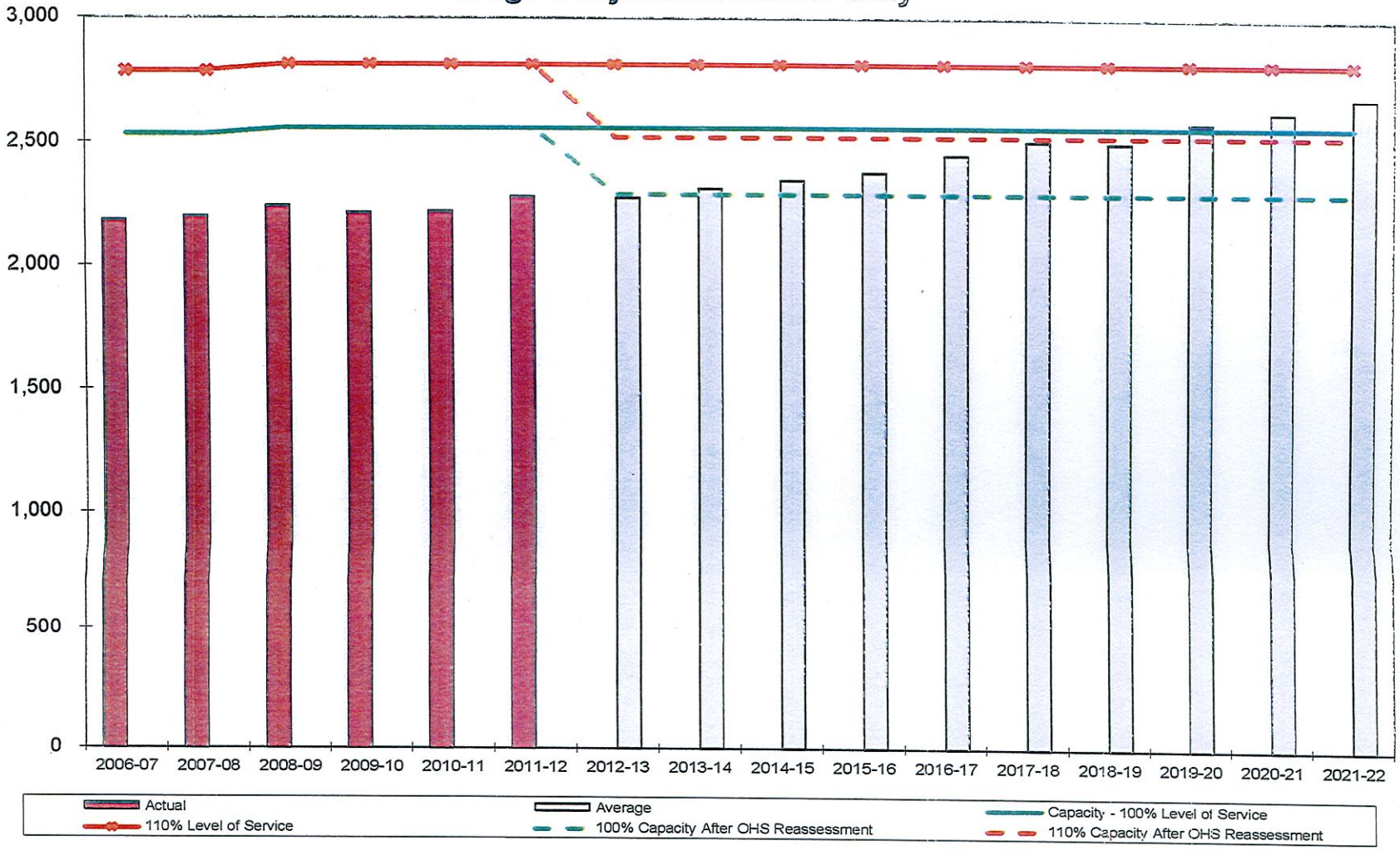
03/11/2012



(1) Class sizes for grades K-3 = 1:23 for school years 2006-07 and 2007-08. In accordance with 2005 School Collaboration Work Group direction, with planned opening of CHCCS Elementary #10 in school year 2008-09, K-3 class sizes for school years 2008-09 through 2015-16 reflect 1:21 as directed by past State legislative action. This results in OCS elementary capacity reduction (district wide) of 297 seats (decreasing from 4,116 [105% LOS @ 1:23 class size] to 3,819 [105% LOS @ 1:21 class size]).

3/11/2012

Chart 2. Orange County Schools - High School Student Projections
Average Projection Model Only



2010-2013 SAPFO Report Membership Comparisons

School	Year Built	Square Feet	Current SAPFO Capacity (100% Capacity)	Number of Pre-K Rooms	Number of Students Enrolled	2010 Membership (End of Year)	2011 Membership (End of Year)	2012 Membership (End of Year)	2013 Membership as of 4/15/2013	Current Difference Between SAPFO Capacity and Membership	Levels of Service
CPES	1956	70,812	565	0	0	631	632	646	668	103	
CES	1952	52,492	455	2	36	238	265	287	319	-136	
ECES	1952	64,316	497	2	36	405	443	458	458	-39	
GABES	1974	74,016	544	1	8	455	494	477	455	-89	
HES**	1952	51,106	471	0	0	410	408	421	443	-28	
NHES	1991	100,164	586	1	18	593	577	604	629	43	
PES	2000	85,282	576	3 (2)	41	483	478	472	449	-127	
									Total Elementary School Capacity	**-273**	**92.6%**
ALS	1995	136,000	740			596	606	602	612	-128	
CWS	1968	107,620	726			565	579	627	615	-111	
GHMS	2006	123,000	700			492	504	481	466	-234	
									Total Middle School Capacity	**-473**	**78.2%**
CRHS	2002	206,900	1,000			951	966	1,024	1,050	50	
OHS*	1962	213,509	1,399			1,159	1,144	1,150	1,196	-203	
									Total High School Capacity	**-153**	**93.6%**
PA	2006	6,600	40			24	20	33	22	-18	**55.0%**

* New requested capacity based on the August 2012 DPI facility study for OHS.

** HES is projected to be above capacity for the 2013-14 school year.

M.O.U. Maximum Capacity:

Elementary Schools	105%
Middle Schools	107%
High Schools	110%

Gilbert 5/1/2013