Survey on the Future of the Unatego Facilities

Do you agree w/the recommendation to close Otego and move all K-5 Students to Unadilla Elementary?	Yes: 59 50.9%	Maybe: 1 1%	No: 57 49.1%
Do you agree w/the recommendation to eventually close Unadilla Elementary and build a new elementary school on the Jr./Sr. HS campus in Wells Bridge?	Yes: 31 45.6%		No: 37 54.4%
If the board decides to keep both buildings open, would you support a capital project to perform necessary repairs in Unadilla and Otego?	Yes: 32 49.2%		No: 33 50.8%

1. Do you agree w/the recommendation to close Otego and move all K-5 students to Unadilla Elementary?

Unite!

However, only if the Otego School is not just left vacant & is either utilized as a community center for all kids, and/or utilized for different functions.

Bus times to long to close either school.

(Reluctantly) You will lose families to other school districts.

Not unless they (Unadilla) pays fair taxes.

No, No, No

Not sure with all the money we pay in taxes how we are still a broke district and will our taxes decrease or increase when one of our buildings close?

Close both at the same time!

Closing this building would devastate the community. The savings is not worth the destruction it would cause.

This seems inevitable from all the talk but was there a longitudinal study done on the demographic population? Will we <u>need</u> this building/space again? More than what a central campus could hold?

2. Do you agree w/the recommendation to eventually close Unadilla Elementary and Build a new elementary school on the Jr. Sr. High School campus in Wells Bridge?

Depends on the enrollment if it declines to much foolish to build a new building.

Unsure, depends on cost to district taxpayers.

Add on to Unadilla Elem. Would make more cost effective sense. 5th grade wing could be bumped out.

Seems like a huge waste of taxpayers' money. Why spend that amount of \$ to just build something that is already available. It would be such a shame & disappointment if two functioning schools are left abandoned, like what happened in Sidney Center!

Do not <u>build</u> a new elementary on Jr. Sr. Campus until another population survey of our District. Wouldn't need more buildings at the present.

Should have been originally.

Not until Unadilla pays equitable taxes.

Keep both Otego & Unadilla open when you get the elementary built then close them both.

No, I will not be in favor of a new building, even if you have to close one of the elementary schools.

As well as closing Otego when the new building is completed.

3. If the board decides to keep both buildings open, would you support a capital project to perform necessary repairs in Unadilla and Otego?

Not both, 1 maybe.

?

Only if the financial situation takes a dramatic turn for the better.

If not a substantial increase to taxes.

Unadilla only.

Not feasible financially.

Reluctantly.

Close Otego and bring Unadilla School up to code as part of that building should be up to code.

With all of the work done over the past 5 years I can't believe there is major work to be done!! Fix equitable tax problem first.

Depends on what my taxes will change to.

Put the money into the new structure at the high school.

I think this is the better of cost option rather than a 20 million \$ new_building - go back to Otego residents 1-5 & Unadilla 1-5 - less money in transportation.

4. Do you have other ideas not included above, or would you like to make additional comments? Please use the space below and back of this survey if you need more room. Thank you for taking the time to let us know how you feel about this important topic.

Community Person.

------Option 3 seems to be what would be best for this school district. What the school is doing now by making these poor elementary students bounce back & forth depending on the grade is so unfair w/that being said, our children grow too fast & are exposed to so many things at too early of an age, to build a school in such close proximity to the bigger kids is very concerning. I know many parents, including myself, that would transfer our children to another school if this occurred while our children were still in elementary school.

The biggest concern my husband & I have had in regard to our child attending Unatego school is there seems to be tremendous lack of concern about the education this school is providing and/or the resources (ie) tutors, extra help, programs to help the students being invested in, let alone obtained in order to help all of the students become more successful, struggle less, want to attend school, decrease dropout rate & help the students be less stressed so that they can enjoy their school years. We have requested extra help and tutors for our child several times to no avail. We've been told a couple of those times that "we will see what we can do" to "we don't have tutors" to "your children get the extra help by coming in early, staying late or using their lunch period to ask a teacher for help." Although appreciated, some have to ask themselves, who is doing all of the work there? The students are not getting paid, the teachers are. So if you have a student who expresses they are struggling, parents who advocate for this, and are told that the school does not have tutors (despite us telling the school we would pay for the tutor) or that even though our child (your student) is incredibly stressed due to struggling, they need to buck up & be responsible & go to the teacher on their time, REALLY – as if the child doesn't hate school already - Let's push them further so that they either just give up & accept bad grades, or worse yet, QUIT! COMMON CORE is hard enough, put the \$ where it's really needed.....IN our child's education, not their surroundings.

I think we should add onto the present high school or build and elementary school building near the existing at High School.

Page:2 Question #4

As a tax payer one on a fixed income I can't really afford a tax increase on school or village or town taxes. Please don't build to increase size or have a capital project. Sorry about the hand writing had is painful.

Please stop discussing this to death and make a decision.

All facilities at one location including the bus garage!

I won't be able to stay here when I retire due to the school districts; it's been bad enough that <u>every year</u> my school taxes increase higher than my rise at work. How many years do you really think people can live under such a financial system?

Why didn't the consultants consider consolidation? Clearly it would be less expensive than any of the options described herein. The school board should have allowed this option if for no other reason than to give the tax payers a <u>cost comparison</u> of what such would be.

You note the growing middle age population in the district. You'll be losing many of us too if these trends continue. We can't stay here and continue to support this "Shangri-ho" School District which the Board, the staff & teachers want to perpetuate. Sadly, I'm sorry I ever moved

here. A more expensive home in Oneonta would have more than paid for itself by now in the ----lower school taxes I'd have paid over the last 20 years!

Built Unatego HS against adult recommendation advice. Stop letting money do the talking.

I worry your declining enrollment is self-imposed. Speaking as a professional family I cannot encourage young families to move into the school district because of the building issues and long transportation potential quite honestly I'm surprised <u>we've</u> stayed! I know many families have left already.

PG: 3 Question #4

A new school would definitely bring fresh blood into the district and money would be spent focused on the future rather than maintain money pits. Let's spend our money on education <u>not</u> buildings and excessive transportation!! We are delaying the inevitable by maintaining old -----buildings.

We do have the confidence in School Board Members to make a good decision that benefits the students. (Reference questions 3 is negotiable).

Unfortunately the district could have put everything at the high school 15 years or so ago for 90% the people in this district cannot see the <u>big</u> picture. <u>Do</u> what is necessary for the future. Have someone who <u>can really</u> seek out grants etc.

Stop spending our money. The ELDERLY cannot AFFORD these out of control school taxes. This K-5 building should have been built in the 60's when plywood was \$@ a sheet not \$21 a sheet today. $\underline{DON'T\ DO\ THIS!}$

Since Otego residents pay more towards the school district in taxes-several re-valuations have been done in Otego vs. <u>none</u> in Unadilla. I feel the school in Otego be kept open – 1. Not on a flood plain. 2. More room for expansion. Is it too late to have Otego join Oneonta and Unadilla to join Sidney?

How and when are the upgrades at the current High School going to be addressed? Regardless of the elementary situation, these repairs/upgrades still need to be considered and we have to be informed of the tax consequences.

At this time the residents of Otego are paying much more in taxes than Unadilla residents & has been this way for many years. If our enrollment is declining than "yes" close and elementary school, but not necessarily Otego. Many schools have K-12 in one building. Has that been considered? As an Otego resident I feel Unadilla should do a re-val of property & begin to pay comparable taxes to Otego.

Of the Otego Elementary school is closed and all elementary students are in Unadilla I am <u>very</u> <u>concerned</u> that if we had <u>another</u> flood what do you intend to do if the Unadilla school is flooded? What is your plan if this occurs?

I think both towns need to prosper. To close Otego and leave Unadilla open-is basically discrimination. How can the decision be made in fairness. Otego pays more actual tax dollars than Unadilla. They have many more parcels and business's than Otego. They (Unadilla) haven't had a revaluation of property. Otego will suffer financially, community activities. Don't close Otego without closing Unadilla at the same time. Get BOCES out of our business/keep the jobs here.

PG: 4 Question #4

I believe that elementary age children K-5 should NOT have to be subjected to the problems and behaviors associated with high school age children (teenagers). They don't need that in their early yrs. Even though some are seeing it at home with siblings, they shouldn't have to be around those issues at school. I strongly urge that K-5 remain separate! Thank you.

We would like to know how our taxes will be affected. We already pay a ridiculously high amount and will that increase or decrease if a building closes?

------Build at the main campus. Close both elementary schools. Buy Greenies for additional land to relocate softball & practice fields when you go to build. You can also use the Greenies building as new Bus Garage, maintenance and business office building. People are going to bitch no matter what you do so do what's best for children of the future. Feel free to contact me if you want to hear more of what my idea would involve. Thank you

Closing Otego will be devestating to this community. The only thing holding it together, is the main stay of the school. The property is used for athletics and that would be gone as well. What happens should enrollment begin to increase? Our school is still gone. If one closes, then the other should close too and one main campus at the high school would make more sense. Otego and Unadilla have always had this on-going battle ever since it merged. Losing Otego Elementary takes away from people moving to Otego and enriches the Unadilla community dividing us, yet again. If one campus is the answer, then at least it is one location – one school community –and not a division.

I don't understand why tax payers have to vote on a building project in order for it to happen or not happen and yet don't get to vote on whether or not to keep a school open or to close it.

Please consider your decision carefully. Our entire community depends on it. How can Otego ------even grow in the future w/out a school? Thank you for listening.

It would be nice to keep both Otego and Unadilla schools open until a new elementary school is open in Wells Bridge.

I feel it would be a great loss to either community to lose their schools. Too many of these vacated schools sit empty and go into disrepair. I think the board should consider the idea of subdividing the extra space at the elementary schools and offering rental space for small upstart

their early yrs. Even though some are seeing it at home with siblings, they shouldn't have to be around those issues at school. I strongly urge that K-5 remain separate! Thank you.

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Use some of the empty spaces in the schools for pre-K, medical/dental support to children & families, or special education classes.

PG: 5 Question #4

Why doesn't the school district consider going in w/another school. It does not make sense to build when enrollment is going down.

Most of the (seniors) adults in the Otego and Unadilla area cannot afford any higher taxes. That's why there are so many places for sale and people are moving away. Open your eyes not all of us make the money you make.

The board should not make this decision without letting WE, the TAXPAYERS vote on the issue. Let our voices be heard as we are paying for it. I don't think either building is in dire need of repair until a new facility is ready. Having a central campus would not destroy one community over the other and might unify the district. Please let the tax payer's voices be heard by allowing a vote.

Put no more money into either Otego or Unadilla and build a new school. Unadilla needs to have a revelation for taxes so they can start paying there share in taxes. Maybe there would not be as big a short fall in money for our schools.

You might as well bite the bullet now and build the new elementary school as soon as possible. With each year it will cost the tax payers another 1,000,000 dollars to build it. 98% of the homes now for sale in Otego and Unadilla are because the home owners can no longer afford your darn high school taxes. The school board cannot see past the end of their noses as they think we the tax payers have all kinds of money. They are just like the Democrats party, all talk and no action.

<u>Close</u> Jr. Sr. High School – Dissolve it, sell it or knock it down. Leave Unadilla & Otego open for K-12 and make necessary repairs!! Due to lack of jobs (good paying jobs) in area there won't

be any increase in population. People out of college and retiring are moving to out of state places for better paying jobs & lower taxes!

------I read all the recommendations – each citing decreased enrollment as the driving factor in these recommendations. Nothing is mentioned as to what or how students enrollment could be increased. 20+ years ago when we bought our home in Otego – our realtor said home sold quickly in Otego as people wanted Otego school for their children. Now – 20 years later as we contemplate selling our home – the realtor is telling us homes are not selling as people do not want Otego school system (Unatego as a whole). People living here are transporting their children to Franklin, Oneonta and Sidney schools (hence- their enrollments are up). Maybe a study should be done to implement a strategic plan to boost the overall morale of the school system to increase enrollment over the next several years instead of focusing on how the enrollment just continues to decline by 2022. I know one option stated that a "state of the art school building" would benefit the students But-a building is just that a Building made of mortar & brick. What we need are more dedicated teachers & staff to teach and direct our children. I would rather have an A-1 staff of educators than a beautiful new building. Maybe

PG: 6 Question #4

the "consultants" should be looking into this aspect <u>more</u> and less on the "restructuring" project of buildings. Personally I think it was better when Unadilla K-5 went to Unadilla, and Otego K-5 went to Otego. There is less bus issues it was easier for parents ie-parents with children going to <u>each</u> school is very difficult ie-child in Kindergarten goes to Otego & sibling going to Unadilla. Very hard for parents to be involved in two schools so parental support decreased.

Turn both elementary schools into 55+ housing.

Consolidation is only logical. I would strongly recommend starting trying to sell Otego building now so as to have it leased/sold or in process before the end of the 2017 school year. I also think as Otego has the <u>best</u> playground and it's in very good condition it should be moved over the summer to Unadilla as we wanted to expand its playground anyway and something as big and great as Otego's will never be able to be afforded. This will allow maximum usage and cost savings. Option #2 would be to leave the playground @ Otego for the few townspeople until the new elementary in Wells Bridge is almost complete then move it and Unadilla's playgrounds to the new school, making a super playground and school in one for all our children to enjoy @ the much lesser cost of moving them compared to buying and installing of new.

Future and Past capital projects will bankrupt the school taxpayers. Let only the taxpayers vote on capital projects.

---It would be nice, in my opinion, if Otego's school held Otego's students and Unadilla held only Unadilla students. Then some of these crazy bus rides could be eliminated! I spoke w/a current student (going into 6th grade), and she agreed w/me. She also said she doesn't like the idea of a centralize "campus". What would that do to the villages of Unadilla and Otego? Keeping both elementary schools open would be my preference.

I do not have children in any of the schools, but I think the concerns of the taxpayers should remain a priority. I would expect education and paying for teachers to "trump" all else, and that cost savings (in sports and after-school activities) should continue to be explored. Also, why are we paying for kids to obtain college credits?!!!

For people to argue that Otego is where it's at – Well, all I can say is that upstate communities will continue to lose their children to the cities no matter what kind of building or "campus" we have in Otego, Unadilla or Wells Bridge. We need jobs. I personally attended Unadilla

PG: 7 Question #4

Elementary (thru 6th grade), graduated from Unatego, and after getting my master's degree, ----started working in NYC, the only place I could get hired!

One central campus seems to make sense at Jr/Sr HS lot. But again — I have lived in this district for 30 years — was there a longitudinal study done when the beautiful/expensive addition was built on to the Otego Building only 15+ give or take years ago? I think not, or someone goofed. Why would that project go forward when in a short 10-15 years the population curve was going down? Seems like a waste. It's not like that addition was built 30 yrs. ago. So that history casts doubt on expensive building projects. If in fact the population is warranting this (whatever the numbers are — high-low — sustained) and the cost too great to bring the 2 elem. Schools up to code, we do support "moth balling" those 2 elem. Buildings (drain water, etc.) to sell or whatever works out for the district — then yes, a central campus. We trust it will be a well-informed decision. There are our tax dollars.

If the board decides to only keep Unadilla open, I would support a capital project to perform necessary changes.

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What is the plan for Otego Elementary Bldg. if it can't be sold to something that will keep property values up? Tear it down? What happens to Bus Garage? Unadilla is in flood zone!! A new school is not necessary if we are losing enrollment.

ONLINE SURVEY OPEN-END RESPONSES

preform the repairs to unadilla and the jr sr building

YMCA pre-school in Otego Elementary school and GED

It makes no financial sense to use 3 bldgs for the number of students we currently have especially if enrollment is declining. Due to state requirements, this forces tax payers to pay for additional administrators, counselors, and secretaries for each bldg. instead of using that money to provide more programs for the students (including pre-k). If you want to put all students on one campus buy Greenie's. We need the space anyway for offices, bus garage, sports fields, as well as possibilities for the future.

9/30/2016 7:45 AM View respondent's answers

For the benefit of both towns and for the children of our district, I feel as though both schools need to remain open to keep a sense of community. I would actually like to see us go back to K-5 in each building.

9/27/2016 2:14 PM View respondent's answers

Would like to know the enrollment numbers for other years, not just the specific ones listed in the report. When the high school was built and subsequent years, how was enrollment? Lower than today? Easy to project a dramatic reduction with current numbers, but we all know it can be cyclic. We also need to question what is considered necessary repairs to each building. K-5 should all be together, but also consider the many number of schools who are k-12 in the same building in our area. It must work.

9/25/2016 1:35 PM View respondent's answers

Closing both elementary schools is a decision that needs to be made as soon as possible and is a decision that is long overdue...

9/21/2016 12:09 PM View respondent's answers

How about having Unadilla have a property reval done so that they pay their FAIR SHARE of taxes.

9/19/2016 10:19 AM View respondent's answers

Keep both elementary schools opened, closing one of the elementary schools leads to larger class sizes and less jobs for teachers in our area. Also do not agree to move 5th graders up to the jr/sr high school.

9/16/2016 1:19 PM View respondent's answers

MAKE THE TAX BASE EQUAL BETWEEN VILLAGES. THE VILLAGE OF OTEGO HAS BEEN PAYING HIGHER TAXES/MORE OF THE TAX BASE FOR MANY MANY YEARS - IT SHOULD BE EQUALIZED TO MAKE IT MORE FAIR.

9/13/2016 8:47 AM View respondent's answers

The tax base discrepancy between Otego and Unadilla is astounding. The gap needs to be closed and Unadilla residents need to make the same contribution as Otego residents. It may not be the answer but it will close some of the financial "distress" that has been noted after many years of it being 1 sided.

9/12/2016 9:03 PM View respondent's answers

Build at the main campus and buy Greenies to use as bus garage, maintenance and business offices. Plus you will need the land to add parking and sports fields after builing onto main building. Bite the bullet and do it now.

9/12/2016 10:05 AM View respondent's answers

Elementary schools should nor be closed unless we have a business that would buy and develop property adoing to the tax base. Otherwise land values will suffer, people will leave area and there will be no draw for new people to come and attendance in the school will further deteriorate. We need to promote business and solid education for our towns. We need to pay for qualified teachers who are in the educational field with a desire to teach and make a difference vs those looking to teach only those easily taught.

9/10/2016 12:17 PM View respondent's answers

Close Unadilla and move 5th grade go the high school since there are 10 empty classrooms there! Otego is much cheaper to maintain than Unadilla. Otego has more land the bus garage is in Otego. Otego is more centrally located. Otego elementary is in better condition and is NOT is a flood zone unlike Unadilla. There is also more parking at Otego elementary both on school grounds and on the road.

9/9/2016 11:05 PM View respondent's answers

the eventual closing of the older buildings would have to be a savings in fuel cost both for heat and transportation

9/9/2016 12:49 PM View respondent's answers

My concern has always been the length of time the children have to spend on the bus. Is that a consideration at all? The schools should have stayed K-5 in each building until a common school was built on the rise campus. Let's think about the children and not the money for once!

9/8/2016 8:46 AM View respondent's answers

The best solution would be to use the Otego elementary school for all elementary grades since it is smaller and will be more suitable for declining class sizes. Was that seriously

considered? Otego tax payers contribute more than Unadilla ones do. Why don't we give more benefits to Otego?

9/1/2016 12:18 PM View respondent's answers

If you close either or both "little" schools, they will become an eyesore for the community. Furthermore, the lack of a community school will hinder growth in that village and decrease overall school population in the future, resulting in this beautiful big school that is half full. 9/1/2016 8:58 AM View respondent's answers

The sooner both elementary schools are closed the better for the district financially. Common sense.

8/31/2016 12:39 PM View respondent's answers

I do not support closing the Unadilla School. Look at Sidney Center, Mt Upton and Sidney for example of how these buildings become eye sores in the community when abandoned. The Wells Bridge campus has for years removed the Otego and Unadilla Community identity and moving all schools there would further erode the community feeling. Look at Laurens as a small district example and how the school is an integral part of the community. DO NOT CLOSE the Unadilla school!!!!!!!

8/31/2016 9:31 AM View respondent's answers

If we cannot afford to maintain two existing schools how could we afford to build a brand new one?

8/31/2016 9:22 AM View respondent's answers

Closing an Elementary school in either community before a new school is built would be devastating. The school is often the center of each community with events and activities going on from 7:30 a.m. until 9 at night. Even things like after school care and summer program would be affected. Closing Otego and moving everyone to Unadilla is not the answer. There is no instructional benefit to the students and the 5th graders are certainly not benefitted by moving to the middle school at such a young age.

8/30/2016 9:13 PM View respondent's answers

Subdivide and sell parcels in Otego. 8/30/2016 5:57 PM View respondent's answers

8/30/2016 1:11 PM View respondent's answers

First, the link given to this survey in the newsletter was incorrect. Second, Manual is clearly spelled wrong on the District's home page. Now I know why my employees spell it Manuel. Sheesh! Regarding the facility question, I believe we arrived at this dire situation because of incompetence and fiscal mismanagement. It's a shame that one or both of our elementary schools will now have to close to make up for this shortfall. How can we be sure this incompetence won't continue? I have heard a lot of people who support the plan to build a new facility in Wells Bridge say that we'll be getting in tons of money from the sale of both former elementary school buildings. These proponents must have no idea of the real estate glut in our area. Not only are there closed schools wallowing in nearby towns, but decent family homes have been going for \$4,000 at auction. Given this reality, I foresee that we would end up with two deteriorating buildings still on our tax rolls.

Although I support construction of a new elementary school at the Jr-Sr High School site, it is contingent upon finding an alternate use/sale of the existing elementary schools. If those buildings (particularly Unadilla) would end up abandoned, then I would support a capital project to repair the Unadilla school only.
8/30/2016 1:07 PM View respondent's answers

I don't believe the individuals hired by the board are up to date educators..... they hung their hats on no impact to property values in Otego with the closing of the Otego school. This is not true. You heard a lot from the residents of Otego at the your board meeting where it was presented by these 2 individuals. LEAVE ARE SCHOOLS ALONE.

8/22/2016 1:16 PM View respondent's answers

It is a sad day to see both elementary schools closing. Unfortunately, I believe that if we spend the money to fix the schools we will eventually close them down anyway. This happened with Masonville and Sidney Center and it was so sad to see newly refurbished schools just close down. Let's think ahead and do what is going to be best in the long run. A central campus is not only going to save money in many areas. It is also going to help with the busing situation right now, which is a HOT MESS! Our students should not be missing 1/2 an hour of school to be shuttled to other locations. If they were all in one central location this would also save on gas and ware and tear! It would be so nice to arrive at a school and be able to get all of your children in grades 1, 4, and 7 without driving miles in between each stop. Let's think not about how the value of the town will decrease, but about how this will eventually help our children!

8/18/2016 3:10 PM View respondent's answers

separate building on the land next to the middle/high school sure would be convenient. No favoritism to either community, consolidated services, convenient for families to have all of their students near each other, separation makes it easy to create different climates for the older vs. younger students. 10/20/2016 5:41 PM View respondent's answers

No, I don't have any other ideas but would like to say I do think it would be better to have all buildings in one place... but where's the money coming from and what will be done with the properties that will be dormant. I hope not just to sit and Rot down. Thanks

10/6/2016 8:24 PM View respondent's answers preform the repairs to unadilla and the jr sr building

10/3/2016 8:10 AM View respondent's answers YMCA preschool in Otego Elementary school and GED

9/30/2016 8:53 AM View respondent's answers

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9/30/2016 7:45 AM View respondent's answers

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9/27/2016 2:14 PM View respondent's answers