



Amphi: Future-Ready

DECEMBER 9, 2025

Our District: History



- Founded in 1893 with a one-room schoolhouse and 11 students – 12 pictured here in 1895.
- Over the years, the District grew.
 - 9 schools in 1960
 - 17 schools in 1986
 - 21 and our online school in 2017
- Enrollment climbed through the early 2000's to more than 18,000 students leading to construction and expansion for the same.
- Since then, however, enrollment has declined, that decline accelerating since the Great Recession and COVID.
- Today: approximately 10,500 students.

Our District: Achievements



- Implemented the Promise of a Graduate.
- Substantially improved (a 450% increase in A ratings) our letter grades as designated by the Arizona Department of Education. Our schools consistently out perform state averages for student achievement.
- Celebrated three schools for earning the A+ School of Excellence designation, and we anticipate more this year.
- We implemented District-wide rigorous standards-based curricula.
- We placed highly qualified instructional support personnel in positions that help move the needle on student achievement.
- We have expanded opportunities for all students, including broad implementation of inclusion and expansion of CTE programs.
- We exponentially grew technology access for students, now providing at least one device (laptop or desktop) per student.



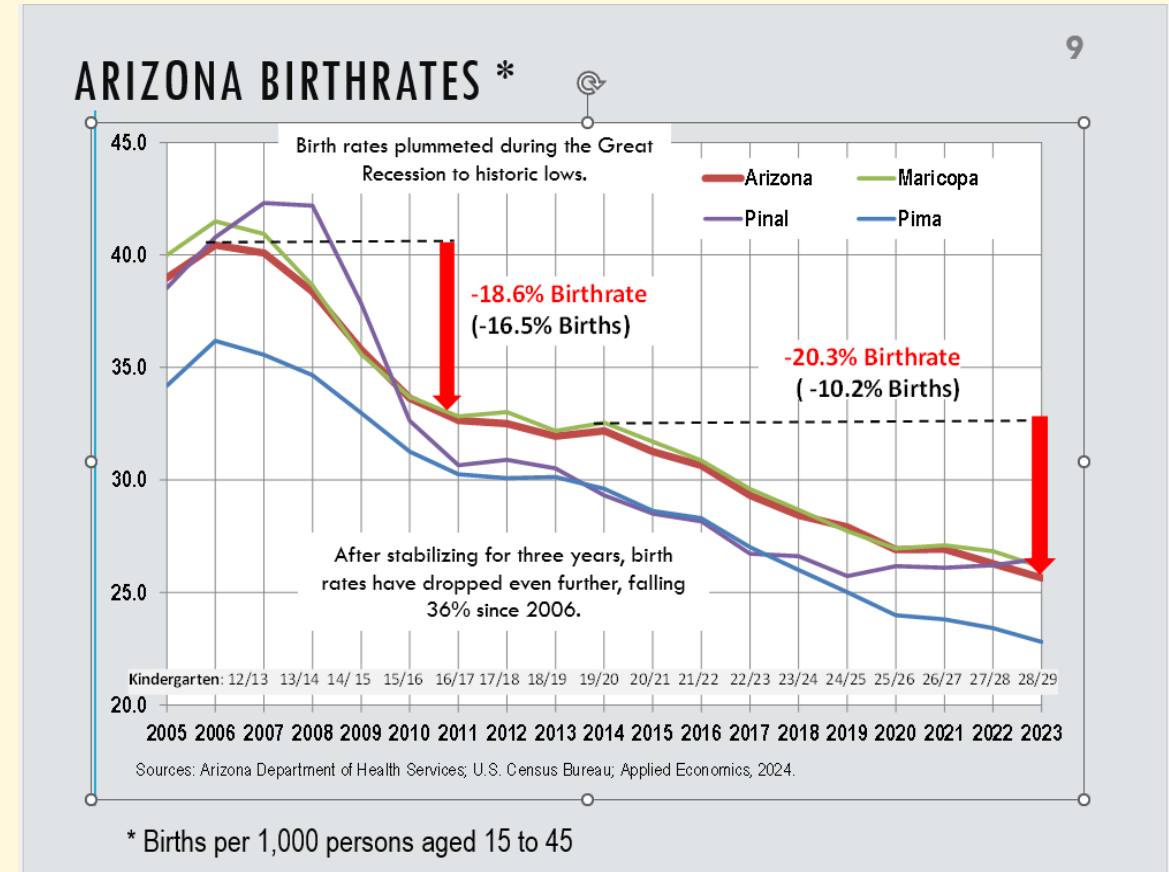
The Challenges: Birth Rate



In Arizona, the birth rate has dropped 36 percent between 2006 and 2023. This trend has continued over the last two years with some estimates placing the drop at 38% in Arizona.

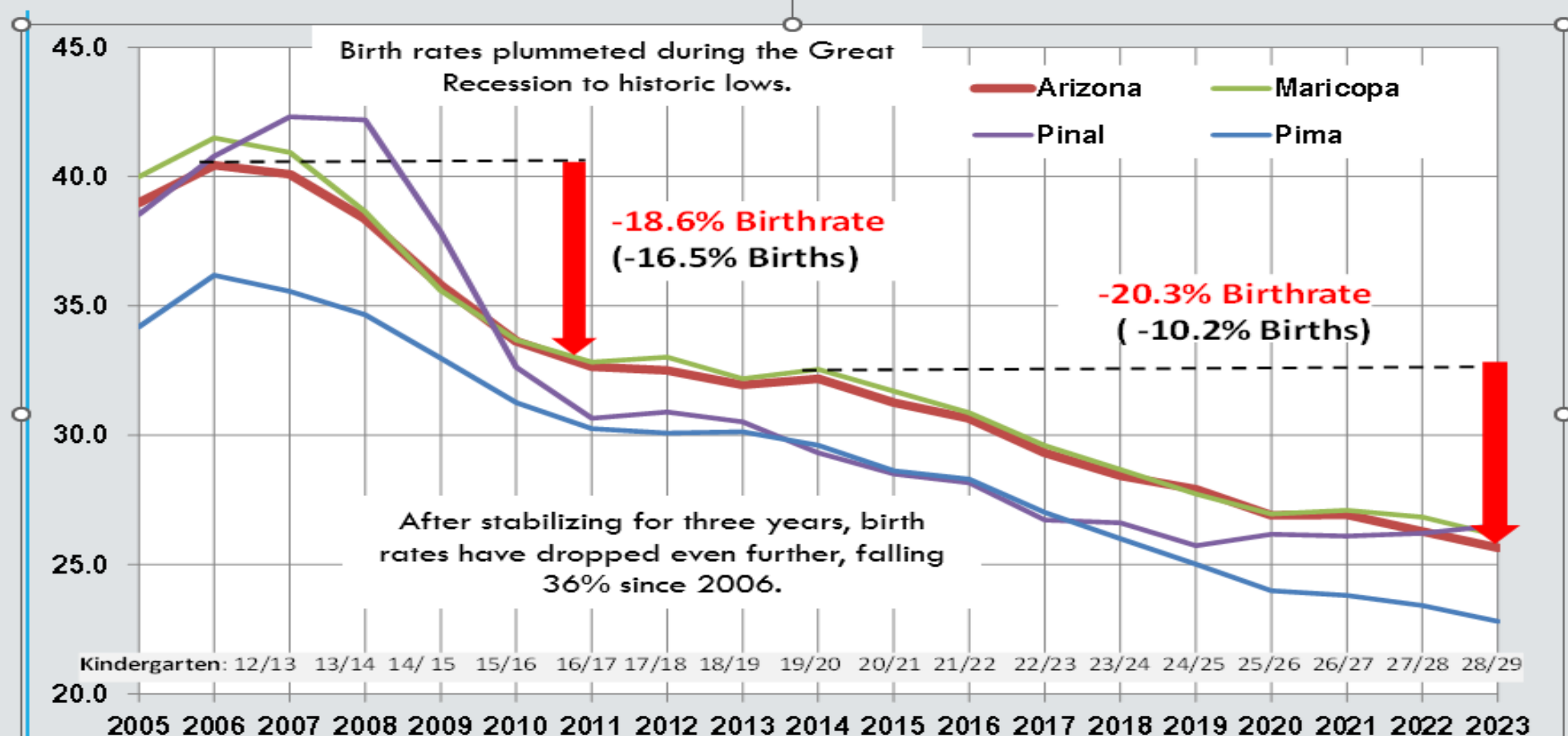
Pima County has the lowest birth rate of all the major Arizona counties.

In comparison, the national birth rate has declined 19 percent.



ARIZONA BIRTHRATES *

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Sources: Arizona Department of Health Services; U.S. Census Bureau; Applied Economics, 2024.

* Births per 1,000 persons aged 15 to 45

Long Term Reality



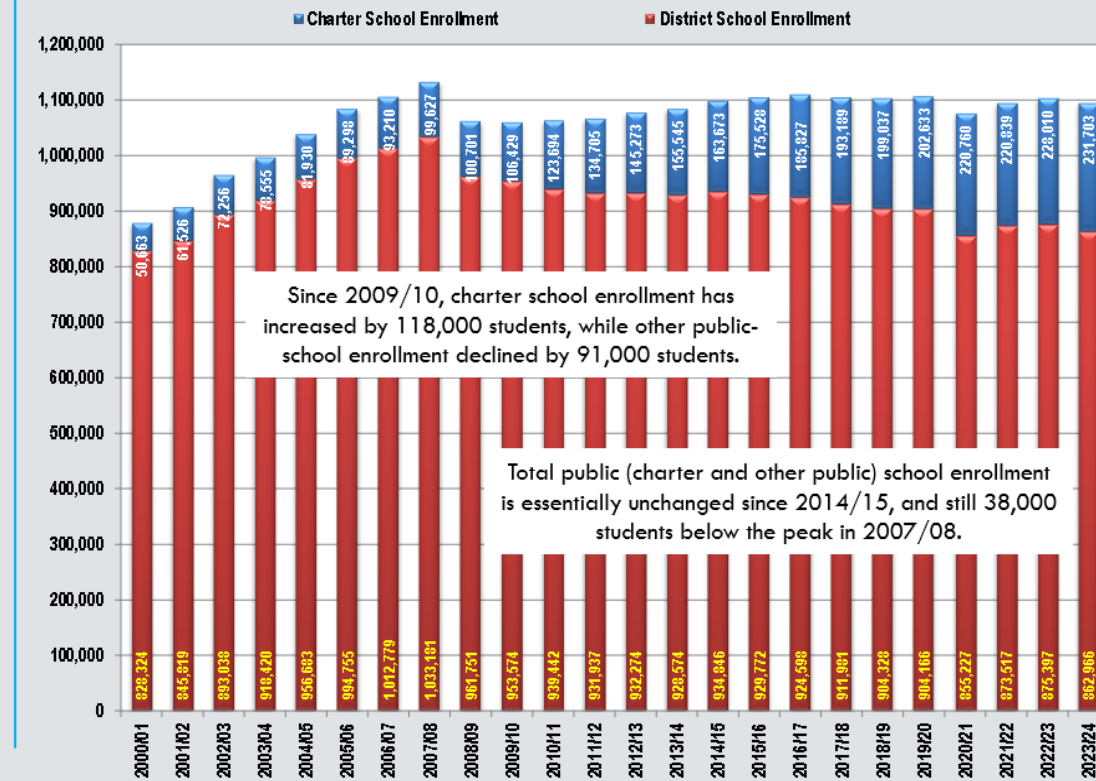
Demographers have advised us that the current trend of declining will not begin to change direction by any significant measure until at least 2050.

This is a long-term issue for our society.

The Challenges: Charter Schools

ARIZONA PUBLIC SCHOOL K-12 ENROLLMENT

11



Source: Arizona Department of Education, 2000-2024.

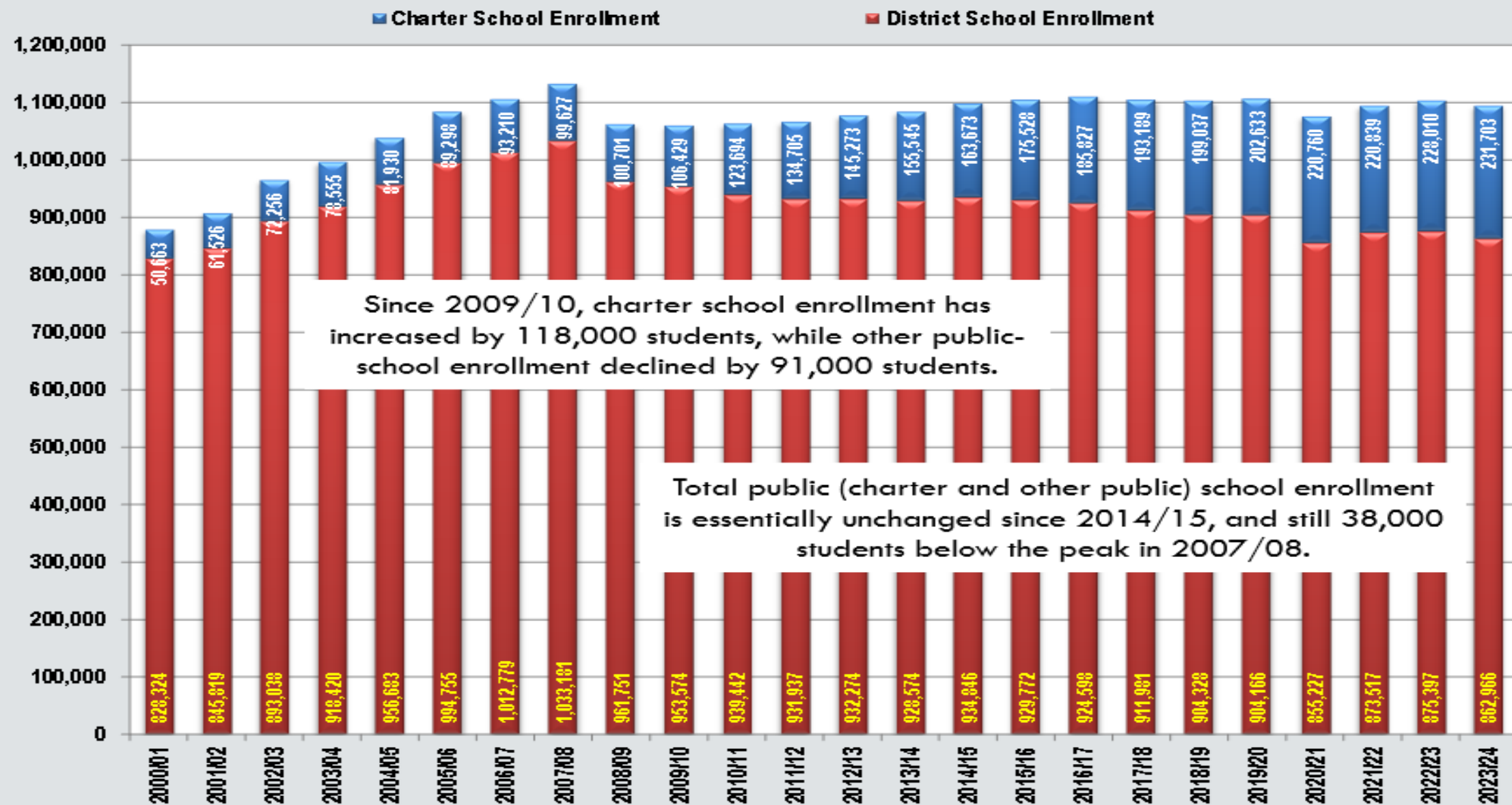
In 1997, the District's enrollment had topped 18,000 students, with overcrowding at many schools. That resulted in the construction of several new schools in the Oro Valley area.

The 1990s also saw the birth of charter schools in Arizona, which have grown in the years since.

Amphitheater has 12 charter schools in our boundary, more than any other district except TUSD. Charter school enrollment has grown throughout the state, while traditional public-school enrollment has declined.

Private school vouchers are hitting charter school enrollment as well, causing them to spend more marketing dollars to attract public school students.

ARIZONA PUBLIC SCHOOL K-12 ENROLLMENT



Source: Arizona Department of Education, 2000-2024.

The Challenges: Vouchers



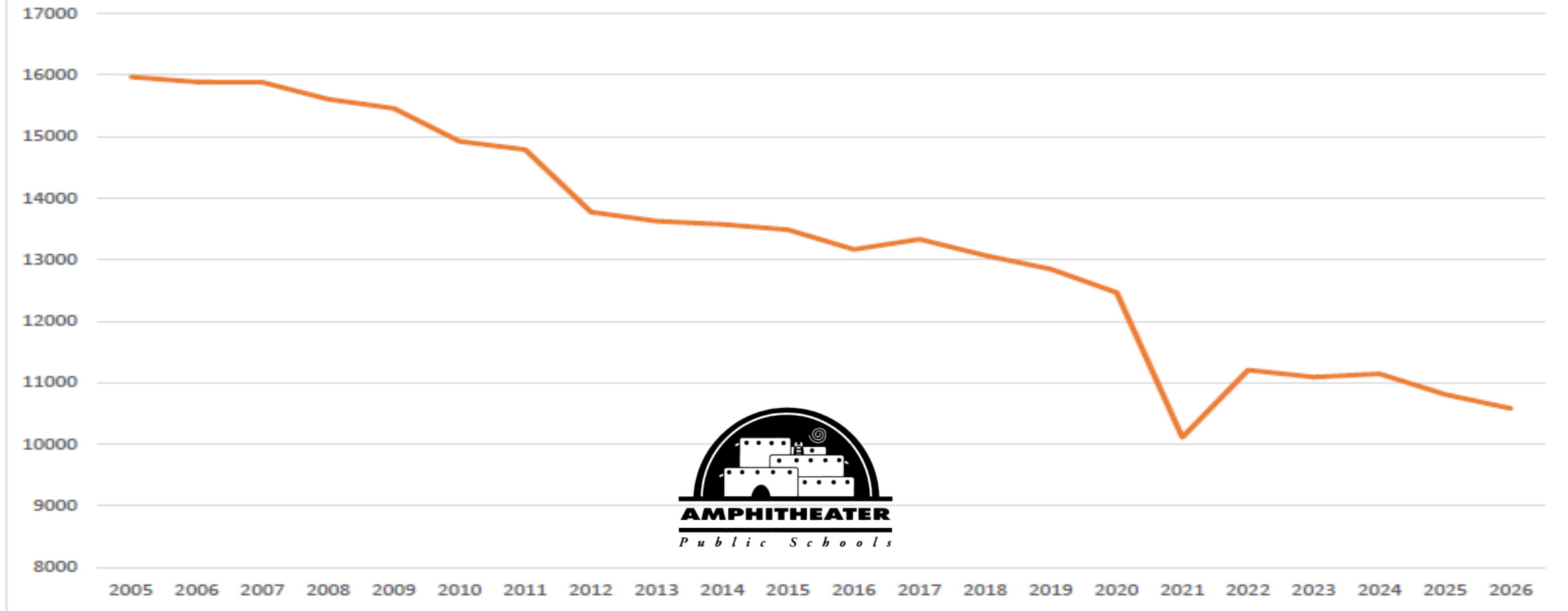
Vouchers: Arizona has a school voucher system (also known as "Empowerment Scholarship Accounts") offering parents funding for private schooling (including "micro-private schools" which they establish at home -- to be distinguished from traditional home schools).

24-25 4th Quarter Report from the Arizona Department of Education :

- State was issuing vouchers for 85,195 students across Arizona (currently issuing 96,802)
- Total of vouchers (annualized basis) was \$881,662,142 (but is now over \$1 billion, an average of \$10,330 per private school student)
- 11,100 items and services were purchased (funded) for voucher families, including diamond rings, Rolex watches, luxury hotel stays, and vehicles.

In 2024, parents/guardians of 1,367 students from within the Amphitheater boundaries took vouchers, amounting to more than \$9.5 million that would have funded public education if the students were enrolled in a public (district or charter) school.

Average Daily Membership 2005-2026



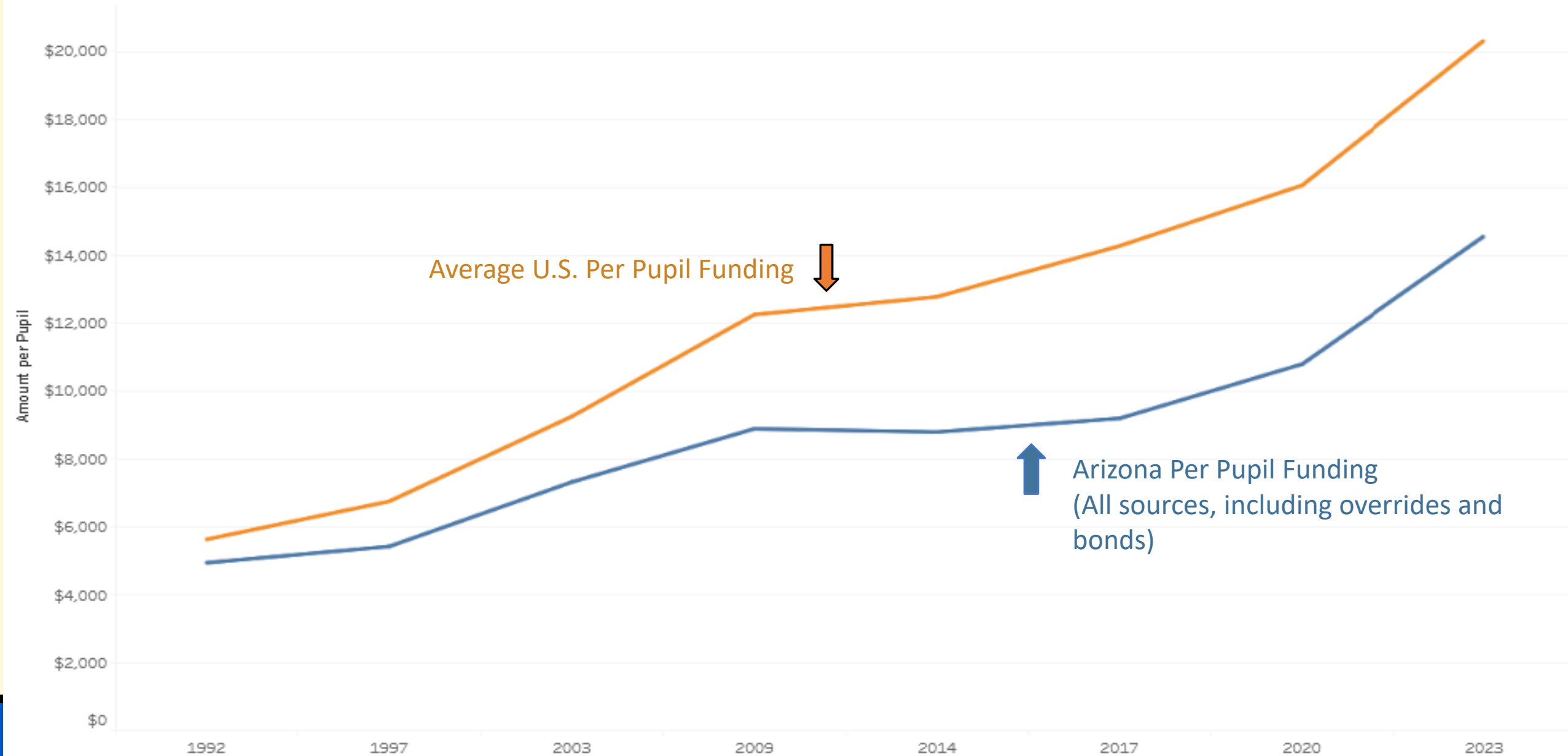
Projected Enrollment Drop for Fiscal Year 2026 – 323 Average Daily Membership

Public Education Funding, State Comparisons to the US Average

Per Pupil Total K-12 Revenues, Select Years 1992 - 2023

Source is Table 11. States Ranked According to Per Pupil Public Elementary-Secondary School System Finance Amounts

<https://www.census.gov/content/census/en/programs-surveys/school-finance/data/tables.html/>



The Challenges: Operational Costs

- Amphitheater operated at 231 square feet per pupil in 2024.
- The average square feet per pupil for our peer districts in the state was 158 in 2024.
- The estimated expenses for operating the additional square footage in 2024, alone, was \$7.2 million.
- These were very different propositions when our enrollment stood at 18,500+
- The State of Arizona has withheld \$7.2 billion from public schools that was supposed to support school building improvement, exacerbating operational cost impacts. Recurring lawsuits brought against (and lost by) the State have not led to change in legislative actions and behaviors. The rule of law, when it comes to education funding, apparently means little.



The Challenges: Inflation

Year	Funding Increase Provided by the Legislature	Average Annual Inflation
2021	2.0%	4.7%
2022	8.8%	8.0%
2023	2.9%	4.7%
2024	2.0%	2.9%
2025	2.0%	2.9%

This history follows a period near the turn of the 21st Century when after years and years of the Arizona Legislature failing to comply with state law mandating inflationary increases (at the rate of inflation), the Legislature simply repealed the law.

Coming to Terms

We are not alone.

- Enrollment declines, for all the reasons stated, exist statewide.
- Competition for enrollment is fiercer than ever and requires robust programmatic offerings to attract and retain students.
- Excessive operational costs limit a District's capacity to offer programs.
- The cautionary tale of Isaac School District: placed into receivership after failing to respond to enrollment decline.
- Districts throughout the State of Arizona (and indeed, nationally) have had to close schools to reduce costs and implement consolidations to strengthen programs for the long term.
- Nearly 40 schools statewide have closed so far, with more coming – Paradise Valley, Phoenix Elementary, Scottsdale, Kyrene, Cave Creek, and Roosevelt are just some of the Districts involved.
- Charter schools have also closed.





The Hard Truth

What could happen if we don't close schools

- Financial Insolvency (e.g., Isaac School District)
- Class Size Increases beyond current policy maximums
- Reduction in class offerings, extracurricular programs and athletics
- Fee increases for students and families
- Wage and benefit freezes for staff
- Significant job losses



The Hard Truth

We are spread too thin.

With campuses with around 200 students that were built for hundreds more, we have classes that are too small and rooms sitting empty – but still air-conditioned. We have schools that struggle to form a band or orchestra, clubs, and PTOs.

To ensure Amphitheater's future and maintain our standards of excellence, we must consolidate.

Ironically, we have to shrink our physical footprint to grow our programmatic footprint. And, we have to do so now.

Our Process

Last school year

- Unexpected, sudden enrollment loss demanded we take action.
- Cost reductions of \$3.6 million – administrative, programmatic, and operational.
- Announced District would spend this year on consolidation planning; school closures
- Formed a Budget Advisory Committee to study and provide recommendations on the issue over the course of several months, continuing into this year.
- Began discussions with our other various constituent representative groups: Teacher Advisory, Support Staff Advisory, Community Council, and Student Advisory (all 3 high schools).



Our Process

This school year

- Continued our study, involving stakeholder and advisory groups.
- Set non-negotiables.
 - Feeder patterns must be maintained.
 - Consolidation must still allow for future growth at welcoming schools.
 - Title 1 schools could not be combined with non-Title 1 schools.
 - Avoid disproportionate impacts on populations.
 - Transportation and meal service must be maintained.
 - Special Education programming must not be negatively impacted.
- Reviewed data (enrollment, capacity, costs).



Why These Schools: Data

School	District Capacity	SY 25-25 Enrollment (Current)	Percent of School Capacity	Annual Operational Costs
Keeling Elementary School	798	221	28%	\$420,450
Nash Elementary School	853	310	36%	\$399,590
Rio Vista Elementary School	825	344	42%	\$347,973
Walker Elementary School	770	327	42%	\$420,450
Holaway Elementary School	715	214	30%	\$355,748

Why These Schools: Data

School	District Capacity	SY 25-25 Enrollment (Current)	Percent of School Capacity	Annual Operational Costs
Donaldson Elementary School	440	205	47%	\$464,508
Mesa Verde Elementary School	660	256	39%	\$249,837
Harelson Elementary School	687	391	57%	\$264,077
Painted Sky Elementary School	935	403	43%	\$420,450
Copper Creek Elementary School	853	247	29%	\$550,919

Recommendations



Closing Buildings	Welcoming Schools
Copper Creek Elementary School	Wilson K-8 and Harelson Elementary Schools
Donaldson Elementary School	Mesa Verde Elementary School
Nash Elementary School	Keeling and Walker Elementary Schools
Holaway Elementary School	Rio Vista Elementary School

Notes:

- Some programs (specific special education classes and preschools may be consolidated to other sites) with an emphasis on having students attend their neighborhood schools. For example, with the boundary changes, Cross Categorical students who live in the Painted Sky boundary will attend Painted Sky next year under the proposal.
- Small groups of students who currently attend Donaldson and Rio Vista will shift to Walker with boundary changes.

Why These Schools



Copper Creek:

- Low enrollment: 247 students (inclusive of self-contained programs) with capacity rate of 29%.
- High Operational costs: \$550,919 annually.
- Consolidation with Wilson K-8 and Harelson.
 - Currently, Copper Creek students go to Wilson or Cross for middle school.
 - Shifting students to Wilson and Harelson for elementary enables a clear path for smooth transitions to middle school on the very same campuses.
 - Wilson and Harelson have ample space for the Copper Creek students.
 - All three schools are high-performing A-rated schools. That level of excellence, therefore, will continue.
 - Consolidation has the potential to strengthen programs that benefit from more robust enrollment such as band, orchestra, REACH, clubs, and PTOs/Site Councils.
- Of all our affected schools, this one may be the most likely to appeal to third party use.

Why These Schools



Donaldson Elementary School:

- Low enrollment: 205 students with capacity rate of 47%. While the capacity rate isn't the lowest, opportunities for students decrease when a school has very low enrollment(band, orchestra, clubs)
- High Operational costs: \$464,508 annually
- Consolidation with Mesa Verde
 - Mesa Verde is a larger campus; less costly to operate and maintain.
 - No disturbance of Title I Status, School Meal Programs, or Transportation timing for either school.
 - Better Playground Experience at Mesa Verde.
 - Elimination of recurring groundwater issues at Donaldson.
 - Special education and preschool programs will be maintained.
 - This consolidation has the potential to strengthen programs that benefit from more robust enrollment such as band, orchestra, REACH and Odyssey of the Mind.
 - Mesa Verde has enjoyed ongoing status as an A-rated school. Both Donaldson and Mesa Verde are currently A-rated, so they have a common achievement profile.
 - Both schools have strong parent and community support, and we anticipate engagement to continue at a high level.

Why These Schools



Nash and Holaway Elementary Schools:

- Several schools throughout the AHS feeder pattern have low enrollment and need to be consolidated to secure the financial and programmatic health of the area schools.
- Although Keeling Elementary has lower enrollment and capacity than either of these schools, it possesses a prestigious international STEM accreditation and is an A-rated school.
- Both schools have had recent histories of academic challenges, but both are rebounding in that respect. Consolidation with schools of significant academic success will further enrich the education of the students at each sending school.

Nash Consolidation with Keeling and Walker	Holaway Consolidation with Rio Vista
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Keeling is a newer and larger campus; less costly to operate and maintain.◦ Keeling has community resources on site.◦ Walker is a Highly Performing School◦ Walker has much larger facilities and interior hallways for year-round comfort and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Rio Vista is a large campus◦ Rio Vista is a newer facility and is less costly to maintain.◦ Rio Vista has a strong STEM Lab/Maker Space program◦ Rio Vista has a history of strong academic performance

Student Impact



- More students means more opportunities for social and programmatic participation, and beneficial growth in those programs.
- Transportation: The maximum length of any bus ride will not exceed current lengths, and there will be no reduction in service. Walking distance limits will not change.
- Food Service: School meals, including eligibility for free and reduced lunches, will be unaffected by consolidations.
- We will continue to provide the continuum of services for our students who have special needs.
- The changes proposed will help ensure more special needs students can be served at their neighborhood schools.

Student Impact



- To preserve feeder patterns, students who currently go to Copper Creek and then Cross and CDO will move to Harelson. Those students who currently go to Copper Creek and then Wilson (6-8) and IRHS will go to Wilson K-8. Students who currently go to La Cima and Amphi Middle School will remain in their feeder pattern.
- This reorganization provides for a more balanced distribution of students at all schools.
- All welcoming schools have either the same or higher academic achievement profile as each sending school.
- More students leads to more opportunity in clubs and activities such as band and orchestra.
- More grade-level classes means more teachers working together, with more options for grade level cooperative learning between classrooms.
- We will maintain class size ratios as set by current district policy and enabled by the override.

Open Enrollment



- As always, all families may apply for open enrollment at an Amphi school. Consolidation will not change that. To apply, families may visit our website at www.amphi.com.
- Students who are currently open-enrolled in an Amphi school that closes for next year will automatically be enrolled in the new welcoming school and will receive notification when the process of "rolling-over" for all students occurs, typically in mid-January. The families will only need to fill out open-enrollment forms if they wish to apply to a school different from their assigned site.
- Students who are open-enrolled at a school that will be receiving students under the recommended plan will retain their open-enrollment. They do not need to reapply.

Care for Special Needs



- Personalized coordination with families of students in special programming regarding placement and supports for next school year.
- Our team is reaching out to families directly to provide support and answer questions for their students.
- Ensuring a continuum of programming and services in the feeder pattern and District to meet each student's individual needs.
- Maintaining continuity of IEP services for all students.
- Supporting students to remain in their homeschools with peers to maximum extent.
- Continued collaboration for students with families, schools, administrators, staff, and departments to ensure a positive and smooth transition for all.

Staff Impact



- Staffing decisions will be based on long-standing District policy grounded in fairness, clarity and respect, and with a focus on students, staff, and community well-being.
- District staff have met with teachers and staff at affected schools to discuss transition information.
- Staffing is largely dependent on enrollment every year.
- Each year, we hire 50 to 60 teachers due to natural attrition factors -- even last year after our sudden enrollment drop.
- Support staff positions are particularly subject to attrition factors, and we will have an ongoing process to match displaced support staff with positions as they become available.

The Path Forward



Next Steps

- The Superintendent will submit the matter to the Governing Board for action at its January 13, 2026 meeting.
- When the decision is finalized by that action, we will begin working with school communities on developing new community relationships, preserving our common history, honoring our traditions and ensuring our students and families feel welcome and safe in their schools.
- Operational plans for new boundaries, bus routes, and food service will be developed, finalized and communicated.
- District teams will work to determine the best uses for the closed school buildings and land. The buildings and grounds will be maintained and secured until dispositions are finalized.

Support Through Change



- Throughout the spring, schools and the District will work on plans for combining schools, staffs and families to ensure smooth transitions and to create a combined positive culture where everyone feels a sense of caring and belonging.
- Families and staff will be invited to complete a survey to help schools identify matters of importance, such as traditions, programs and activities.
- Buildings will be maintained and secured until a new use or disposition can be determined.
- Communities will be consulted in the repurposing of facilities, recognizing that taxpayer investments should be respected and not wasted over time.

Building Use in Future



- Vacated buildings following consolidation still have value and significance; they will be protected with security measures and maintained to protect value.
- Future use will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but buildings will not remain vacant long term.
- Some sites may be repurposed for District use or for third-party use in coordination with other governmental entities or partners.
- Any sale of school sites requires voter approval, and proceeds can only be used to improve other school facilities, acquire new school sites, or reduce district bond debt. Community input will be obtained prior to any sale.

Positives and Possibilities



- Continue our focus on student achievement and growth. Research from Texas shows that consolidation can lead to measurable improvements in math and reading scores.
- Expansion and strengthening of programs particularly specialized programs and other functions dependent upon larger populations (e.g., Orchestra, clubs, PTOs/site councils).
- Larger grade level teaching teams offer greater opportunity for collaboration and professional learning which benefits both staff and students.
- Opportunity to create shared values and a cohesive school identity, improving morale and collaboration among staff.
- Improved social interactions among students of diversified backgrounds.

Positives and Possibilities



- Reduces underutilization buildings and reduces per-student operational costs.
- Reduces duplication of services and administrative overhead.
- Frees up budget capacity to meet other needs such as programmatic expansion and staff pay increases.
- Most studies find neutral or positive impacts on achievement when transitions are managed effectively.

Vision for the Future



- Expanding programmatic depth, rigor and diversity.
- Meeting the needs of our community and its children.
- Ensuring the promise of every student is realized to the maximum extent possible by freeing up resources to support the same.
- A District that sees continuous improvement in our learning and working environments.
- A continuing culture of care for students, staff, parents and community.