

School Board Meeting:

November 22, 2010

Subject:

Enrollment Projection Report

Presenter:

Tina Burkholder

SUGGESTED SCHOOL BOARD ACTION:

For Board Review Only.

DESCRIPTION:

Review of K-12 Enrollment as of Oct. 1st

The school district's enrollment growth came to a halt for the 2009-2010 school year and has now basically recovered some of what was lost the year before for 2010-2011. Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose's K-12 enrollment has increased by 20 students from the previous year. The five-year growth average is slowly decreasing and is currently at 74 students/year or 1.32%. Total enrollment growth for the past five years is 370 students or 4.27%.

The enrollment as of October 1st was 5,760*. The asterisk by the number means that this number will be different from the official October 1st seat count from the Minnesota Department of Education. For internal purposes, students considered post-secondary or shared-time are adjusted down in our internal monthly enrollment reports. Once the official October 1st enrollment report is on MDE's website, the enrollment number could be 20-30 students higher.

Open Enrollment History

The district typically loses more students than it gains in open enrollment. The downward trend continued, and the district experienced a net loss of 196 students through open enrollment and tuition for the 2009-2010 school year. Tuition students are resident students but attend another district through tuition agreement such as Wright Technical Center or MAWSECO. The district receives the general aid on the tuition students but then forwards the aid to other tuition districts.

The district lost the largest portion of open enrollment students to Rockford and Delano (-139) and gained the most open enrollment students from St. Michael-Albertville (+83). If we take a look at individual grade levels, only grades 9 and 10 showed net gains in open enrollment.

Fall vs. Spring Enrollment

Historically, the district's K-12 enrollment decreases from October 1st to June 1st. Most of the enrollment drops happen in grades 9-12. The percentages of enrollment drops in grades 9-12 have been pretty consistent for the last 5 years. The district has had only two years of enrollment growth during the school year over the last 18 years (2000-01 and 2001-02). After seeing the November 1st enrollment report, I suspect this trend will continue.

Review of 2010-11 Enrollment Projection

The 2010-11 enrollment projection overestimated the enrollment of 5,781 by 21 students. As I mentioned earlier, the October 1st counts (5,760) adjust down post-secondary and shared-time students to only include the instructional time at the school district. Clearly, the economic conditions played a greater role in determining the number of students attending Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose this year.

2011-12 Enrollment Projection

The district uses the schoolfinances.com enrollment projection model. In projecting enrollments, there are three different data sets available: October 1st MARSS submission, end of year ADM, or district data. The end of year ADM data includes tuition students where the student resides in the district but attends another school. The state aid comes to the resident school district, then the other school district bills that resident school for the state aid. Because tuition students are included in the end of year ADM data, it makes the enrollment data inflated. A similar issue occurs with the October 1st MARSS data. The enrollment data submitted to the State includes post-secondary and shared time students. The district data option is the third option and allows schools to enter enrollment history taken at any time. For example, this option could be used by entering in our enrollment history that adjusts the post-secondary and shared time students as of any date. I will be using the district data as of October 1st.

The next step is to project kindergarten students. There are four different methods to pick from: hold constant, linear projection, county birth, and zip code method. In reviewing the Wright County resident births, the overall number of recorded births, which predicts future kindergarten enrollment, is pretty consistent for the next 3 years. Keep in mind that these are Wright County resident births from 2006-2008. Just looking at the housing market, a lot of those births could have moved out since that time. In our growing years, we have enrolled 26-30% of the Wright County resident births. The percentage of resident births enrolled is slowly dropping. For October 1, 2010, we are at 22.5%. I tried to project what kindergarten enrollment numbers would look like if I stayed with 21% of the Wright County resident births enrolled at our district for the next four years. I wanted to select a method that would reflect that pattern. In the end, I chose the zip code birth (lowest average) projection method that had similar kindergarten student enrollment numbers. This method was also selected last year.

Now we start looking at K-12 enrollment projections by looking at a variety of methods.

Cohort survival method uses a ratio computed for each grade from the previous year. This is accomplished by dividing the current enrollment in one grade by the previous grade in the previous year. Cohort ratios are calculated using 1-7 years of enrollment history. For example, a cohort ratio using five years of enrollment history would produce a ratio of the enrollment that occurred five years ago to the enrollment that occurred six years ago. In rapid growth, this methodology may produce projections that are too optimistic.

Weighted cohort survival method uses a ratio computed for each grade level from the previous year as well as by dividing the current enrollment in one grade by the previous grade in the previous year. The ratios are weighted to bias the prediction in favor of the most recent year's results. In rapid growth, this methodology may also produce overly optimistic results.

Numerical survival method uses a simple grade to grade progression without calculating a ratio. A multiple year average of the enrollment change is added or subtracted to the enrollment in a grade to project future enrollment. In rapid growth, this model may produce projections that are too conservative.

Weighted numerical survival method uses grade to grade progressions like the numerical survival method, but also employs a weighted average to give greater influence to recent year's results. In rapid growth, this methodology dampens the projections slightly.

Merged method is a combination of all previous methods.

There are seventeen different variations to pick from. I examined a combination up to five different models at one time. The following five were selected for detailed analysis: 2-year weighted average, 3-year weighted average, 4-year weighted average, 5-year weighted average, and merged. From the 5 methods, I selected the merged method. That model predicts a total K-12 enrollment of 5,748 students for 2010-11, a decrease of 12 students from this year. Some of the factors considered when selecting a method were the current housing market, economic conditions, Wright County births, open enrollment, and budget reductions.

The future enrollment projections are portrayed by grade grouping. Since BHM schools is (or was) a growing district, we should be concerned about some of the school building capacities:

BHS – 1,935	PHX – 64	PRIDE – 25
BCMS – 1,375	Elementary – 3,200	

The building capacities listed are optimum capacities and can be stretched a little bit. The enrollment projections raise some concerns for the middle school for the school year 2014-15 and beyond. Should another middle school be built, or should we reconfigure the grade levels at existing buildings? There appears to be adequate time before coming to any decision.

Finally, the weighted average daily membership (WADM) projection shows relatively no change in student aid. Keep in mind the district's enrollment history tends to decline from October 1st to June 1st. Slightly more conservative numbers will be used in the January financial forecast.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Enrollment Nov10