



New England School Development Council

New Fairfield Public Schools

New Fairfield, CT

2023-24 Letter of Analysis



2023-24 Enrollment Projections

TO: Dr. Kenneth Craw, Superintendent, New Fairfield, CT
FROM: Karen L. LeDuc, Ph.D.
DATE: 10/24/23
RE: Enrollment Projections

We are pleased to send you the Enrollment Projection Report which displays the past, present, and projected enrollments for the New Fairfield School District. These ten-year projections are designed to provide New Fairfield with yearly, up-to-date enrollment information that can be used by boards and administrators for effective planning and allocation of resources. Included in this report are graphs representing historical and projected grade-by-grade enrollments, as well as historical and projected enrollments in grade combinations. We have received the figures given to us by the district, and we assume that the method of collecting the enrollment data has been consistent from year to year.

Enrollment projections are more reliable in Years #1-4 in the future and less reliable in the “out-years.” Projections six to ten years out may serve as a guide to future enrollments and are useful for planning purposes. In light of this, NESDEC has added a “Spring Update Refresher” enrollment projection at no cost to affiliates.

The NESDEC forecast for School Year 2022-23 fell within 28 students of the K-12 projected enrollment (2098 projected vs. 2070 enrolled). In Grades K-2, 422 students were projected vs. 420 enrolled; in Grades 3-5, 449 students were projected vs. 436 enrolled in Grades 6-8, 519 students were projected vs. 510 enrolled; and in Grades 9-12, 708 students were projected vs. 704 enrolled.

Enrollment Projection Analysis: Over the next three years, K-2 enrollments are forecast to increase by a total of 22 students, Grades 3-5 enrollments are projected to increase by 34 students, Grades 6-8 enrollments are projected to decrease by 29 students, and Grades 9-12 are projected to decrease by about 22 pupils, as the classes move up the grades. Projections can serve as useful guides to school administrators for educational planning. Enrollment projections are more reliable in Years #1-4 in the future and less reliable in the “out-years.” Projections six to

ten years out may serve as a guide to future enrollments and are useful for planning purposes, but they should be viewed as subject to change given the likelihood of potential shifts in underlying assumptions/trends, such as student migration, births as they relate to Kindergarten enrollment, and other factors. Building permits have begun to stabilize see the “Additional Data” table. See the “Reliability of Projections” section for more details. The birth numbers used in the projections, through 2020, are from the CT Department of Public Health. Any “provisional” numbers reflect a total that is preliminary. Any “estimated” numbers are created using a rolling five-year average, which NESDEC has found to be the most accurate method of estimation. Local clerks have up-to-date information on local births, but do not have access to the number of New Fairfield residents born out-of-state, information which will eventually become known to the CT DPH Vital Statistics Department. Regardless, it is quite possible that real estate turnover will have increased further, bringing in additional new families: see the “Projections” page.

NESDEC has found that the following factors are relevant to the analysis of your Enrollment Projections.

Hidden Trends Within the District

The two factors now at work that will have the greatest effect upon future enrollments are: (1) an small increase in the number of births to New Fairfield residents, and (2) an expected continuation of the in-migration of families.

Births: The analysis of births as they relate to kindergarten is important to consider as it constitutes the potential enrollment pool for Kindergarten. The students currently in Grades 1-10 were born during a period when New Fairfield was averaging 99 births per year. More recently, and expected over the next 8-10 years, New Fairfield now is averaging about 104 births per year, about 5 more births per year than previously. The relationship between New Fairfield births and Kindergarten enrollments is displayed on the B-K graph. New Fairfield continues to experience an increased number of “net move-ins” of families with Kindergarten students. For example, in 2018 there were 109 births, and for school year 2023-24, New Fairfield enrolled 146 Kindergarteners (an increase of 37 students). Kindergarten enrollments over the last five years have experienced a range of 119-146 students. Kindergarten is one of the more difficult grades to project, as the projection is based upon birth data recorded five years earlier and is influenced by new families moving to New Fairfield.

In- or Out-Migration of Students: Like many nearby communities, New Fairfield continues to experience fluctuations in enrollment and in-migration in Grades 1-8. There are additional trends and countertrends to consider. More so than other grade levels, **Grades 1-8 in most districts, taken as a group, tend to be relatively stable in numbers.** Grades 9-12 are excluded from the calculation, as in many communities there tends to be additional fluctuation for reasons having little to do with students moving in/out of the community. Regarding the Grade 1-8 enrollment stability, if last year the Grade 1-7 total was 1,100 children, and if no one moved in or out, this fall’s Grades 2-8 would equal about 1,100 – the same cohort of children. Because Grades 1-8 tend to be the most stable in total K-12 enrollment, these Grades 1-8 are potential places to discover “hidden trends” that otherwise might go unnoticed, and that provide a useful yardstick by which to measure a district’s tendency toward in-/out-migration. In the case of New Fairfield, we know that the District had been experiencing an in-migration of school-age

children (with increases in 8 out of 8 years, leading to a net increase averaging 24 students). The presence of in-migration in Grades 1-8 would be evidence of the complexity of enrollments in these unsettled economic times. Analysis of these hidden trends can provide an additional benchmark by which to assess enrollment trends.

Forecasting Kindergarten and Grade 9: The two most difficult grades to forecast in all districts are Kindergarten and Grade 9. The latter is difficult to anticipate, as there are so many options for Grade 9: vocational or agricultural schools, private or parochial non-public schools, etc. Kindergarten can be difficult to project based upon births alone, especially in a changing real estate market like New Fairfield-as many districts have large numbers of “net move-ins/move-outs” who are ages 1-4. Some districts take extra steps to track 3- and 4-year-olds with a local census, or report to NESDEC the known number of 4-year-olds in local pre-schools/nursery schools that typically enroll Kindergarteners in the district. Knowing this information helps NESDEC to project Kindergarteners more reliably, as does data from the Kindergarten Screening in districts, which also tracks 3- and 4-year-old siblings (or neighbors) at that time. New Fairfield’s in-migration of residents remains an important variable in the new class of Kindergarteners each year and is well worth tracking in order to periodically update the estimated number of newly arrived children. The more data that is sent to NESDEC regarding the incoming Kindergarten class, the greater the chance that enrollment surprises will be minimized.

Trends in Real Estate Sales: Every day across America, 10,000 citizens celebrate their 65th birthdays, a phenomenon which will continue for the foreseeable future. Current real estate trends indicate that a large share of these mature citizens had planned to “downsize” their living arrangements but postponed doing so due to the fluctuating real estate market. Millennials, many of whom postponed home buying, are now purchasing homes in record numbers. School enrollments are influenced strongly by the number of real estate sales, as these contribute to new families moving into many districts. Generally, in our work we have become aware that the number of real estate sales is 4-5 times larger than the number of building permits for new residential construction. **Thus, the number of real estate sales can be a more important factor than the number of building permits.** The global economy continues to influence our nation’s public health and economic stability in unpredictable ways, especially for our schools. In the case of New Fairfield, an average of 204 single-family homes were sold annually from 2013-2022. The number of homes sold through August of 2023 (93 single-family homes) is on a pace that could reach mid-high 100s by year’s end. The median sales price for single-family homes has ranged from \$321,000 to \$474,500 for the past 10 years and is currently \$510,000 through August 2023. (Data Source: Warren Group)

Analyzing Your Enrollment

1. After the "YEAR" column can be found the "BIRTHS" column. The number of births to residents for each of eleven years is displayed. Note any trends, e.g., have births been decreasing? increasing? leveling off? Kindergarten and Grade 1 enrollments normally are quite responsive to these fluctuations.
2. Look **down** the K and 1 columns, noting the direction of the trend. This affords a comparison of these classes over a ten-year period. Add the K and Grade 1 enrollments of the first school year recorded and compare them with the sum of the current K and Grade 1 enrollments.
3. Take the first K class and follow it diagonally to trace its movement to Grade 1, 2, etc. up to its current 10th grade status. This comparison (which can be accomplished for other classes also) gives some measure of the effects of migration in your school district. If a sixth-grade class today is larger than it was as a K class six years ago, then net in-migration probably has occurred; if it is smaller, then net out-migration probably has occurred.
4. Compare each K class with the previous year's graduating class. Note which is larger and by what amount one surpasses the other. Larger graduating classes generally reflect declining enrollments; larger K classes generally indicate increasing enrollments.
5. In the "Grade Combinations" section, note the trends of elementary, middle school and high school enrollments. A significant and consistent trend in these summaries usually results in the corresponding trend for projected enrollments. If enrollments are leveling off in the elementary grades after a period of decline, then the secondary enrollments might be expected to continue to decline for several years until the leveling off experience has had time to take hold at the secondary grades.



Using This Information Electronically

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New England School Development Council

**New Fairfield Public Schools
New Fairfield, CT**

School Year 2023-24 Enrollment Projection Report

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Enrollment Summary

NESDEC is pleased to send you this report displaying the past, present, and projected enrollments for your District. It is important to update enrollment projections every year to identify changes in enrollment patterns. Ten-year projections are designed to provide your District with yearly, up-to-date enrollment information that can be used by boards and administrators for effective planning and allocation of resources.

Included in this report are graphs representing historical and projected grade-by-grade enrollments, as well as historical and projected enrollments in grade combinations. We received the enrollment data from the District, and we assume that the method of collecting this data has been consistent from year to year.

Enrollment projections are more reliable in Years #1-4 in the future and less reliable in the “out-years.” Projections six to ten years out may serve as a guide to future enrollments and are useful for planning purposes. In light of this, NESDEC has added a “Spring Update Refresher” enrollment projection at no cost to affiliates. For more information, please refer to the Methodology, Reliability and Use of this Document section.

The NESDEC enrollment projection fell within 28 students of the K-12 total, 2,098 students projected vs. 2,070 enrolled.

Births increased by 5 from a previous ten-year average of 99 to a projected average of 104. In most districts, Grades 1-8 are very stable in enrollments. However, there have been increases in 8 of the 8 most recent years, leading to a net increase averaging 24 students per year.

Over the next three years, Grades K-2 enrollments are projected to increase by 22 students, Grades 3-5 enrollments are projected to increase by 34 students, Grades 6-8 enrollments are projected to decrease by 29 students and Grades 9-12 enrollments are projected to decrease by 22 students, as students move through the grades.



Historical Enrollment

School District: New Fairfield, CT

10/24/2023

Historical Enrollment By Grade																			
Birth Year	Births*	School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	UNGR	K-12	PK-12
2008	125	2013-14	66	162	151	170	157	201	203	204	216	206	247	246	261	241	0	2665	2731
2009	85	2014-15	85	139	158	162	174	154	199	209	204	216	213	240	240	268	0	2576	2661
2010	117	2015-16	67	153	130	151	165	173	152	193	198	199	230	213	228	245	0	2430	2497
2011	102	2016-17	77	136	153	138	152	164	172	152	190	201	188	226	211	235	0	2318	2395
2012	100	2017-18	74	150	139	153	137	153	170	180	154	190	190	186	225	206	0	2233	2307
2013	85	2018-19	77	112	157	139	156	141	161	174	184	158	183	189	194	223	0	2171	2248
2014	95	2019-20	89	143	115	152	144	161	139	174	175	189	152	179	185	187	0	2095	2184
2015	95	2020-21	71	119	149	116	153	149	169	144	179	174	181	151	182	194	0	2060	2131
2016	93	2021-22	68	129	137	153	132	159	153	176	160	183	169	178	147	189	0	2065	2133
2017	98	2022-23	76	126	140	142	156	135	169	157	179	160	183	178	182	164	0	2071	2147
2018	109	2023-24	84	146	128	146	138	156	142	173	157	180	160	177	176	191	0	2070	2154

*Birth data provided by Public Health Vital Records Departments in each state.

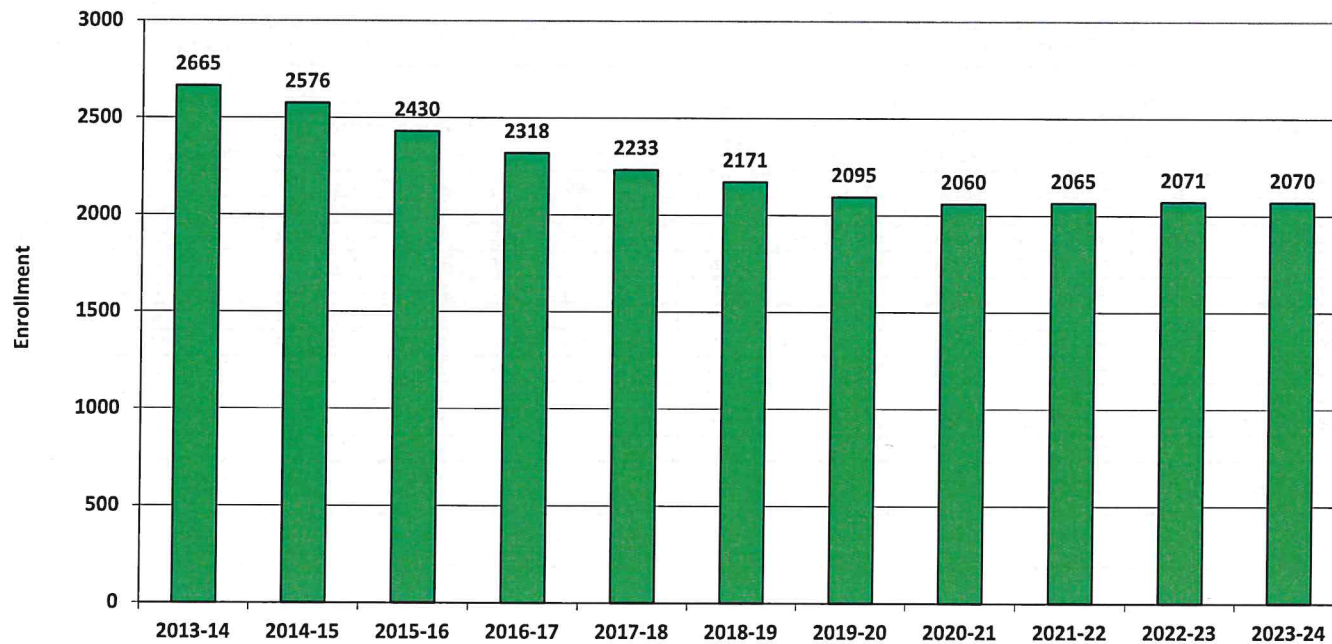
** < 10 Not reported, to protect subgroups with fewer than 10 students.

Historical Enrollment in Grade Combinations									
School Year	PK-5	K-5	PK-2	K-2	3-5	6-8	PK-8	K-8	9-12
2013-14	1110	1044	549	483	561	626	1736	1670	995
2014-15	1071	986	544	459	527	629	1700	1615	961
2015-16	991	924	501	434	490	590	1581	1514	916
2016-17	992	915	504	427	488	543	1535	1458	860
2017-18	976	902	516	442	460	524	1500	1426	807
2018-19	943	866	485	408	458	516	1459	1382	789
2019-20	943	854	499	410	444	538	1481	1392	703
2020-21	926	855	455	384	471	497	1423	1352	708
2021-22	931	863	487	419	444	519	1450	1382	683
2022-23	944	868	484	408	460	496	1440	1364	707
2023-24	940	856	504	420	436	510	1450	1366	704

Historical Percentage Changes			
School Year	K-12	Diff.	%
2013-14	2665		
2014-15	2576	-89	-3.3%
2015-16	2430	-146	-5.7%
2016-17	2318	-112	-4.6%
2017-18	2233	-85	-3.7%
2018-19	2171	-62	-2.8%
2019-20	2095	-76	-3.5%
2020-21	2060	-35	-1.7%
2021-22	2065	5	0.2%
2022-23	2071	6	0.3%
2023-24	2070	-1	0.0%
Change		-595	-22.3%

Historical Enrollment

Grades K-12, School Years 2013-14 to 2023-24





Projected Enrollment

School District: New Fairfield, CT

10/24/2023

Enrollment Projections By Grade*																				
Birth Year	Births*		School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	UNGR	K-12	PK-12
2018	109		2023-24	84	146	128	146	138	156	142	173	157	180	160	177	176	191	0	2070	2154
2019	97		2024-25	84	130	155	132	152	141	163	146	180	158	178	160	177	185	0	2057	2141
2020	91		2025-26	85	122	138	159	138	156	148	168	152	182	156	178	160	186	0	2043	2128
2021	128	(prov.)	2026-27	85	171	129	142	166	141	163	153	175	153	180	156	178	168	0	2075	2160
2022	96	(prov.)	2027-28	86	128	181	133	148	170	148	168	159	177	152	180	156	187	0	2087	2173
2023	104	(est.)	2028-29	86	139	136	186	139	152	178	153	175	160	175	152	180	164	0	2089	2175
2024	103	(est.)	2029-30	87	138	148	140	194	142	159	183	159	177	158	175	152	189	0	2114	2201
2025	104	(est.)	2030-31	87	140	146	152	146	199	149	164	190	160	175	158	175	160	0	2114	2201
2026	107	(est.)	2031-32	88	143	149	150	159	150	208	154	170	192	158	175	158	184	0	2150	2238
2027	103	(est.)	2032-33	89	138	152	153	156	163	157	214	160	172	190	158	175	166	0	2154	2243
2028	104	(est.)	2033-34	90	140	146	156	160	160	171	162	222	161	170	190	158	184	0	2180	2270

Note: Ungraded students (UNGR) often are high school students whose anticipated years of graduation are unknown, or students with special needs - UNGR not included in Grade Combinations for 7-12, 9-12, etc.

Based on an estimate of births

Based on children already born

Based on students already enrolled

*Birth data provided by Public Health Vital Records Departments in each state.

** < 10 Not reported, to protect subgroups with fewer than 10 students.

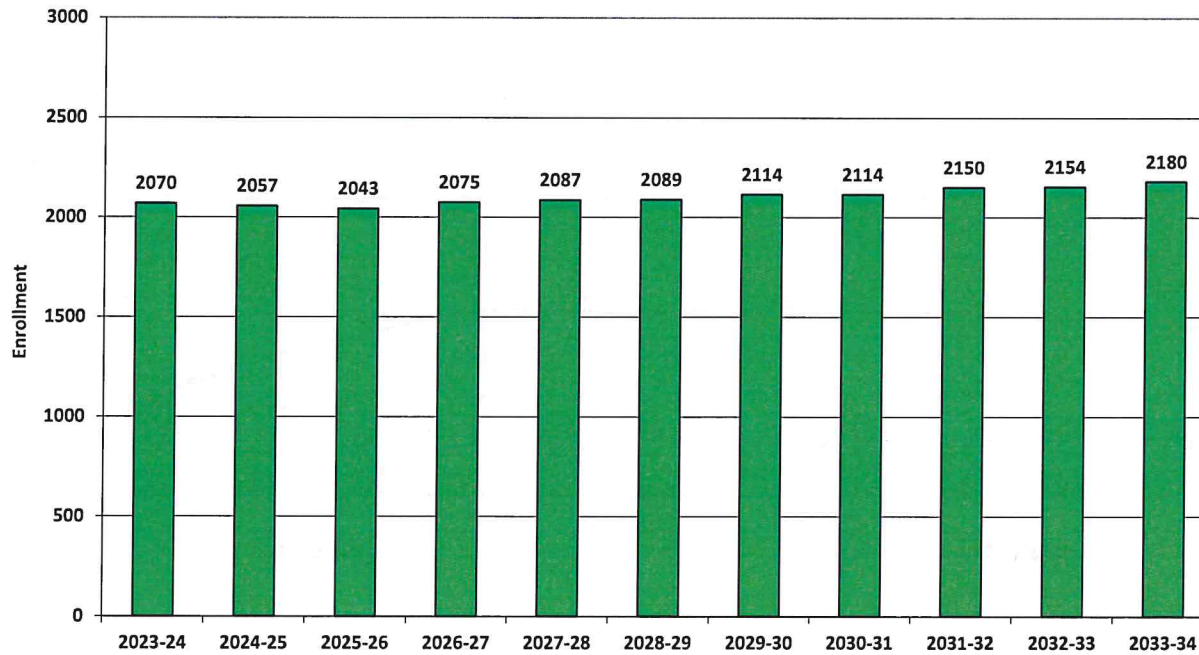
Projected Enrollment in Grade Combinations*									
School Year	PK-5	K-5	PK-2	K-2	3-5	6-8	PK-8	K-8	9-12
2023-24	940	856	504	420	436	510	1450	1366	704
2024-25	957	873	501	417	456	484	1441	1357	700
2025-26	946	861	504	419	442	502	1448	1363	680
2026-27	997	912	527	442	470	481	1478	1393	682
2027-28	994	908	528	442	466	504	1498	1412	675
2028-29	1016	930	547	461	469	488	1504	1418	671
2029-30	1008	921	513	426	495	519	1527	1440	674
2030-31	1019	932	525	438	494	514	1533	1446	668
2031-32	1047	959	530	442	517	516	1563	1475	675
2032-33	1008	919	532	443	476	546	1554	1465	689
2033-34	1023	933	532	442	491	545	1568	1478	702

Projected Percentage Changes			
School Year	K-12	Diff.	%
2023-24	2070	0	0.0%
2024-25	2057	-13	-0.6%
2025-26	2043	-14	-0.7%
2026-27	2075	32	1.6%
2027-28	2087	12	0.6%
2028-29	2089	2	0.1%
2029-30	2114	25	1.2%
2030-31	2114	0	0.0%
2031-32	2150	36	1.7%
2032-33	2154	4	0.2%
2033-34	2180	26	1.2%
Change		110	5.3%

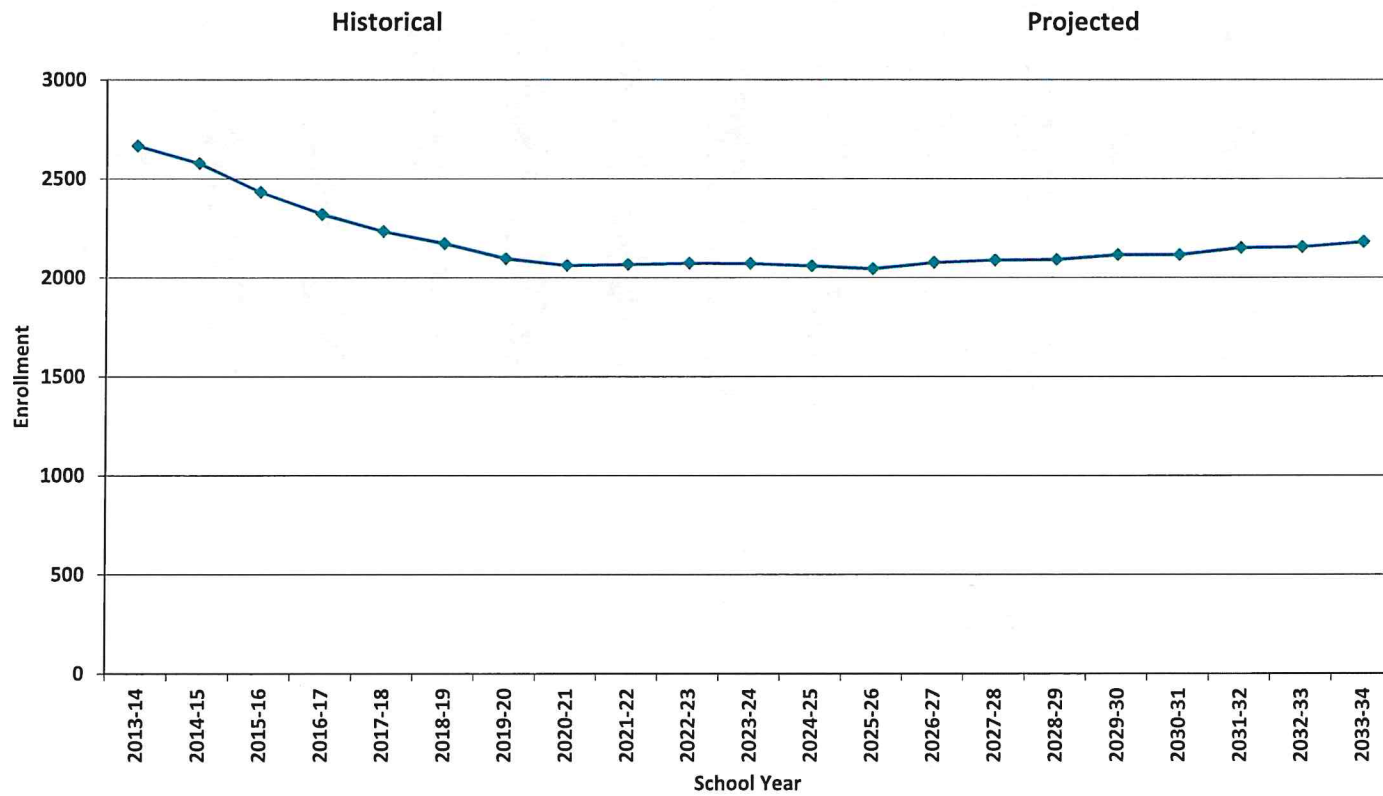
*Projections should be updated annually to reflect changes in in/out-migration of families, real estate sales, residential construction, births, and similar factors.

Projected Enrollment

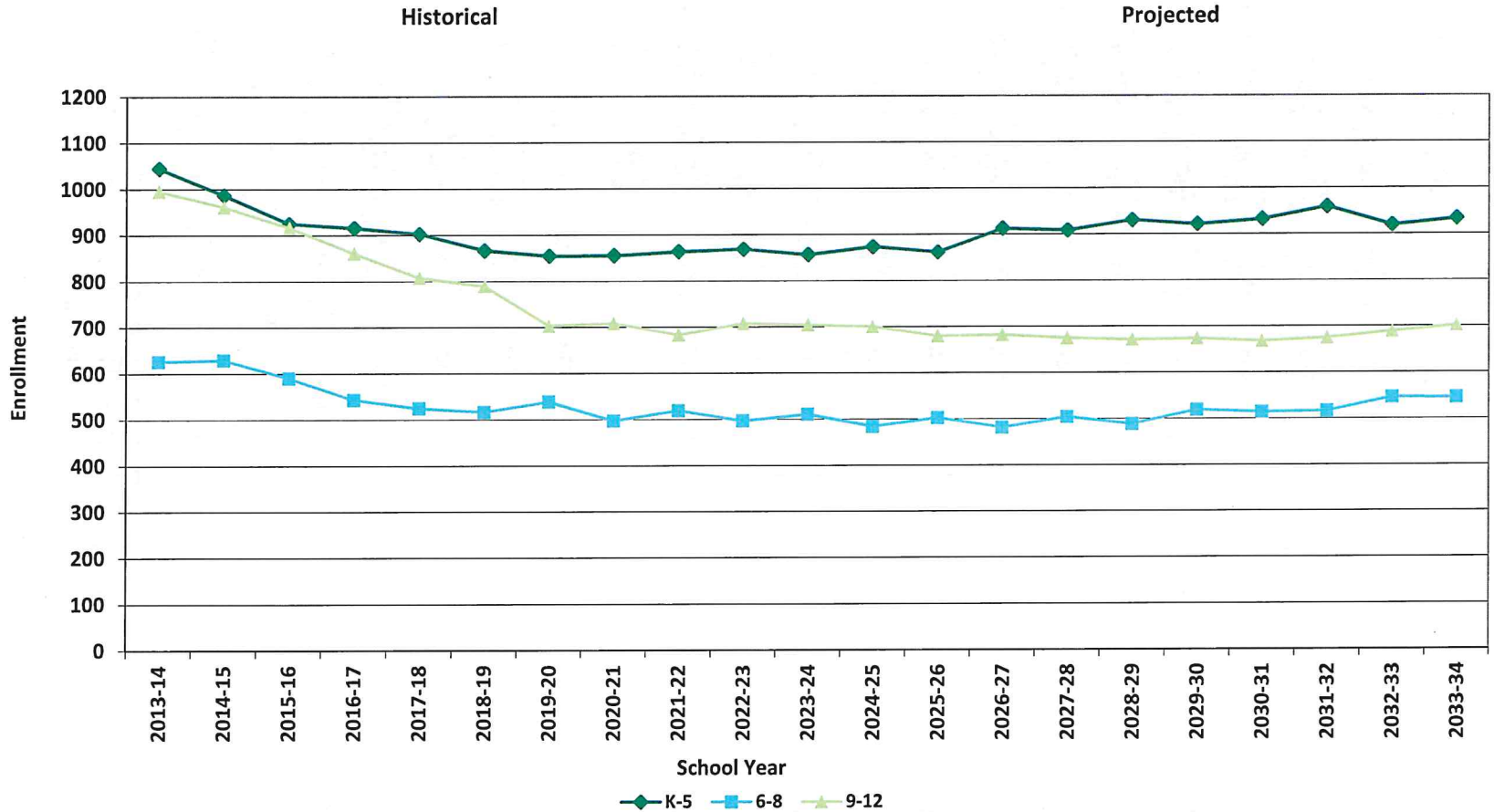
Grades K-12, School Years 2023-24 to 2033-34



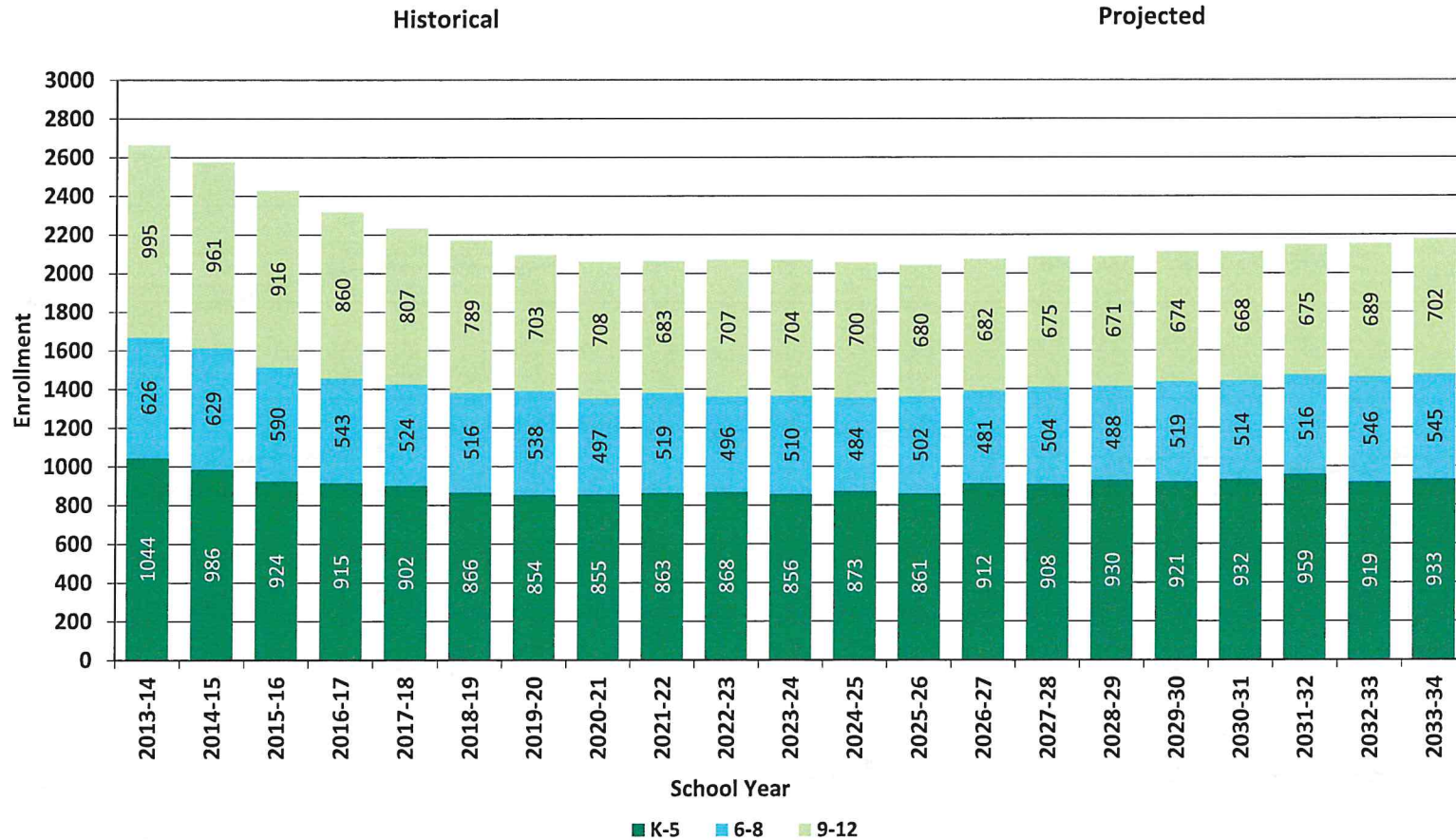
Historical & Projected Enrollment



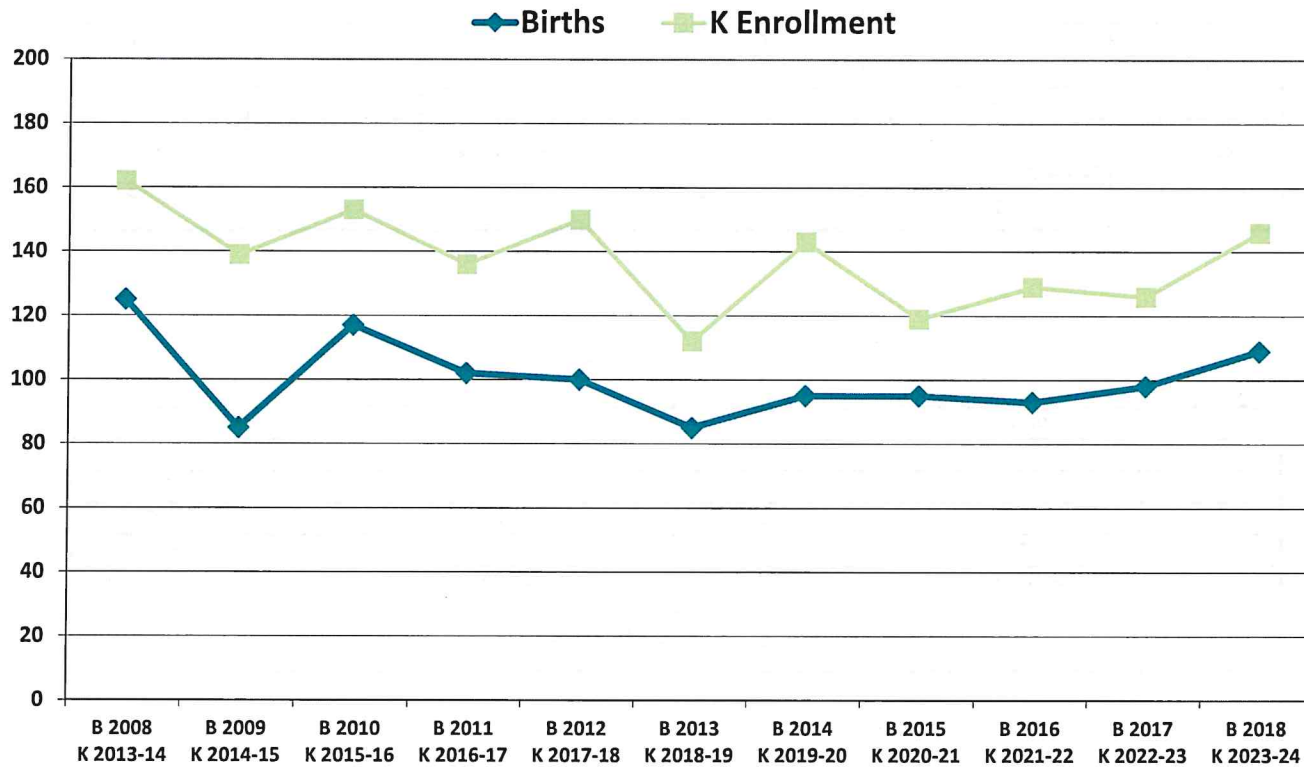
Historical & Projected Enrollments in Grade Combinations



Historical & Projected Enrollments in Grade Combinations



Birth-to-Kindergarten Relationship



Additional Information

Building Permits Issued (Source: HUD)		
Year	Single-Family	Multi-Units
2019	6	0
2020	9	0
2021	5	0
2022	0	0
2023	2 to date	0 to date

School Year	9 - 12 CTE	K - 12 Non-Public	K - 12 Choice-In	K - 12 Choice-Out	K - 12 Out-of-District SPED	K - 12 Homeschool
2019-20	39	n/a	< 10 **	18	< 10 **	15
2020-21	48	n/a	0	15	< 10 **	39
2021-22	57	n/a	0	25	< 10 **	25
2022-23	43	n/a	0	17	< 10 **	14
2023-24	43	n/a	0	18	< 10 **	14

*The above data was provided by the District, with the exception of building permit data (provided by HUD).

"n/a" signifies that information was not provided by District.

** < 10 Not reported, to protect subgroups with fewer than 10 students.

New England's PK-12 Enrollments Trends

From 2021 to 2030, the US Department of Education anticipates changes in PK-12 enrollment of -3.2% in the South, -6.0% in the West, -3.9% in the Midwest, -6.0% in the Northeast, and a total of -4.4% nationwide.

State	Fall 2021 PK - 12	Fall 2030 Projected	PK-12 Decline	% Change 2021-2030
USA	49,452,864	47,252,500	-2,200,364	-4.4%
CT	508,686	475,600	-33,086	-6.5%
ME	173,215	161,800	-11,415	-6.6%
MA	921,180	879,900	-41,280	-4.5%
NH	170,005	144,600	-25,405	-14.9%
RI	138,566	130,200	-8,366	-6.0%
VT	83,975	74,600	-9,375	-11.2%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by region, state, and jurisdiction: Selected years, fall 1990 through fall 2030, Table 203.20, March 2023.

Although most New England Districts are seeing a decline in the number of births, NESDEC's experience indicates that the impact on enrollment varies from District to District. Almost half of New England Districts have been growing in PK-12 enrollment, and a similar number are declining (often in rural areas), with the other Districts remaining stable.

Methodology, Reliability and Use of this Document

PROJECTION METHODOLOGY

Cohort component (survival) technique is a frequently used method of preparing enrollment forecasts. NESDEC uses this method, but modifies it in order to move away from forecasts that are wholly computer- or formula-driven. Such modification permits the incorporation of important, current district-specific demographic information into the generation of enrollment forecasts (such as in/out-migration of students, resident births, HUD-reported building permits, etc.). Percentages are calculated from the historical enrollment data to determine a reliable percentage of increase or decrease in enrollment between any two grades. For example, if 100 students enrolled in Grade 1 in 2022-23 increased to 104 students in Grade 2 in 2023-24, the percentage of survival would be 104%, or a ratio of 1.04. Ratios are calculated between each pair of grades or years in school over several recent years.

After study and analysis of the historical ratios, and based upon a reasonable set of assumptions regarding births, migration rates, retention rates, etc., ratios most indicative of future growth patterns are determined for each pair of grades. The ratios thus selected are applied to the present enrollment statistics to project into future years. The ratios are the key factors in the reliability of the projections, assuming validity of the data at the starting point.

RELIABILITY OF ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

Projections can serve as useful guides to school administrators for educational planning. Enrollment projections are more reliable in Years #1-4 in the future and less reliable in the “out-years.” Projections six to ten years out may serve as a guide to future enrollments and are useful for planning purposes, but they should be viewed as subject to change given the likelihood of potential shifts in underlying assumptions/trends, such as student migration, births as they relate to Kindergarten enrollment, and other factors.

Projections that are based upon **the children who already are in the district** (the current K-12 population only) will be the most reliable. The second level of reliability will be for those children already **born into the community but not yet old enough to be in school**. The least reliable category is the group for which an estimate must be made **to predict the number of births**, thereby adding additional uncertainty. See these three multi-colored groupings on the “Projected Enrollment” tab.

Annual updates allow for early identification of recent changes in historical trends. When the actual enrollment in a grade is significantly different (higher or lower) from the projected number, it is important (yet difficult) to determine whether this is a one-year aberration or whether a new trend may have begun. **In light of this possibility, NESDEC urges all school districts to have updated enrollment forecasts developed by NESDEC each October.** This service is available at no cost to affiliated school districts.

USING THIS INFORMATION ELECTRONICALLY

If you would like to extract the information contained in this report for your own documents or presentations, you can use screenshots, which can be inserted into PowerPoint slides, Word documents, etc. Because screenshots create graphics, the image is not editable. Please feel free to contact us if you need assistance in this matter, by phone (508-481-9444) or by email (ep@nesdec.org).