



2023 Enrollment Report

Dr. Aaron Engel, Superintendent



Causes of Declining Enrollment

Birth rates are declining locally, statewide and nationally.

The “Baby Busts” of 2008 and 2020 increased the declining birth rate trends.

The La Crosse County birth rate has dropped 30% since 1990

Birth Rate (Births per 1,000 Population) Wisconsin and the U.S., 1950-2020

Year	Wisconsin
2020	10.4
2019	10.8
2018	11.1
2017	11.2
2016	11.5
2015	11.6
2010	12.0
2005	12.7
2000	12.9
1995	13.2
1990	14.8



Population Changes Locally

The City of La Crosse and surrounding townships have grown just 1.3% in 30 years.

Holmen and Onalaska have grown over the last 30 years -but both school districts have experienced declining enrollment over the last five years.

- Holmen -2.9%
- Onalaska -4.0%

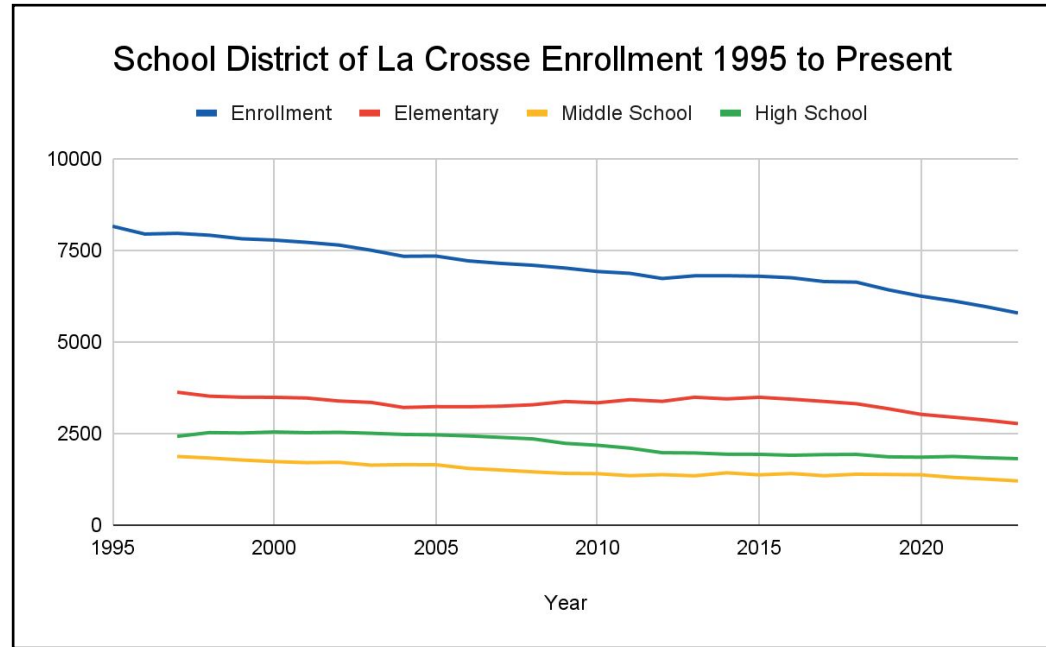
City and Township Population		
City/Town	1990 Population	2020 Population
La Crosse	51,544	52,185
Shelby	4,872	4,797
Medary	1,304	1,607
Campbell	4,321	4,283
Total Population	62,041	62,872



School District of La Crosse Long-Term Enrollment Trend

The enrollment in the School District of La Crosse has been declining for 30 years.

In 1995 enrollment in the School District of La Crosse was 8,152. Enrollment is now at 5,786, a 29% reduction



Private School Enrollment

Private school enrollment in the district dropped by 44% since 1994, from 2,173 to 1,218 students; at Aquinas, by 47%, from 1,548 to 822 students.

Vouchers now account for 15% of enrollment at Aquinas.

Vouchers stabilized enrollment when they were implemented in 2013.

Aquinas Enrollment Over Ten Years of Vouchers		
Aquinas	2013	2023
Total Enrollment	975	983
WPCP	21	146
% of Enrollment	2.2%	15%



Impact of Lower Birth Rates

The impact of declining birth rates can be seen in the difference between exiting seniors and incoming kindergarteners.

Since 2010, a reduction of 512 students, 45% of declining enrollment.

Year	Kindergarten	12th Grade	Difference	Year	Kindergarten	12th Grade	Difference
2010-11	485	594	-109	2017-18	480	481	-1
2011-12	498	590	-92	2018-19	449	533	-84
2012-13	547	503	44	2019-20	454	459	-5
2013-14	515	551	-36	2020-21	421	512	-91
2014-15	510	507	3	2021-22	428	472	-44
2015-16	529	489	40	2022-23	410	459	-49
2016-17	486	509	-23	2023-24	376	441	-65

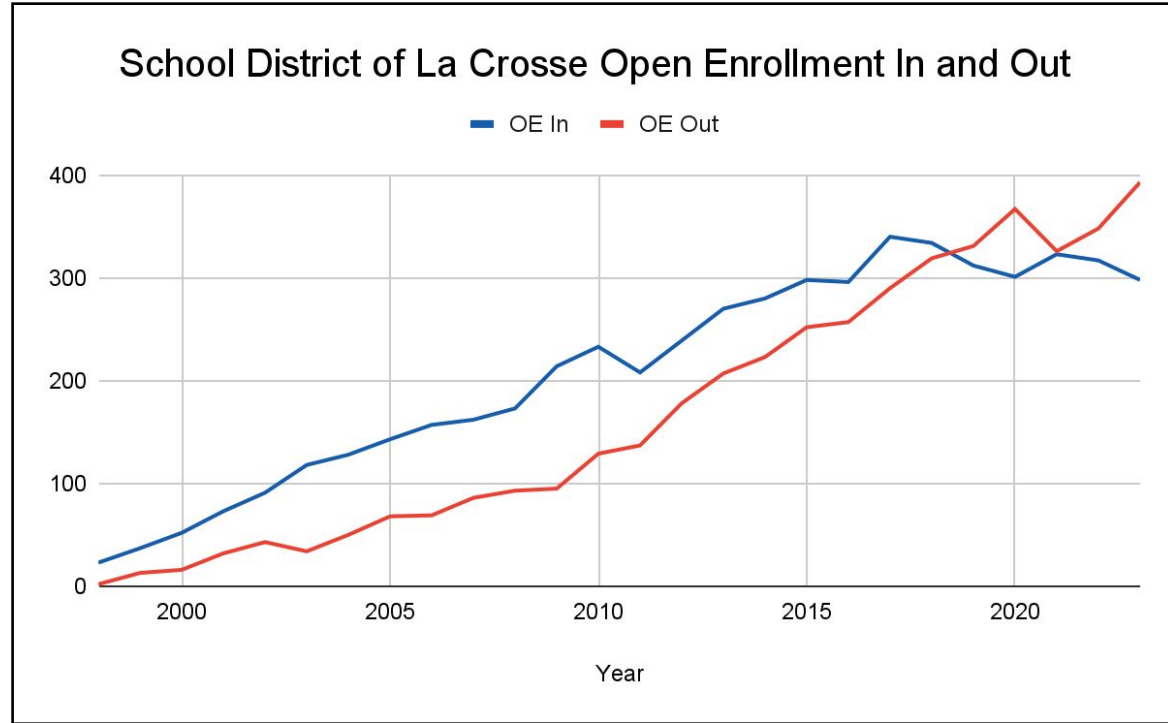


Open Enrollment

Open enrollment was implemented in 1998.

Until 2018, the district had a net positive open enrollment rate.

Currently the district has a net -98 enrollment through open enrollment.



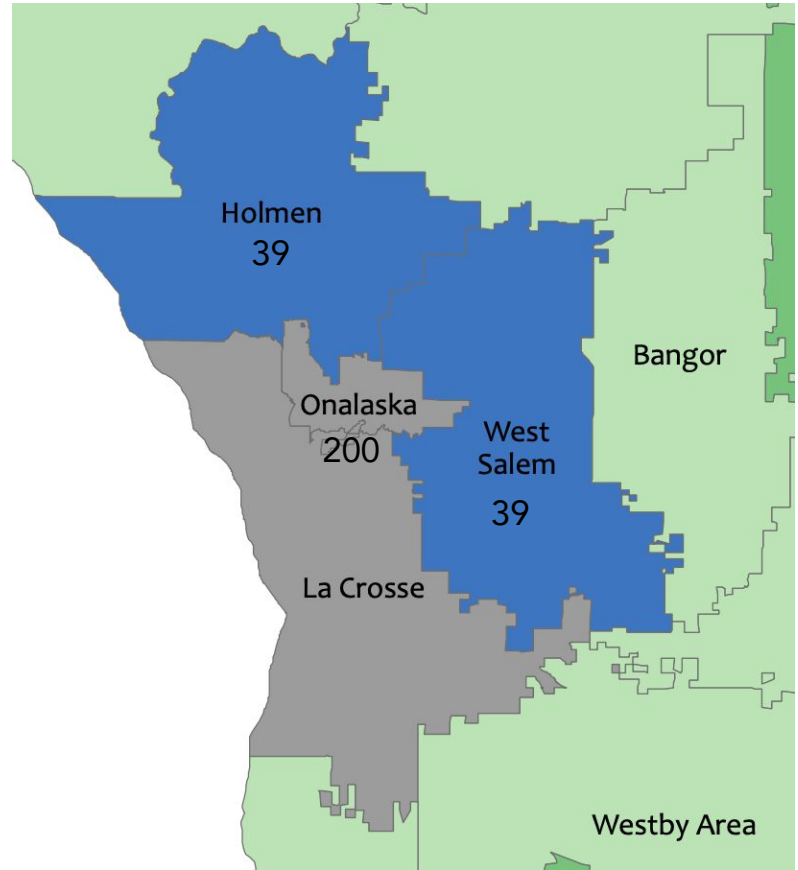
Open Enrollment Out

393 students open enroll out currently.

49% live north of the La Crosse River (28% of district students live in the same area)

Students who open enroll out primarily attend three districts:

- Onalaska (200 students, 51% of open enrollment out)
- West Salem (83, 21%)
- Holmen (39, 10%)

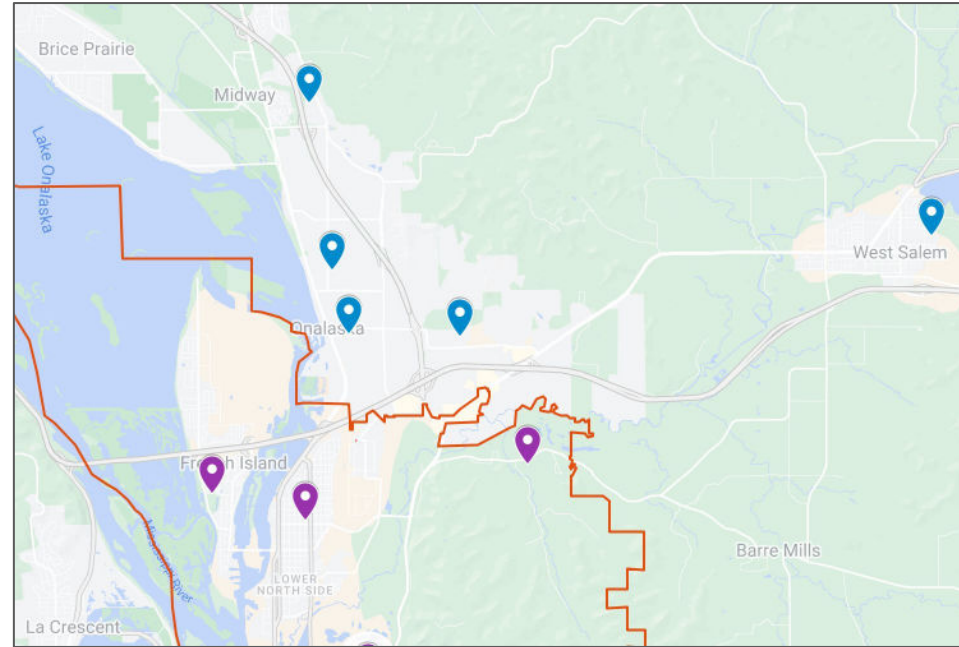


Open Enrollment Out

75% never attended a school in the School District of La Crosse.

- 45% attended another school district starting in 4K or kindergarten.
- 30% moved into the School District of La Crosse and chose to keep their child in their prior school district.

Of previous attendees, 46% of students last attended one of the three northernmost elementary schools - North Woods (25 students), Summit (15), or Northside (12)



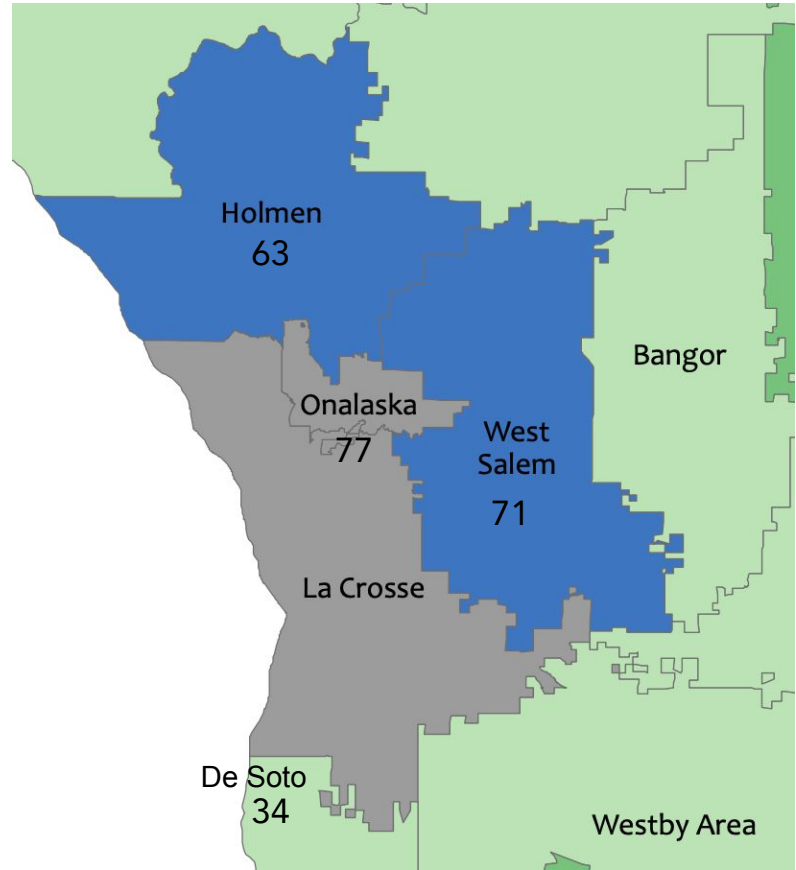
Open Enrollment In

Primarily attend from four other school districts:

- Onalaska (77 students, 26% of open enrollment in)
- West Salem (71, 24%)
- Holmen (63, 21%)
- De Soto (34, 11%)

46% of students started attending in pre-kindergarten (PK), 4K, or kindergarten.

30 students attend the district's virtual school, CRVA.

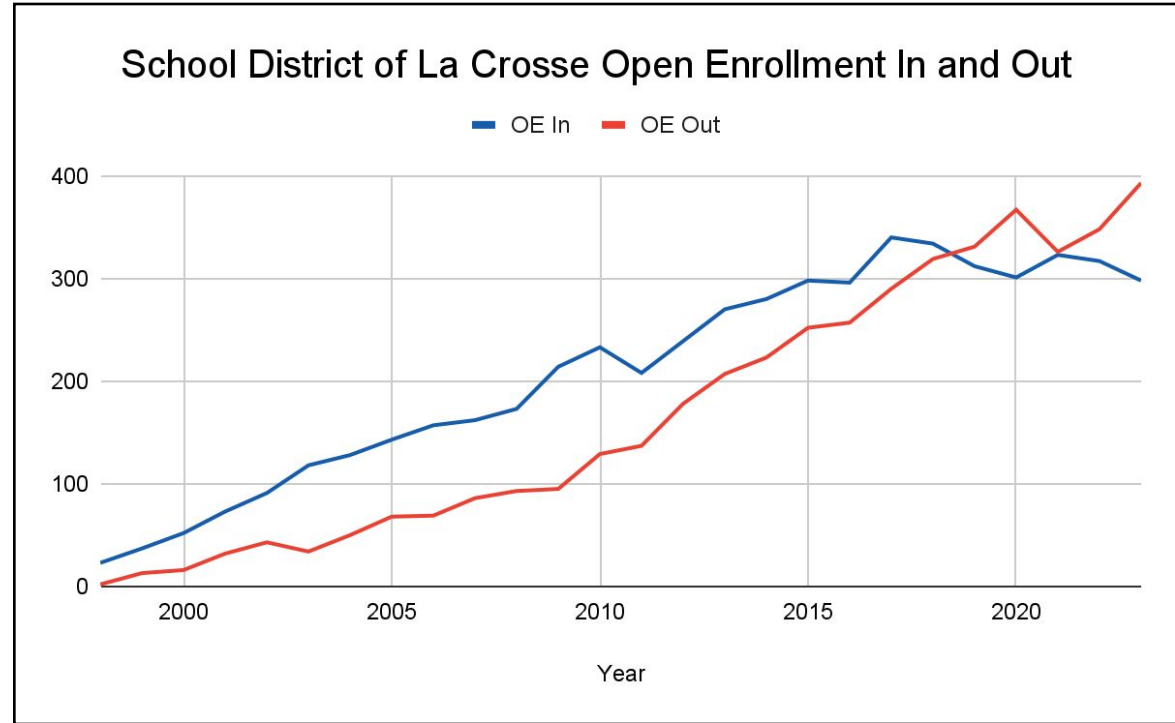


Open Enrollment In

Open enrollment into the School District of La Crosse plateaued in 2017.

A net -145 loss of students through open enrollment since 2017.

Since 2017, net open enrollment accounts for 17% of declining enrollment.



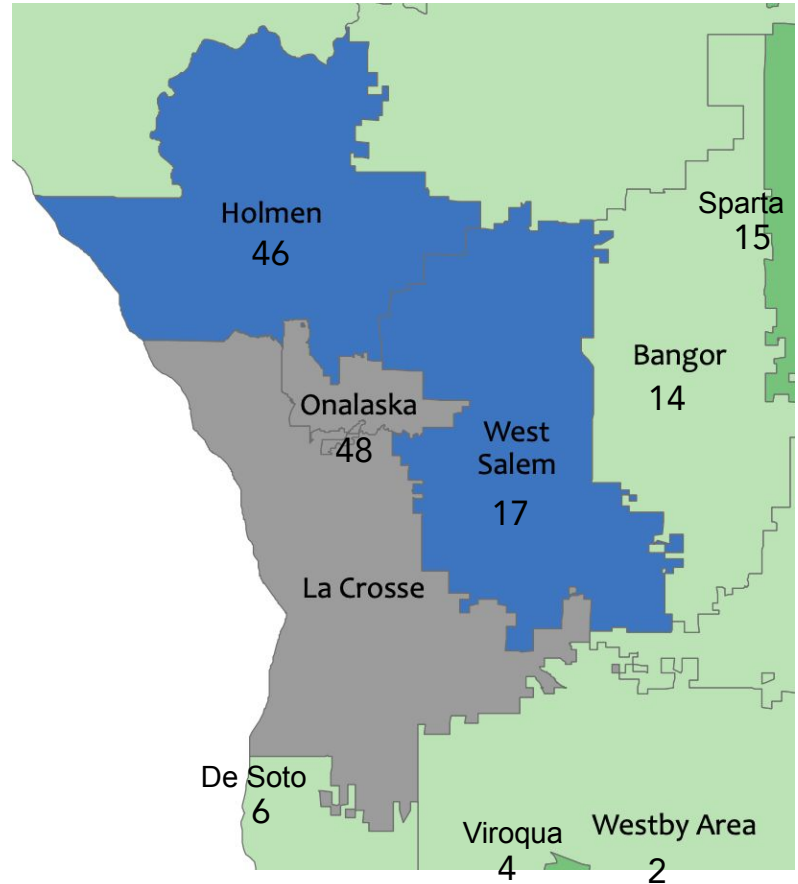
Physical Moves

Enrollments

- 267 non-4k/K new enrollments, 95% physically moved into the district

Withdrawals

- 639 non-graduating seniors
- 497 physically moved out of the district to attend elsewhere
- 34% transferred out of state
- 33% of students moved to a surrounding school district

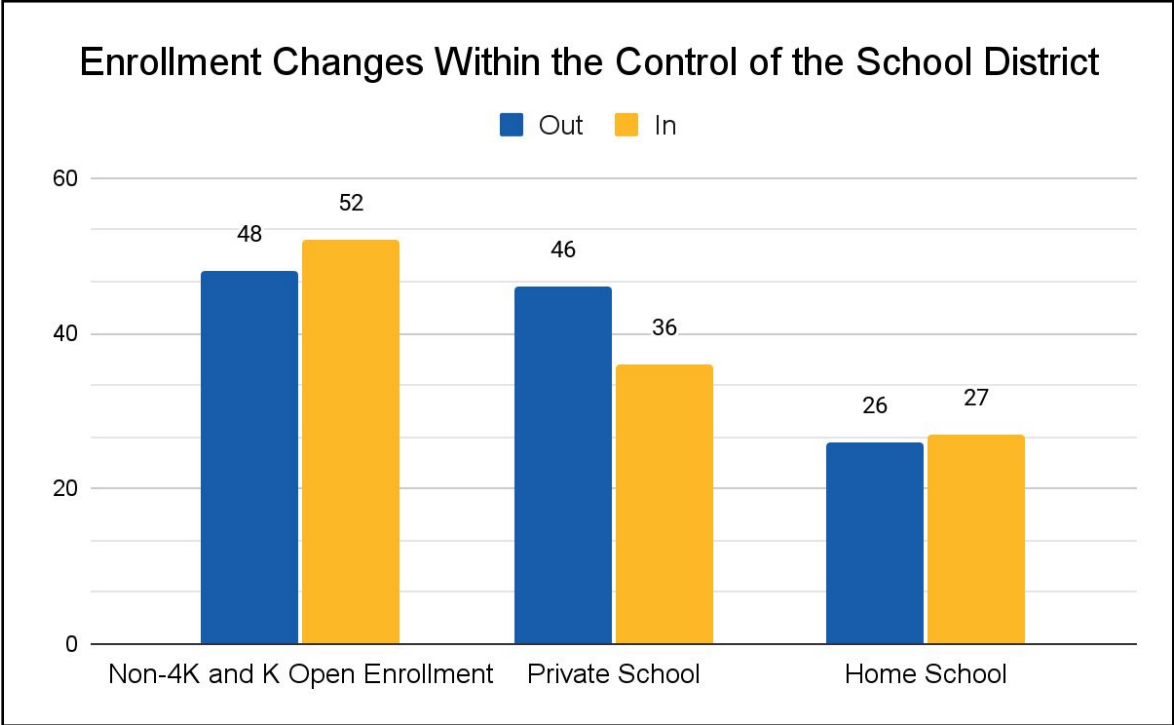


Enrollments Within District Control

Causes

- Non-4K and K open enrollment
- Private School
- Home School

Resulted in a net -5 student enrollment difference



2023 Change in Enrollment - Birth Rates

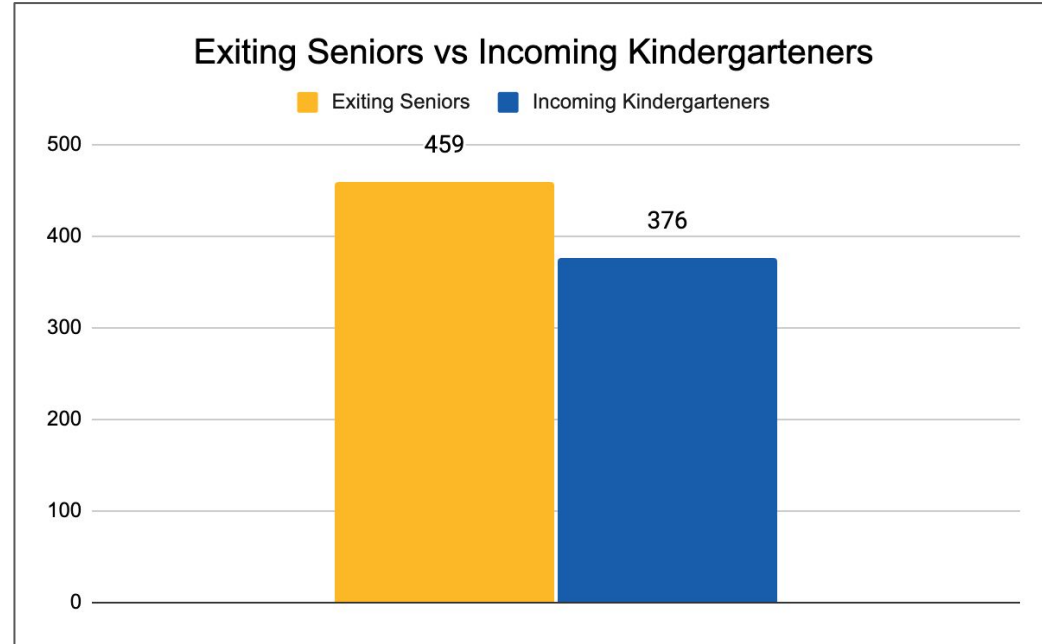
Exiting senior class of 2023 = 459 students

Incoming kindergarten class = 376 students

A difference of -83 students.

21 fewer students enrolled in early childhood and 4K.

These 104 students represent 60% of total declining enrollment from 2022 to 2023.



2023 Change in Enrollment - Open Enrollment

A net -64 students enrolling in the district (-31 in 2022 to -95 in 2023). This declining net change is attributed to the following:

- -14 graduating seniors (-20 Out, 34 In)
- -31 new open enrollments (-120 Out, 89 In)
- -25 open enrollments in did not return to the district from 2022 to 2023 (14 were in 4K/K and didn't return for K/1st, 3 moved out of state)

2023 Change in Enrollment - Physical Moves

Students physically moved out of the school district at a higher rate than moved in, on the order of -110 students, contributing to declining enrollment.

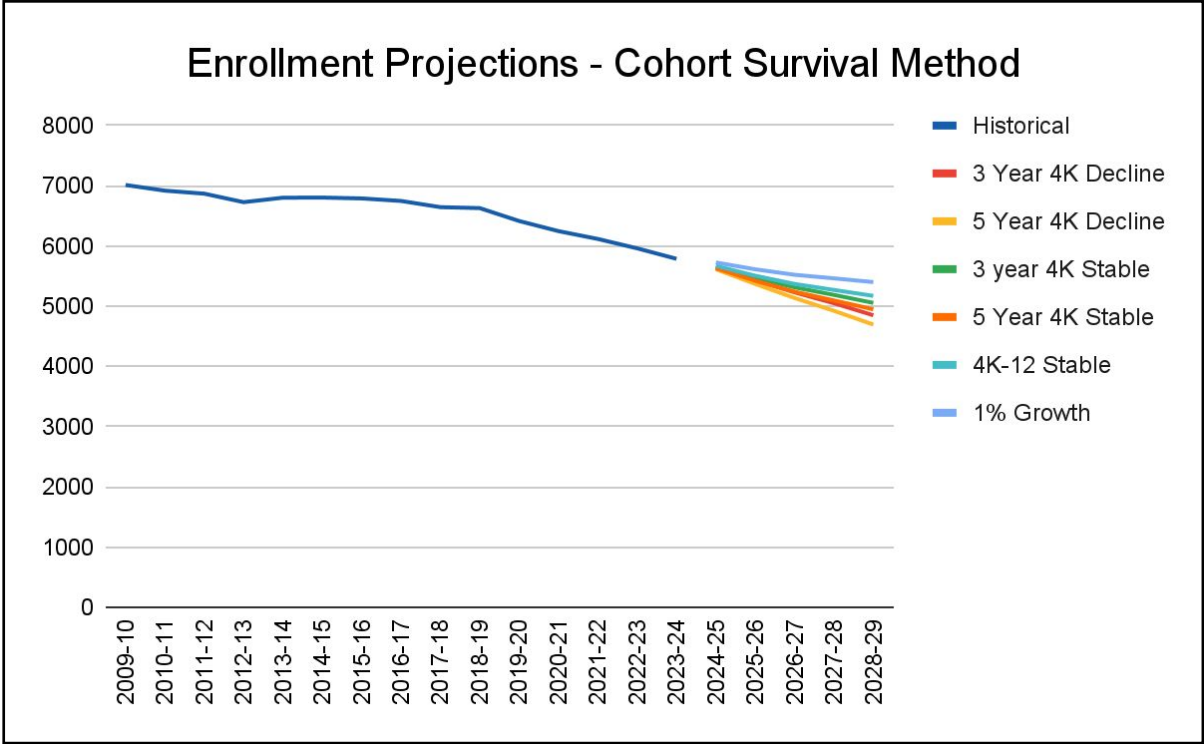


Enrollment Projections

Cohort survival method used by UW Applied Population Lab

Even with 1% growth, something not seen in 30 years, would still result in a -386 students.

The median outcome would result in -746 students and assumes stable 4K and K enrollments.



Next Steps

Since 1990: 30% reduction in birth rate, 29% decline in enrollment.

Other estimates of causes of declining enrollment over the last 10 Years:

- Private school transfers due to vouchers - 9%
- Open enrollment changes - 17%
- Declining birth rates - minimum 45%
- Physical moves out of the district - net loss

Actions:

- Maintain positive reputation as a world class educational institution
- Attract and retain 4K and K students

