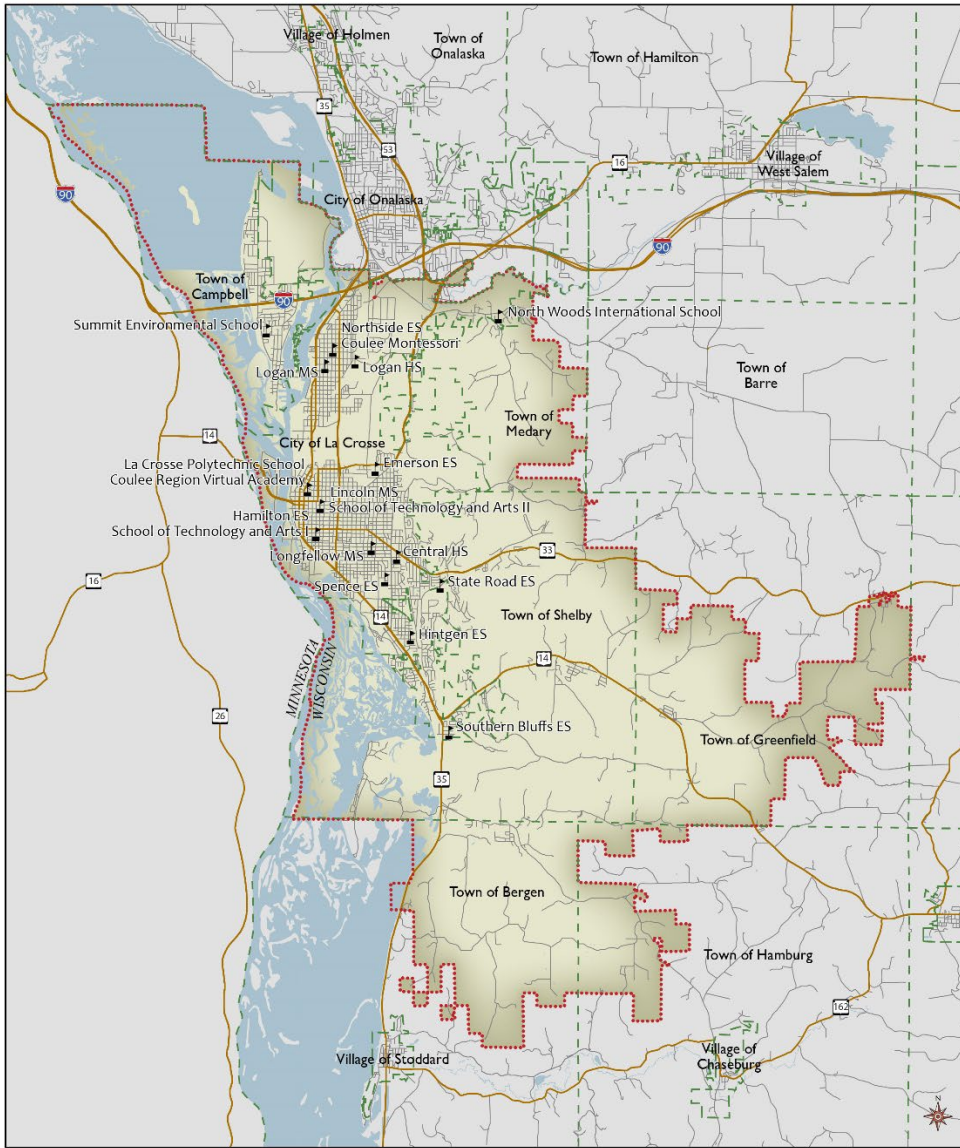


# Planning for the Schools of Tomorrow



School District of La Crosse

- Schools
- Municipalities
- School District
- Water

0 1 2 Miles

Prepared by the Applied Population Laboratory  
 University of Wisconsin-Madison  
 Department of Community & Environmental Sociology

## School Enrollment Projections Series School District of La Crosse

February 2024

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## Executive Summary

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This report provides an enrollment projections analysis for the School District of La Crosse by the Applied Population Laboratory, University of Wisconsin-Madison. The district-wide enrollment (seat count) for the current 2023-2024 school year is 5,753 students. The report takes into consideration past enrollment, current and projected births, and overall trends in population and housing to determine future student change.

- In the last ten years, the district has experienced the smallest decrease in enrollment in grades 9-12 (-6%) followed by grades 6-8 enrollment (-15%). Grades K-5 (-19%) decreased the most of the three grade groupings. Most of this decline has occurred in the latter half of the decade.
- Overall, the long-term and recent trends in births and kindergarten classes have been decreasing with kindergarten enrollment decreasing more quickly than births.
- Households in single-family homes, on average, contain more school-aged children than multi-family housing units. Single-family home construction has averaged 49 new homes annually during the last five years.
- All four models project 4K-12 enrollment decreasing in the foreseeable future. The Kindergarten Trend model projects the greatest decrease in enrollment, while the Baseline model projects the least amount of decrease over the next five years. The Five-Year and Three-Year trend projections forecast similar enrollment.
- On average, elementary school enrollment is likely to see enrollment decreasing by 11% because of declining births and decreases in kindergarten enrollment. Middle school and high school enrollment will likely decrease over the next five years by 12% and 16%, respectively.
- District-level projections should be viewed as having high reliability over the next three to five years, but increasingly enrollment will likely deviate from the projections over time. The district should continue to monitor enrollment change and compare it with these projections, to assess the district's trajectory of future growth and the best-fitting projections model.



## Introduction

Enrollment projections for the School District of La Crosse are presented districtwide, individually for each grade and for grade groupings. The projection process uses a combination of historical enrollment data, birth trends and projections, and housing and population trends to create reasonable assumptions about future scenarios and the likely impact on enrollment in the school district.

## Past Projections Compared to Current Enrollment

The APL completed an enrollment projections analysis for the School District of La Crosse during the 2020/21 school year, allowing us to compare past projections to the last three years of enrollment. Table A compares the actual enrollment to the projections that were completed in November 2020. Overall, the Three-Year Trend model was the most accurate of the four projection models. Each year going forward the projections increasingly over-projected enrollment suggesting that the rate of change of the district’s enrollment declined faster than the projections indicated.

**TABLE A**  
**Comparison of Actual Enrollment to Previous Enrollment Projections**  
**School District of La Crosse**

Actual and Projected Enrollments				Percent Error			
4K-12 Enrollment				4K-12 Enrollment			
Projection Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Projection Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Actual	5,753	5,918	6,092				
Baseline	6,135	6,202	6,259	Baseline	6.65%	4.79%	2.74%
Five-Year Trend	6,063	6,153	6,229	Five-Year Trend	5.39%	3.97%	2.25%
Three-Year Trend	6,009	6,112	6,209	Three-Year Trend	4.45%	3.28%	1.93%
Kindergarten Trend	6,036	6,137	6,218	Kindergarten Trend	4.91%	3.71%	2.07%

K-5 Enrollment				K-5 Enrollment			
Projection Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Projection Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Actual	2,411	2,487	2,547				
Baseline	2,578	2,617	2,649	Baseline	6.9%	5.2%	4.0%
Five-Year Trend	2,538	2,588	2,635	Five-Year Trend	5.3%	4.0%	3.4%
Three-Year Trend	2,520	2,574	2,626	Three-Year Trend	4.5%	3.5%	3.1%
Kindergarten Trend	2,511	2,572	2,624	Kindergarten Trend	4.1%	3.4%	3.0%

6-8 Enrollment				6-8 Enrollment			
Projection Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Projection Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Actual	1,205	1,257	1,300				
Baseline	1,286	1,318	1,367	Baseline	6.7%	4.9%	5.1%
Five-Year Trend	1,268	1,308	1,359	Five-Year Trend	5.3%	4.0%	4.6%
Three-Year Trend	1,250	1,296	1,354	Three-Year Trend	3.7%	3.1%	4.2%
Kindergarten Trend	1,268	1,308	1,359	Kindergarten Trend	5.3%	4.0%	4.6%

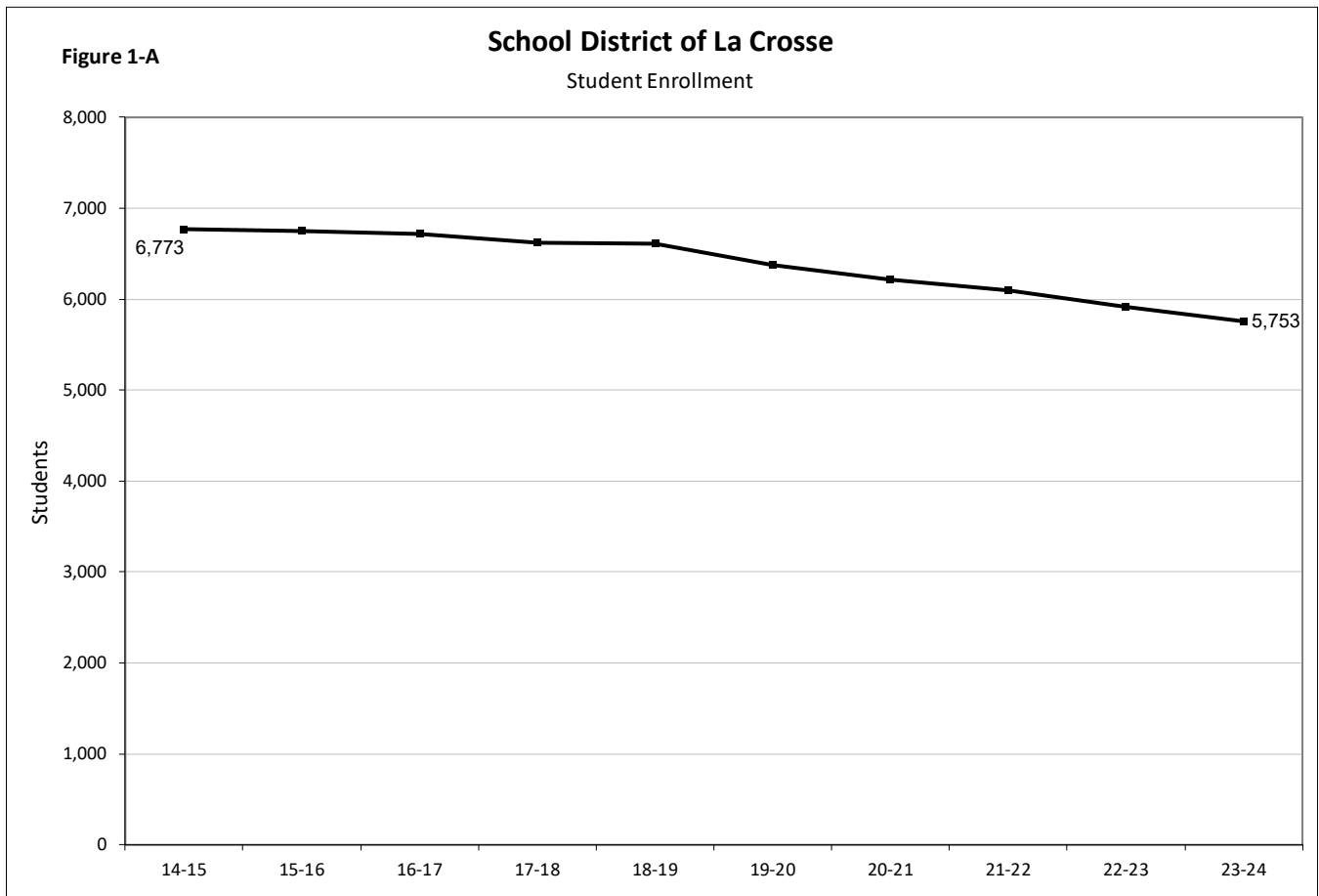
9-12 Enrollment				9-12 Enrollment			
Projection Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Projection Year	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Actual	1,813	1,838	1,872				
Baseline	1,887	1,882	1,855	Baseline	4.1%	2.4%	-0.9%
Five-Year Trend	1,874	1,873	1,848	Five-Year Trend	3.3%	1.9%	-1.3%
Three-Year Trend	1,856	1,858	1,841	Three-Year Trend	2.4%	1.1%	-1.6%
Kindergarten Trend	1,874	1,873	1,848	Kindergarten Trend	3.3%	1.9%	-1.3%



## District Enrollment History

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Figure 1-A and Tables 1 and 2 display the last ten years of enrollment in the School District of La Crosse. District students have decreased overall in the past ten years, from 6,773 students in the 2014/15 school year to 5,753 students in 2023/24. This is a decrease of 1,020 students, or a 15% decline in the number of students.



**TABLE 1**  
**Student Enrollment**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	SCHOOL YEAR									
	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
4K	443	431	430	417	428	408	369	373	336	324
K	510	529	486	480	449	454	421	428	410	376
1	517	507	524	470	483	433	440	421	429	418
2	528	514	506	508	458	456	419	432	414	415
3	473	524	497	481	509	437	432	412	428	398
4	475	467	510	486	466	494	433	421	408	405
5	467	477	456	505	494	454	472	433	398	399
6	500	452	466	444	482	460	439	435	413	374
7	431	495	448	463	446	486	455	427	430	409
8	495	424	493	440	460	435	478	438	414	422
9	455	489	429	499	445	450	444	485	452	424
10	503	449	493	429	511	445	450	451	479	460
11	469	504	474	514	440	508	447	464	448	488
12	507	489	509	481	533	459	512	472	459	441
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,773</b>	<b>6,751</b>	<b>6,721</b>	<b>6,617</b>	<b>6,604</b>	<b>6,379</b>	<b>6,211</b>	<b>6,092</b>	<b>5,918</b>	<b>5,753</b>
K-12	6,330	6,320	6,291	6,200	6,176	5,971	5,842	5,719	5,582	5,429
K-5	2,970	3,018	2,979	2,930	2,859	2,728	2,617	2,547	2,487	2,411
6-8	1,426	1,371	1,407	1,347	1,388	1,381	1,372	1,300	1,257	1,205
9-12	1,934	1,931	1,905	1,923	1,929	1,862	1,853	1,872	1,838	1,813

**TABLE 2**  
**Student Enrollment Changes**  
**School District of La Crosse**

GRADE	ABSOLUTE CHANGE			PERCENT CHANGE			AVERAGE ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGE		
	'14 to '23	'14 to '19	'18 to '23	'14 to '23	'14 to '19	'18 to '23	'14 to '23	'14 to '19	'18 to '23
4K	-119	-35	-104	-26.9	-7.9	-24.3	-3.0	-1.6	-4.9
K	-134	-56	-73	-26.3	-11.0	-16.3	-2.9	-2.2	-3.3
1	-99	-84	-65	-19.1	-16.2	-13.5	-2.1	-3.2	-2.7
2	-113	-72	-43	-21.4	-13.6	-9.4	-2.4	-2.7	-1.9
3	-75	-36	-111	-15.9	-7.6	-21.8	-1.8	-1.5	-4.4
4	-70	19	-61	-14.7	4.0	-13.1	-1.6	0.8	-2.6
5	-68	-13	-95	-14.6	-2.8	-19.2	-1.6	-0.6	-3.8
6	-126	-40	-108	-25.2	-8.0	-22.4	-2.8	-1.6	-4.5
7	-22	55	-37	-5.1	12.8	-8.3	-0.6	2.6	-1.7
8	-73	-60	-38	-14.7	-12.1	-8.3	-1.6	-2.4	-1.7
9	-31	-5	-21	-6.8	-1.1	-4.7	-0.8	-0.2	-0.9
10	-43	-58	-51	-8.5	-11.5	-10.0	-0.9	-2.3	-2.0
11	19	39	48	4.1	8.3	10.9	0.5	1.7	2.2
12	-66	-48	-92	-13.0	-9.5	-17.3	-1.4	-1.9	-3.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-1,020</b>	<b>-394</b>	<b>-851</b>	<b>-15.1</b>	<b>-5.8</b>	<b>-12.9</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>-1.2</b>	<b>-2.6</b>
K-12	-901	-359	-747	-14.2	-5.7	-12.1	-1.6	-1.1	-2.4
K-5	-559	-242	-448	-18.8	-8.1	-15.7	-2.1	-1.6	-3.1
6-8	-221	-45	-183	-15.5	-3.2	-13.2	-1.7	-0.6	-2.6
9-12	-121	-72	-116	-6.3	-3.7	-6.0	-0.7	-0.7	-1.2





Figure 1-B shows enrollment history broken down by grade groupings (4K, K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) over the last ten years. 4K declined by 3% annually, and elementary school enrollment declined by 2.1% annually. Middle school enrollment decreased by 1.7% annually, while high school enrollment has declined the least, decreasing by 0.7% annually.

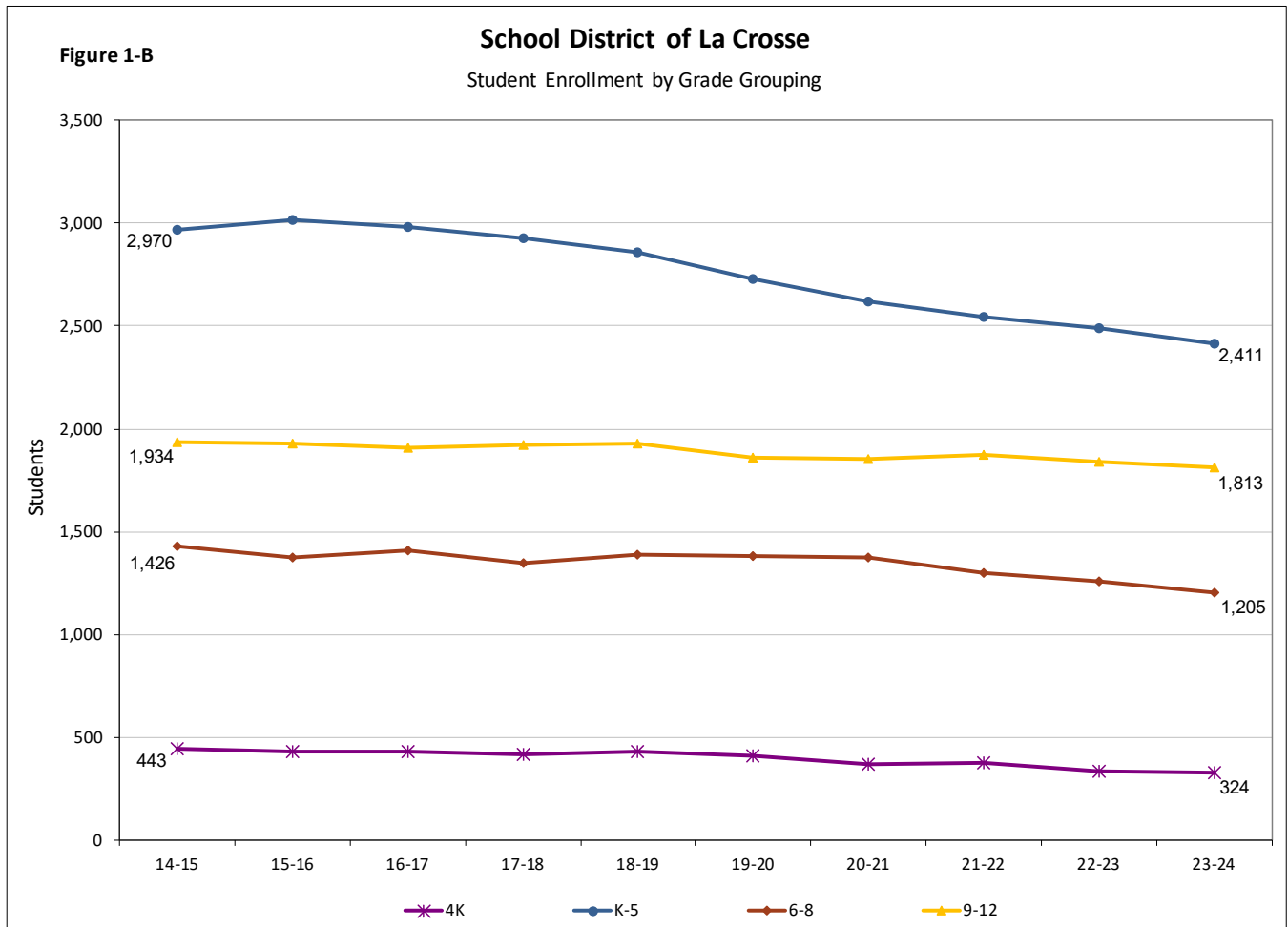
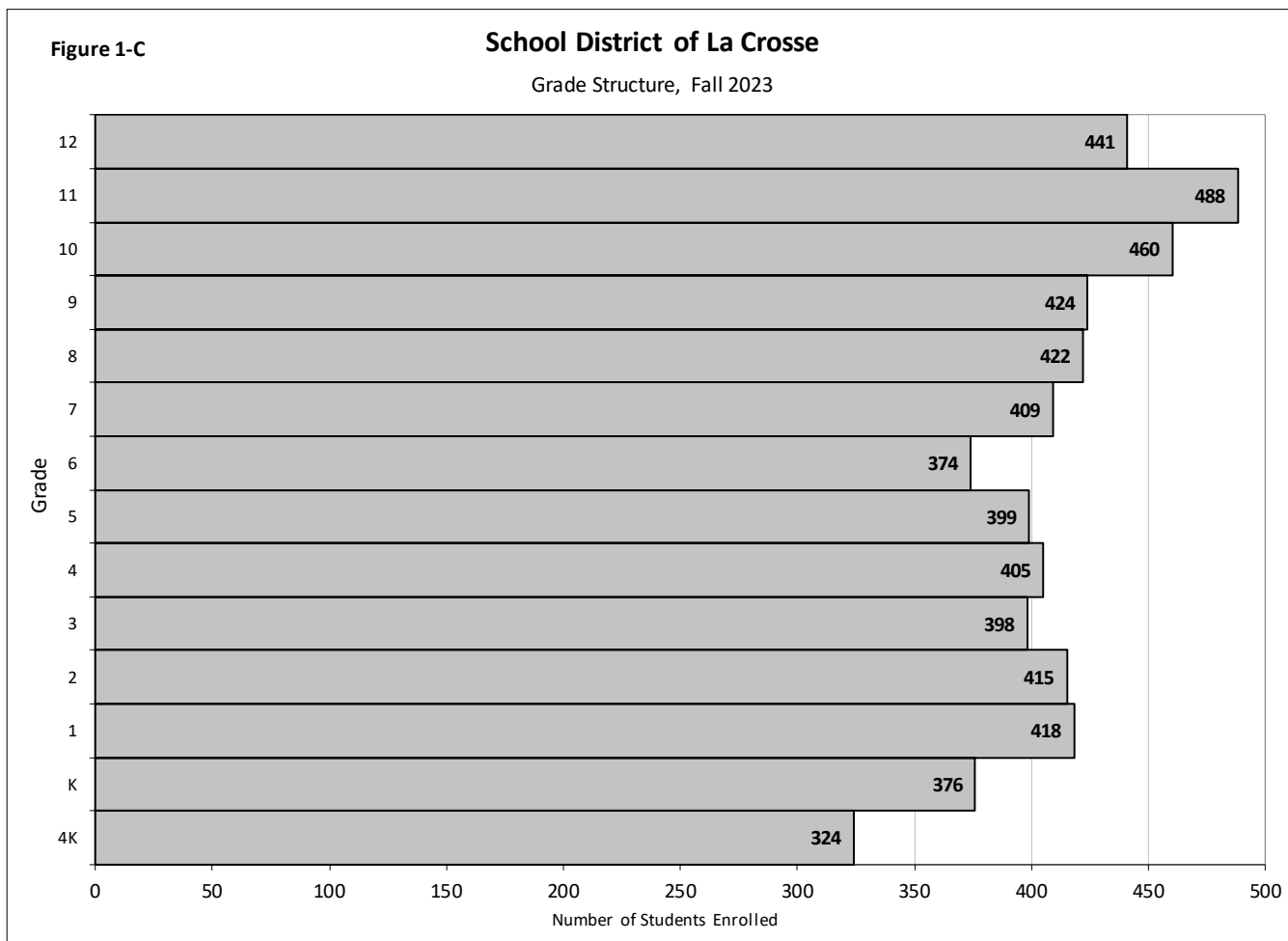
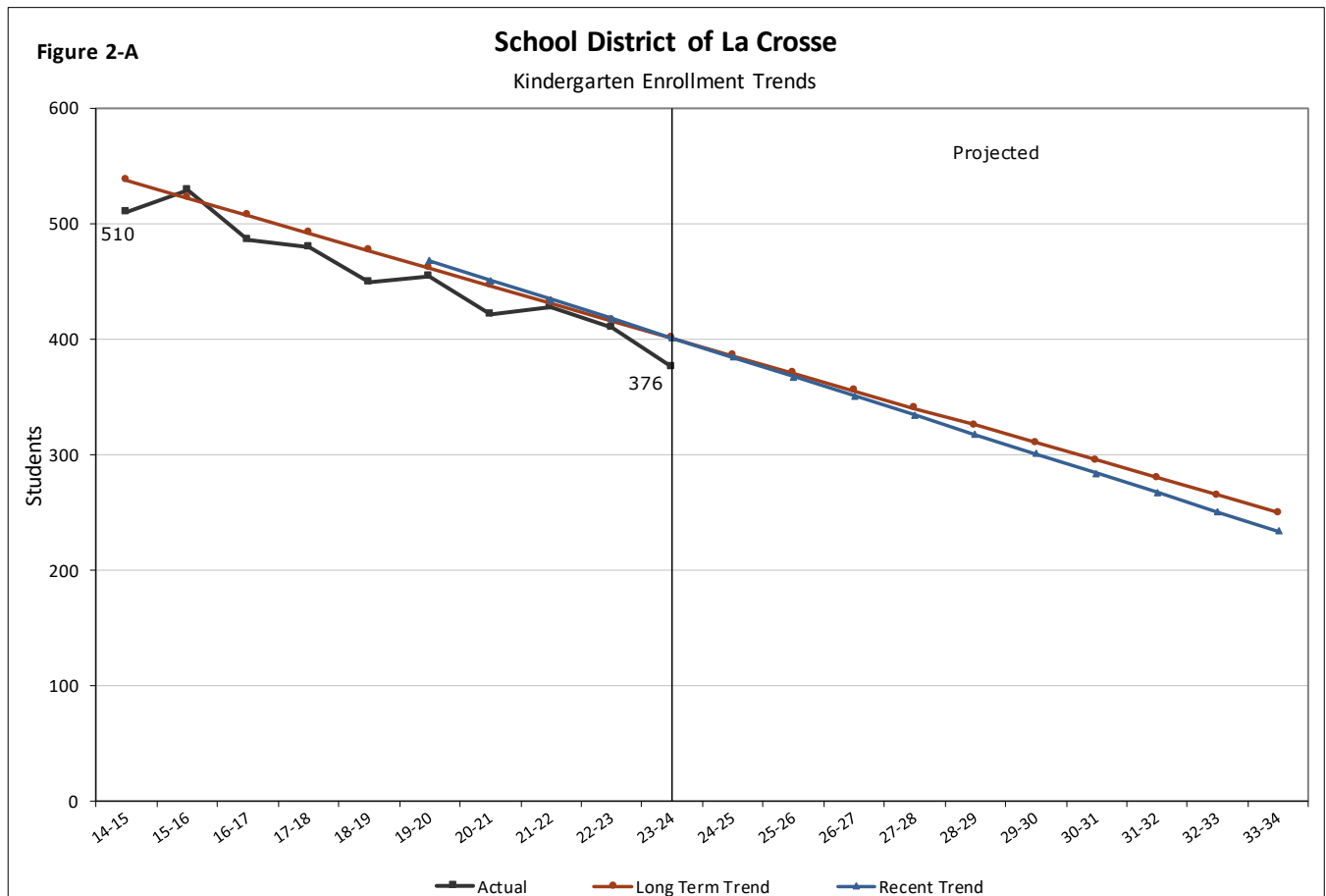


Figure 1-C shows the grade structure in Fall 2023 with the number of 4K at the bottom and the number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders at the top. The average grade size for grades 9-12 is 453 with 11<sup>th</sup> grade being the largest among high school grades. Grades 6-8 average grade size is smaller at 402 with 8<sup>th</sup> grade being the largest among middle school grades. Grades K-5 average grade size is also 402 with 1<sup>st</sup> grade being the largest among elementary school grades.

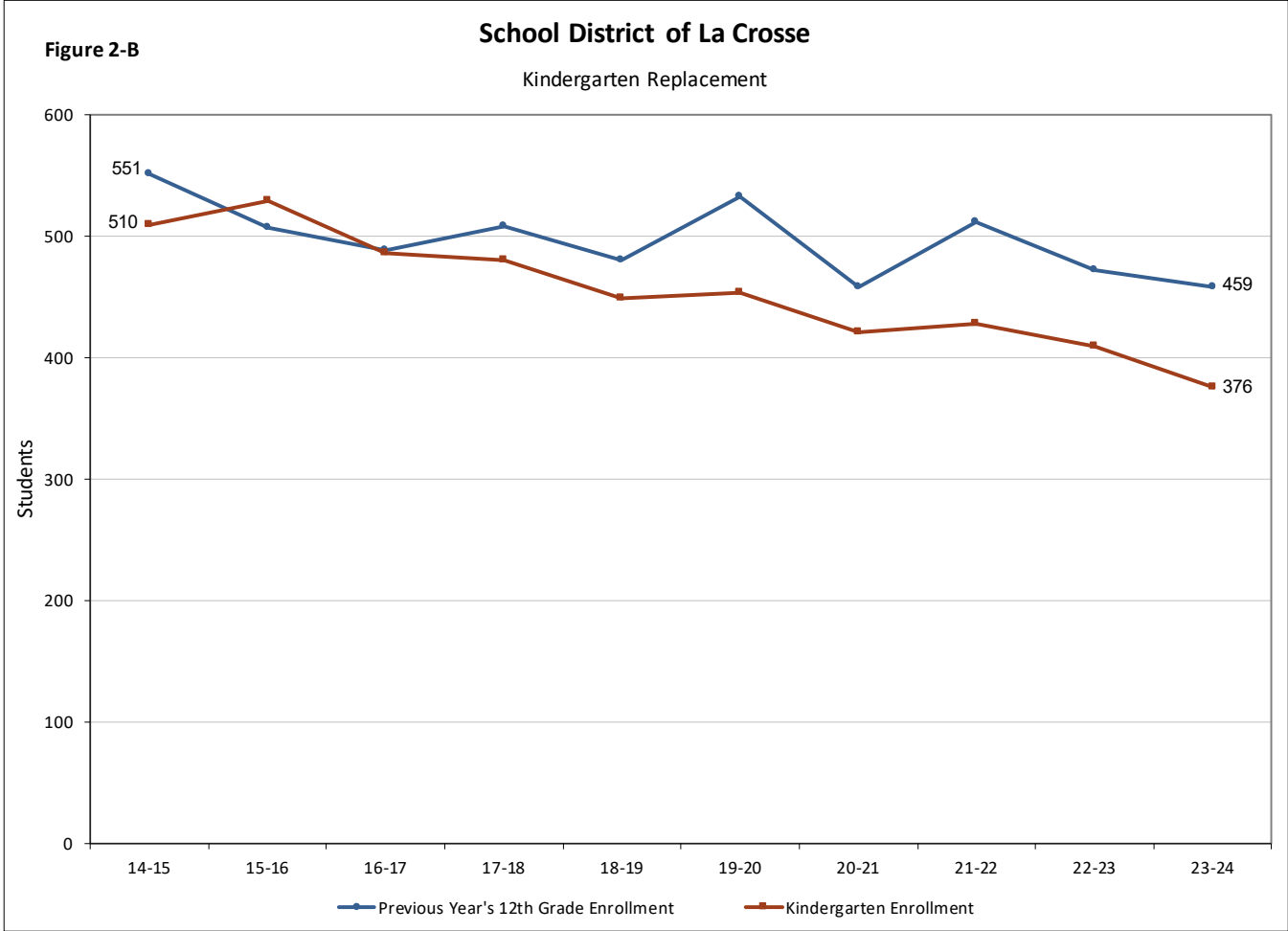


## Kindergarten Enrollment Trends

Examining trends in kindergarten enrollment is particularly informative for gaining perspective on future district enrollment, as today’s kindergarteners will gradually make up tomorrow’s students at the higher grade levels as they age and move through the school system. When kindergarten enrollment is decreasing, elementary and middle school enrollment might be expected to decrease in the future, while high school enrollment may decrease farther in the future. Figure 2-A shows kindergarten enrollment history in black, and trend lines depicting kindergarten enrollment in red and blue. The “Long Term Trend” line (shown in red) averages kindergarten enrollment changes between 2014/15 and 2023/24. The “Recent Trend” (shown in blue) line emphasizes kindergarten enrollment changes over the last five years. In the School District of La Crosse, the long-term and recent kindergarten trends indicate decline. The long-term kindergarten trend will be used for the Kindergarten Trend model found later in the report.

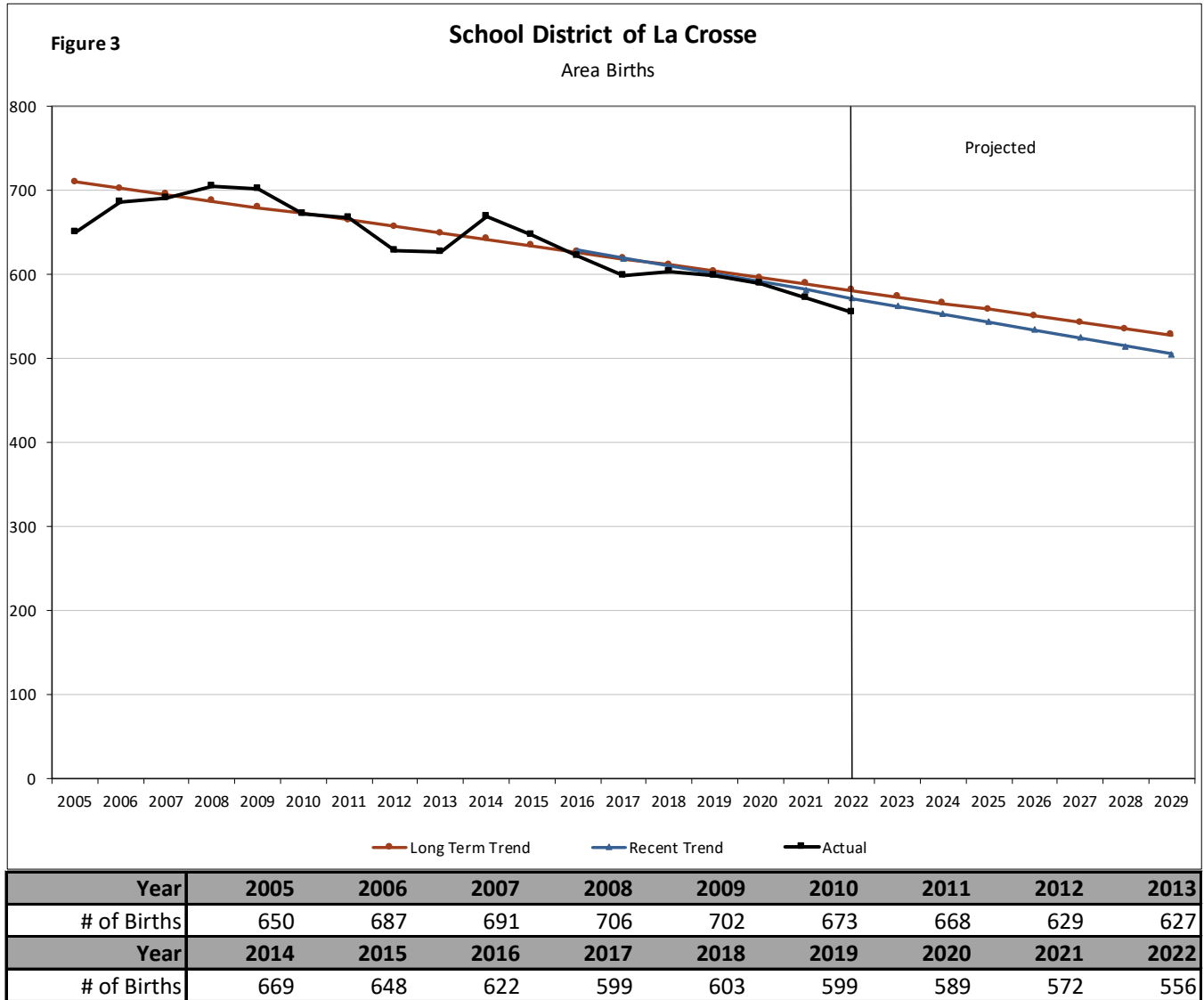


In addition to examining kindergarten enrollment on its own, comparing incoming kindergarteners to the previous year's outgoing 12<sup>th</sup> graders offers a snapshot of how the age structure of district enrollment is shifting either from older to younger, or younger to older. Districts tend to experience overall growth when kindergarten enrollment outpaces outgoing students, and they tend to experience decline when kindergarteners do not fully replace the number of graduates. As illustrated in Figure 2-B, kindergarteners did not replace outgoing 12<sup>th</sup> graders eight of the last ten years. Some students may attend private school through eighth grade and move to public school for their high school years. In 2022/23, there were 81 kindergartners attending private schools.



## Birth Trends and Projections

We use historical and projected birth data to forecast the number of 4K and 5K students who will enroll in the School District of La Crosse in future years. Birth data, as collected and summarized by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, is available at the municipal level. Figure 3 shows the number of births in the city and surrounding towns, by year, from 2005 through 2022.



Source: WI Department of Health Services

We extrapolate long- and short-range birth trends into the future to correspond with our baseline and recent trend models. Long-term and recent birth trends indicate decreasing births. The red line represents the birth trends over the past eighteen years and is utilized in the Baseline model. The blue line denotes birth patterns for the last seven years and is applied in the Five-Year and Three-Year trend models.



## Population Estimates

This section examines population trends of the recent past for the municipalities within the district. Changes in the total population of the district area, particularly when examined by age, provide clues into how the school-age population may be changing. Table 3 provides the U.S. Census population count for 2020 and Wisconsin Department of Administration’s estimates for 2014, 2017, and 2023. From 2020 to 2023, the district area population has declined, while La Crosse County has increased.

**Table 3**  
**Total Population by Municipality: 2014-2023**  
**School District of La Crosse**

Municipality	est. 2014	est. 2017	Census 2020	est. 2023
C. La Crosse	52,153	52,562	52,680	51,978
T. Bergen	1,363	1,361	1,365	1,352
T. Campbell	4,344	4,329	4,284	4,232
T. Greenfield	2,108	2,153	2,187	2,179
T. Medary	1,523	1,568	1,604	1,608
T. Shelby	4,763	4,807	4,804	4,779
<b>District Area</b>	<b>66,254</b>	<b>66,780</b>	<b>66,924</b>	<b>66,128</b>
La Crosse County	116,837	118,834	120,784	122,365
State of Wisconsin	5,751,534	5,815,120	5,893,718	5,951,400

Municipality	2014 to 2017	2017 to 2020	2020 to 2023
C. La Crosse	0.8%	0.2%	-1.3%
T. Bergen	-0.1%	0.3%	-1.0%
T. Campbell	-0.3%	-1.0%	-1.2%
T. Greenfield	2.1%	1.6%	-0.4%
T. Medary	3.0%	2.3%	0.2%
T. Shelby	0.9%	-0.1%	-0.5%
<b>District Area</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>
La Crosse County	1.7%	1.6%	1.3%
State of Wisconsin	1.1%	1.4%	1.0%

Source: U. S. Census Bureau & Demographic Services Center, WIDOA



Figure 4 compares the population by age for the School District of La Crosse for the 2010 Census and 2022 estimates from the American Community Survey. The number of school age children has decreased in all age categories.

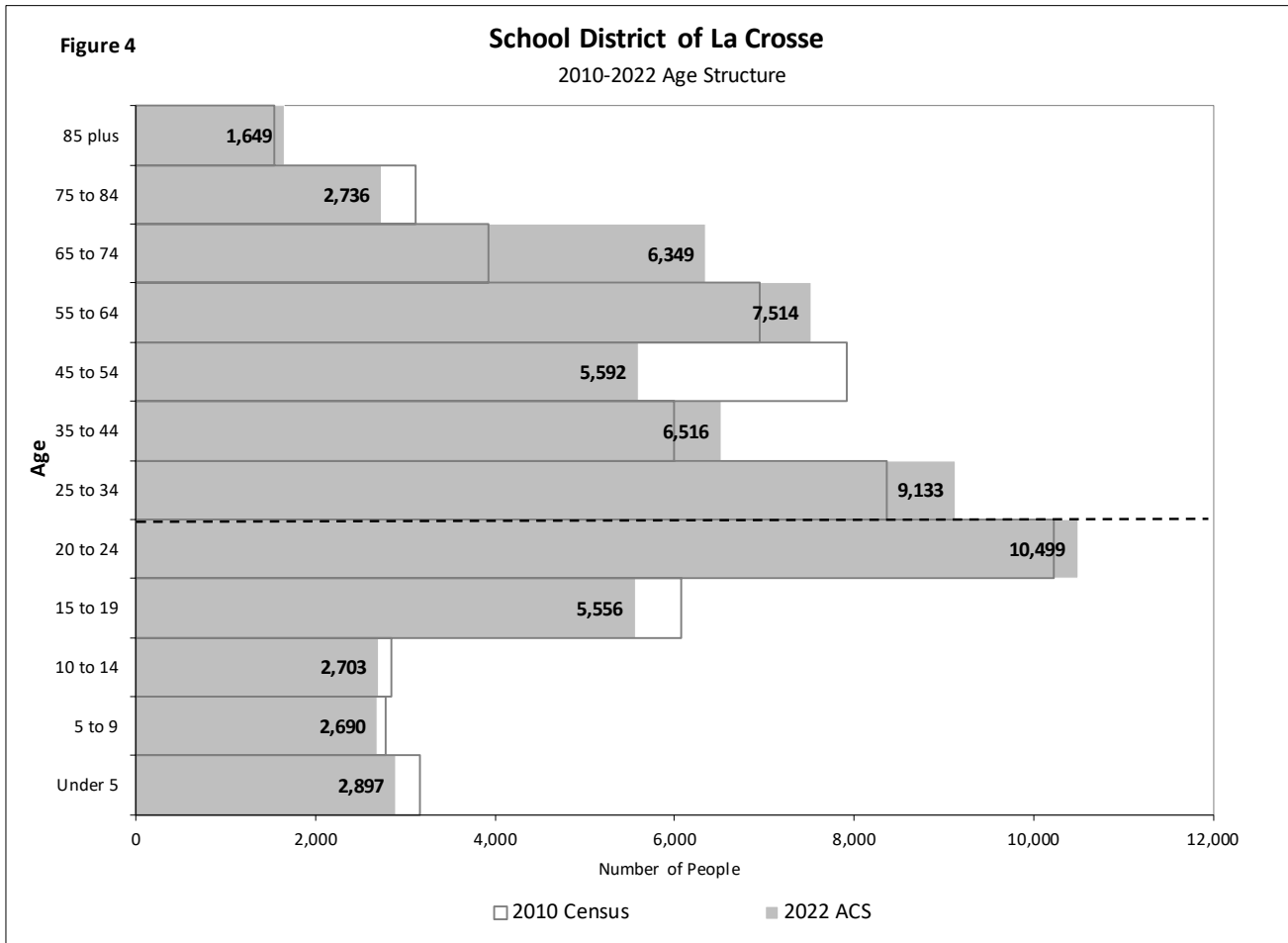


Table 4 also provides the population as enumerated in 2010 by the decennial Census and estimated over the 2018-22 period by the American Community Survey, showing the change in age structure. In specific age groups:

- The number of young people, ages 0-19, decreased by an estimated 1,022 with half the decline coming from ages 15-19.
- Young adults, ages 20-34, in the district area has increased by 1,048 residents.
- Adults, ages 35-64, have decreased by 1,242 residents.
- Older adults, age 65 and over, have increased by 2,164 residents.

**TABLE 4**  
**Population by Age, 2010-2022**  
**School District of La Crosse**

Age	2010	2022	Difference
Under 5	3,165	2,897	-268
5 to 9	2,784	2,690	-94
10 to 14	2,846	2,703	-143
15 to 19	6,073	5,556	-517
20 to 24	10,222	10,499	277
25 to 34	8,362	9,133	771
35 to 44	6,000	6,516	516
45 to 54	7,920	5,592	-2,328
55 to 64	6,944	7,514	570
65 to 74	3,925	6,349	2,424
75 to 84	3,106	2,736	-370
85 plus	1,539	1,649	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,886</b>	<b>63,834</b>	<b>948</b>

Source: U. S. Census Bureau





## Residential Development

Table 5-A shows the number of new housing starts in the School District of La Crosse over the past ten years. The table shows new housing for the entire municipality although only a portion of some municipalities are in the school district. Housing development in the area has consisted of single-family homes with multi-family construction occurring in the City of La Crosse throughout this time period.

**TABLE 5-A**  
**School District Area Housing Starts**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>District Area</b>										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>123</b>
Single Family	35	49	31	53	55	46	59	46	53	39
Two Family	2	2	12	24	8	4	6	0	2	0
Multi-family	206	35	281	35	109	106	5	32	76	84
<b>C. La Crosse</b>										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>112</b>
Single Family	17	24	14	30	30	28	39	30	24	28
Two Family	2	2	12	16	6	2	2	0	0	0
Multi-family	206	35	281	35	109	106	5	32	76	84
<b>T. Bergen</b>										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Single Family	1	2	5	2	2	2	3	1	1	1
Two Family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>T. Campbell</b>										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
Single Family	3	2	4	6	5	1	1	3	3	2
Two Family	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
<b>T. Greenfield</b>										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>
Single Family	5	5	5	4	8	7	7	6	13	2
Two Family	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
<b>T. Medary</b>										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
Single Family	7	8	1	6	9	3	4	3	3	5
Two Family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
<b>T. Shelby</b>										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>
Single Family	2	8	2	5	1	5	5	3	9	1
Two Family	0	0	0	8	2	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Demographic Services Center, WIDOA



Area housing starts have fluctuated from a low of 31 single-family homes in 2015 to a high of 59 single-family homes in 2019. The majority of new single-family homes and multi-family construction have occurred in the City of La Crosse. Households in single-family homes, on average, contain more school-aged children than in two-family and multi-family complexes.

Examining trends in recent housing development can help to explain how in-migration into the School District of La Crosse area might be affecting school enrollment. If the number of housing starts in the district area is expected to be reasonably consistent for the next several years, then we assume that in-migration of school-age children will also remain relatively consistent. If the number of housing starts is expected to increase significantly above and beyond recent levels, in-migration may play an increasing role in school district enrollment.

Figure 5-A shows housing starts in the area by type of housing unit: single-family home, two-family, and multi-family housing units. Figures 5-B and 5-C show the number of residential building permits issued by municipality for communities that fall within the School District of La Crosse.

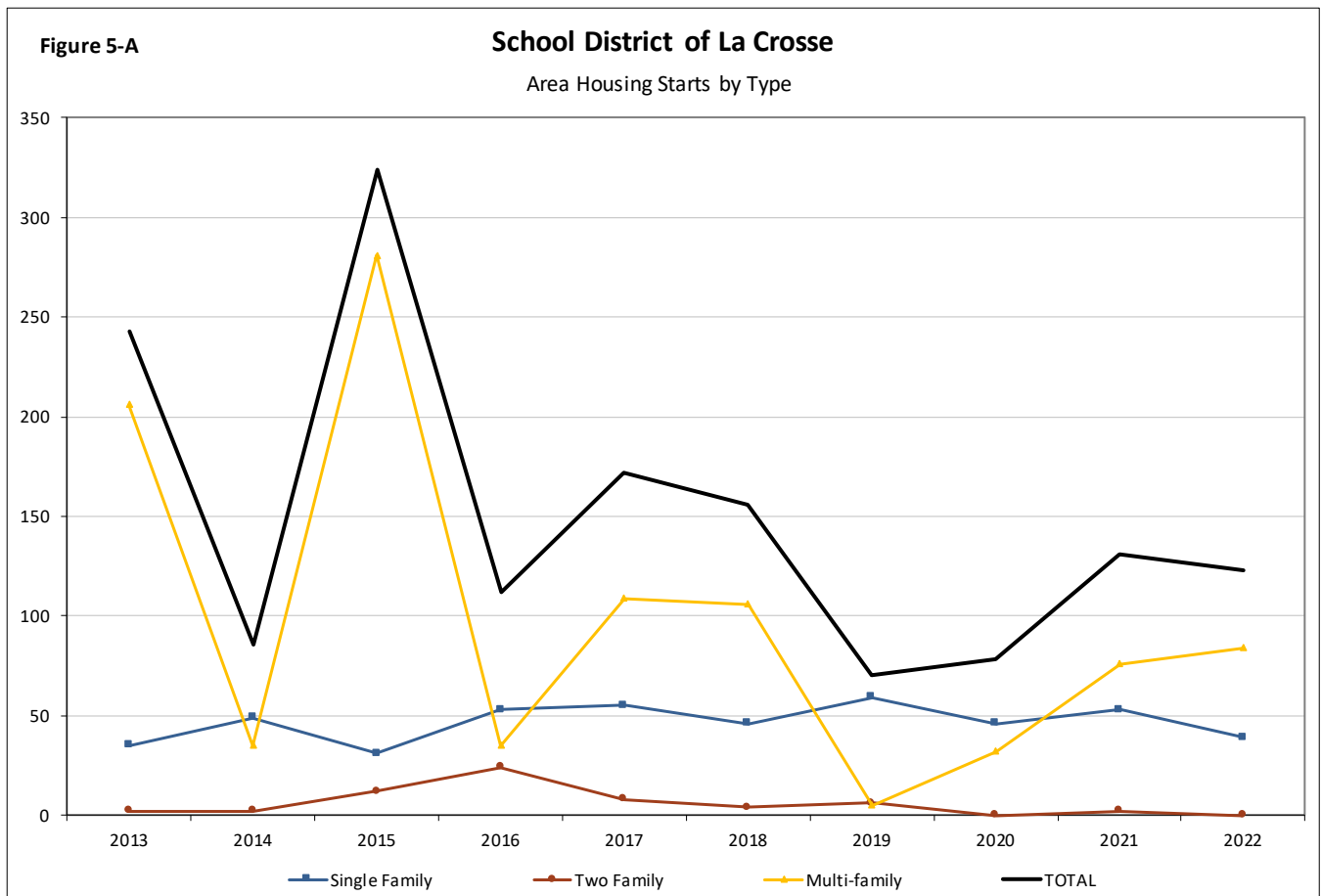


Figure 5-B

School District of La Crosse  
City of La Crosse Housing Starts

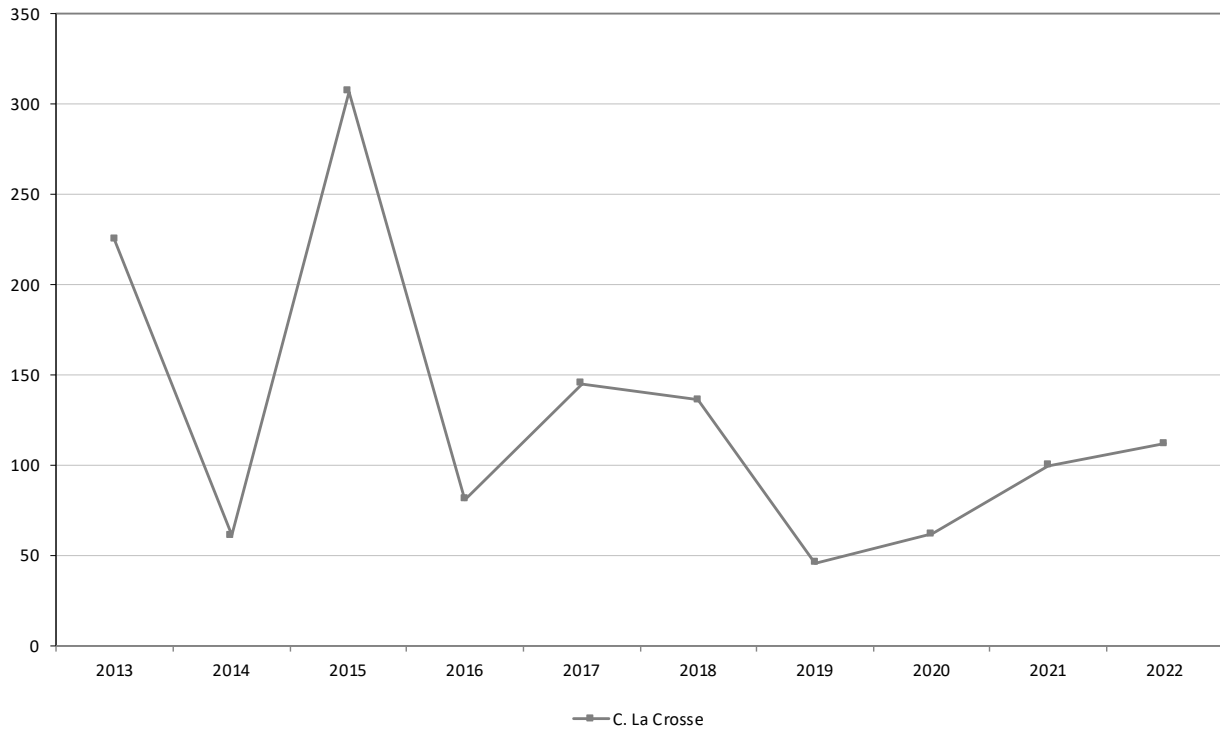
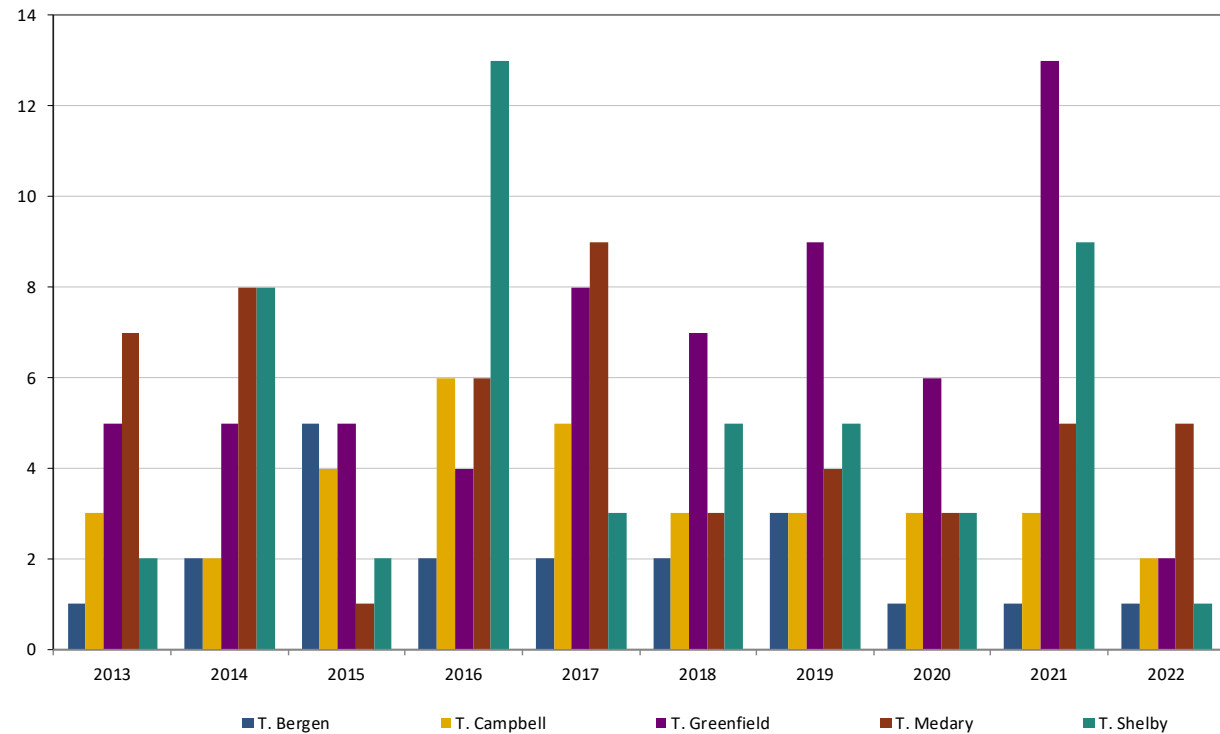


Figure 5-C

School District of La Crosse  
Area Housing Starts by Township



It is also important to consider that turnover in ownership of existing housing stock also contributes to changes in enrollment. Enrollment may increase or decrease depending upon the cycle of resident homeowners. For instance, a younger community will have a higher child-per-household ratio, whereas an older community will have a lower child-per-household ratio. Several factors make predicting housing turnover difficult. These include variables like attractiveness to young families (demand), as well as suitable and available rental and owner-occupied housing (supply). In addition, housing turnover depends on even more elusive variables determined by housing market conditions, the economy, and individual choices of homeowners.

Turnover in ownership in an older community may result in an increase in the child-per-household number. As younger families move into the area, the school district will tend to see new students enrolling into the district’s schools. A change in home ownership may happen over the course of several years at varying rates and may differ between neighborhoods. Absent new housing development or housing turnover, householders age in place and the number of school-aged children ultimately declines.

Table 5-B shows the in-migration for the School District of La Crosse estimated over the 2018-2022 period by American Community Survey. 81% of district residents live in the home they lived in one year ago. This percentage is higher for owner-occupied homes at 93%, while predictably a smaller percentage of renters at 65% lived at their residence one year ago.

**TABLE 5-B**  
**In-migration, one year ago (2022)**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	<b>% Living in the Same House</b>	<b>% Moved within Same County</b>	<b>% Moved in from Different County</b>	<b>% Moved in from Different State or Country</b>
Total	81.0	11.8	3.9	3.3
Owner-occupied	93.0	4.3	1.3	1.4
Renter-occupied	64.6	22.0	7.4	6.0
Median age (years)	33.3	22.7	20.2	27.3
Median income (dollars)	\$30,642	\$17,015	\$8,341	\$17,194

Source: ACS 2018-2022



## Projection Method

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To generate school enrollment projections, we rely on a commonly used demographic technique called the “cohort survival” method or the “grade progression ratio” method. This method advances current students through the school system over time and applies rates of transfer (or “survival”) as the students who are now in school age from year-to-year and grade-to-grade. It is through these rates of transfer that we make assumptions about how migration into and out of the district and transfers to and from different school districts will impact future enrollment.

### Grade Progression Ratios

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Grade progression ratios are used to measure district enrollment changes that have occurred within the school district. By examining these ratios, we can better understand recent changes in enrollment. We then use these ratios as the rates of transfer to inform student projections.

Table 6 and Figure 6, on the following page, show the grade progression ratios for the School District of La Crosse. The ratios measure the effects of in- and out-migration and the transfer of students between private and public schools. The ratios are calculated for several pairs of years and then averages of these based on different time frames are calculated for each grade.

To predict future enrollment under different assumptions, three sets of grade progression ratios are calculated:

- Baseline averages ten years of progression ratios with outlying ratios excluded (those outside of one standard deviation of the mean).
- Five-Year Trend averages the past five years of progression ratios.
- Three-Year Trend averages the past three years of progression ratios.

When the ratio is above 1.0 this indicates that enrollment tends to increase from year to year as each cohort of students advances. When the ratio is below 1.0 this indicates that enrollment tends to decrease from year to year.

The grade progression ratios can be interpreted in the following manner. The Baseline ratio for 8:9 is 1.016. This means that on average, the ninth-grade class is 1.6% larger than the eighth-grade class from the previous year. The B:K Three-Year Trend ratio of .641 indicates that, on average, 64% of births enter kindergarten five years later.



**TABLE 6**  
**Grade Progression Ratios**  
**School District of La Crosse**

YEAR CHANGES	B:K	K:1	1:2	2:3	3:4	4:5	5:6	6:7	7:8	8:9	9:10	10:11	11:12
14-15/15-16	0.752	0.994	0.994	0.992	0.987	1.004	0.968	0.990	0.984	0.988	0.987	1.002	1.043
15-16/16-17	0.712	0.991	0.998	0.967	0.973	0.976	0.977	0.991	0.996	1.012	1.008	1.056	1.010
16-17/17-18	0.717	0.967	0.969	0.951	0.978	0.990	0.974	0.994	0.982	1.012	1.000	1.043	1.015
17-18/18-19	0.699	1.006	0.974	1.002	0.969	1.016	0.954	1.005	0.994	1.011	1.024	1.026	1.037
18-19/19-20	0.723	0.964	0.944	0.954	0.971	0.974	0.931	1.008	0.975	0.978	1.000	0.994	1.043
19-20/20-21	0.643	0.969	0.968	0.947	0.991	0.955	0.967	0.989	0.984	1.021	1.000	1.004	1.008
20-21/21-22	0.653	1.000	0.982	0.983	0.975	1.000	0.922	0.973	0.963	1.015	1.016	1.031	1.056
21-22/22-23	0.650	1.002	0.983	0.991	0.990	0.945	0.954	0.989	0.970	1.032	0.988	0.993	0.989
22-23/23-24	0.620	1.020	0.967	0.961	0.946	0.978	0.940	0.990	0.981	1.024	1.018	1.019	0.984
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>0.685</b>	<b>0.999</b>	<b>0.974</b>	<b>0.971</b>	<b>0.975</b>	<b>0.987</b>	<b>0.959</b>	<b>0.990</b>	<b>0.979</b>	<b>1.016</b>	<b>1.007</b>	<b>1.016</b>	<b>1.026</b>
<b>Five-Year Trend</b>	<b>0.658</b>	<b>0.991</b>	<b>0.969</b>	<b>0.967</b>	<b>0.974</b>	<b>0.971</b>	<b>0.943</b>	<b>0.990</b>	<b>0.974</b>	<b>1.014</b>	<b>1.004</b>	<b>1.008</b>	<b>1.016</b>
<b>Three-Year Trend</b>	<b>0.641</b>	<b>1.007</b>	<b>0.978</b>	<b>0.978</b>	<b>0.970</b>	<b>0.974</b>	<b>0.938</b>	<b>0.984</b>	<b>0.971</b>	<b>1.024</b>	<b>1.007</b>	<b>1.014</b>	<b>1.010</b>

\*Shaded progression ratios are excluded from the Baseline Average

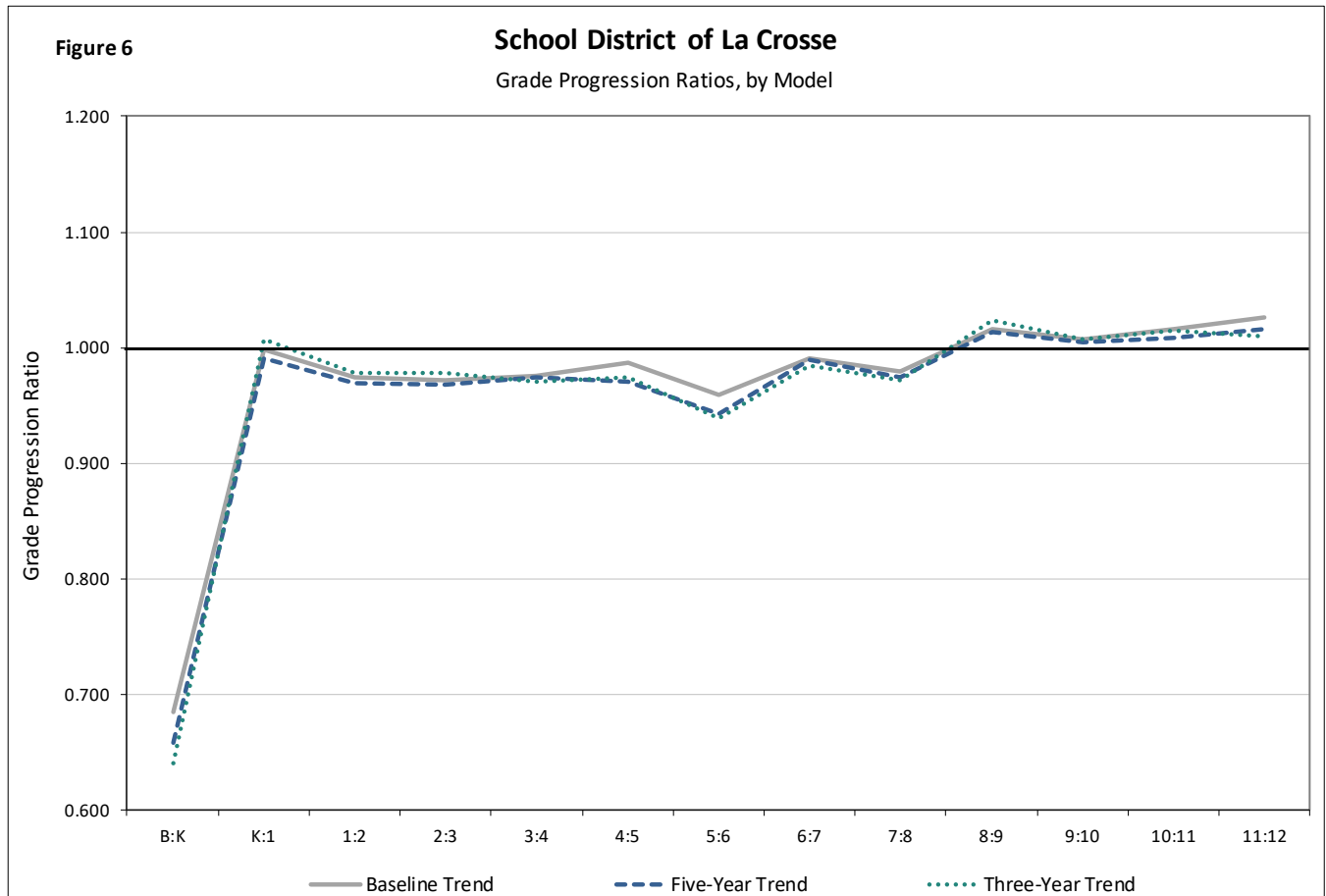


Table 7 shows the observed grade progression ratios between births and 4K and between 4K and kindergarten. The 4K:K ratios are not used in the projection calculations, but they provide an indication that kindergarten classes range from 9% to 12% larger than the prior year’s four-year old kindergarten classes.

To generate 4K enrollment projections, the ten-year grade progression ratio average will be used to project 4K enrollment in the Baseline model. The five-year grade progression ratio average will be used to project 4K enrollment in the Five-Year Trend model. The three-year grade progression ratio average will be used to project 4K enrollment in the Three-Year Trend and Kindergarten Trend models.

**TABLE 7**  
**4K Grade Progression Ratios**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	<b>B:4K</b>	<b>4K:K</b>
<b>14-15/15-16</b>	0.631	1.194
<b>15-16/16-17</b>	0.642	1.128
<b>16-17/17-18</b>	0.649	1.116
<b>17-18/18-19</b>	0.682	1.077
<b>18-19/19-20</b>	0.623	1.061
<b>19-20/20-21</b>	0.563	1.032
<b>20-21/21-22</b>	0.591	1.160
<b>21-22/22-23</b>	0.554	1.099
<b>22-23/23-24</b>	0.539	1.119
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>0.617</b>	<b>1.100</b>
<b>Five-Year Trend</b>	<b>0.574</b>	<b>1.094</b>
<b>Three-Year Trend</b>	<b>0.561</b>	<b>1.126</b>

\*Shaded progression ratios are excluded from the Baseline Average



## School Enrollment Projections

When considering all the projections provided in this report for decision-making, it is important to recognize that population projections of all types, including school enrollment projections, are more accurate in the immediate future than they are farther into the future. This is especially true for the elementary grades, because the students who will enter four-year old kindergarten and kindergarten after 2028 have not yet been born. Overall, our projections are more reliable over the next five years (up to the 2028/29 school year) than they are in the latter half of the next decade.

### Baseline Projections

The Baseline model (Table 8) projects enrollment using the assumption that long-term average trends year-to-year, grade-to-grade, will continue. This model assumes that the ten-year trend in enrollment, migration, and long-term birth trends will be representative of future trends in the district. This model projects that 4K-12 enrollment will decrease from 5,753 students in 2023/24 to 5,267 students in 2028/29, or a decline of 8.4%.

**TABLE 8**  
**Baseline Projection Model**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	SCHOOL YEAR									
	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
4K	365	356	346	350	351	346	341	337	332	327
K	411	406	396	385	389	390	385	379	374	369
1	375	411	405	395	384	389	389	384	379	374
2	407	366	400	395	385	374	379	379	374	369
3	403	395	355	389	384	374	364	368	368	363
4	388	393	386	347	379	374	365	355	359	359
5	400	383	388	381	342	374	369	360	350	354
6	383	384	368	372	365	328	359	354	346	336
7	370	379	380	364	369	362	325	356	351	342
8	401	363	371	372	357	361	354	318	348	344
9	429	407	368	377	378	362	367	360	323	354
10	427	432	410	371	380	381	365	369	362	326
11	468	434	439	416	377	386	387	371	376	368
12	501	480	445	450	427	387	396	397	380	385
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,728</b>	<b>5,588</b>	<b>5,458</b>	<b>5,365</b>	<b>5,267</b>	<b>5,188</b>	<b>5,144</b>	<b>5,087</b>	<b>5,022</b>	<b>4,970</b>
K-12	5,363	5,232	5,112	5,014	4,916	4,842	4,803	4,750	4,690	4,643
K-5	2,385	2,355	2,331	2,291	2,263	2,275	2,250	2,225	2,204	2,188
6-8	1,154	1,125	1,119	1,109	1,091	1,051	1,039	1,028	1,045	1,022
9-12	1,824	1,752	1,662	1,615	1,562	1,516	1,514	1,497	1,442	1,433





Five-Year Trend Projections

The Five-Year Trend model (Table 9) uses the grade progression ratios from the last five years and recent trends in the number of births in the district area to project what future enrollment would look like if more recent patterns were representative of future trends.

With recent migration rates and birth trends weighted more heavily, enrollment in the school district is projected to decrease over time, decreasing from 5,753 students in 2023/24 to 5,033 students in 2028/29, or a 12.5% decline.

**TABLE 9**  
**Five-Year Trend Projection Model**  
**School District of La Crosse**

GRADE	SCHOOL YEAR									
	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
4K	340	332	322	322	319	314	309	303	298	292
K	395	390	380	369	369	366	360	354	347	341
1	373	391	386	377	366	366	363	357	351	344
2	405	361	379	374	365	355	354	352	346	340
3	401	392	349	367	362	353	343	343	340	334
4	388	391	382	340	358	353	344	334	334	331
5	393	376	380	371	330	347	342	334	324	324
6	376	371	355	358	349	311	327	323	315	306
7	370	372	367	351	354	346	308	324	319	312
8	399	361	363	357	342	345	337	300	315	311
9	428	404	366	368	362	347	350	342	305	320
10	426	430	406	367	369	364	349	352	343	306
11	464	429	433	409	370	372	367	351	354	346
12	496	471	436	440	416	376	378	373	357	360
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,653</b>	<b>5,471</b>	<b>5,304</b>	<b>5,171</b>	<b>5,033</b>	<b>4,915</b>	<b>4,831</b>	<b>4,740</b>	<b>4,649</b>	<b>4,568</b>
K-12	5,313	5,140	4,982	4,849	4,713	4,601	4,523	4,437	4,351	4,275
K-5	2,355	2,302	2,256	2,198	2,150	2,139	2,106	2,073	2,042	2,015
6-8	1,145	1,104	1,084	1,067	1,046	1,002	972	947	950	929
9-12	1,813	1,734	1,641	1,585	1,518	1,460	1,444	1,417	1,359	1,332



Three-Year Trend Projections

The Three-Year Trend model (Table 10) uses the grade progression ratios from the last three years to project what future enrollment would look like if even more recent patterns were representative of future trends. For the Three-Year Trend model, enrollment is projected to decrease from 5,753 students in 2023/24 to 5,038 students in 2028/29, or a 12.4% decline.

**TABLE 10**  
**Three-Year Trend Projection Model**  
**School District of La Crosse**

GRADE	SCHOOL YEAR									
	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
4K	332	324	315	315	312	307	302	296	291	286
K	385	380	370	360	359	357	351	345	339	332
1	379	388	383	373	362	362	359	353	347	341
2	409	370	379	374	365	354	354	351	345	339
3	406	400	362	371	366	357	347	346	344	338
4	386	394	388	352	360	355	346	336	336	334
5	395	376	384	378	343	351	346	337	328	327
6	374	370	353	360	355	321	329	325	317	308
7	368	368	364	347	354	349	316	324	319	311
8	397	357	358	354	337	344	339	307	314	310
9	432	407	366	366	362	345	352	347	314	322
10	427	435	409	368	369	365	348	355	349	317
11	467	433	441	415	374	374	370	353	360	354
12	493	471	437	446	419	377	378	374	356	364
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,650</b>	<b>5,474</b>	<b>5,310</b>	<b>5,179</b>	<b>5,038</b>	<b>4,919</b>	<b>4,837</b>	<b>4,749</b>	<b>4,660</b>	<b>4,583</b>
K-12	5,317	5,150	4,995	4,864	4,725	4,612	4,535	4,453	4,369	4,297
K-5	2,359	2,308	2,266	2,207	2,155	2,136	2,103	2,069	2,039	2,012
6-8	1,140	1,096	1,075	1,062	1,047	1,015	984	955	950	929
9-12	1,818	1,746	1,654	1,595	1,524	1,462	1,448	1,428	1,380	1,356



Kindergarten Trend Projections

For this method we perform a trend analysis to project the number of future kindergarten students, rather than relying upon the traditional birth to kindergarten (B:K) progression ratio. Then, the five-year grade progression ratios are used for projecting the other grades (1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) in the district. In other words, this model assumes that the number of new kindergarteners each year over the next decade will be similar to the long-term trend, regardless of the number of observed births in the school district area.

According to this hybrid method (Table 11), the Kindergarten Trend model projects enrollment will decrease from 5,753 students in 2023/24 to 4,905 students in 2028/29, or a decline of 14.7%.

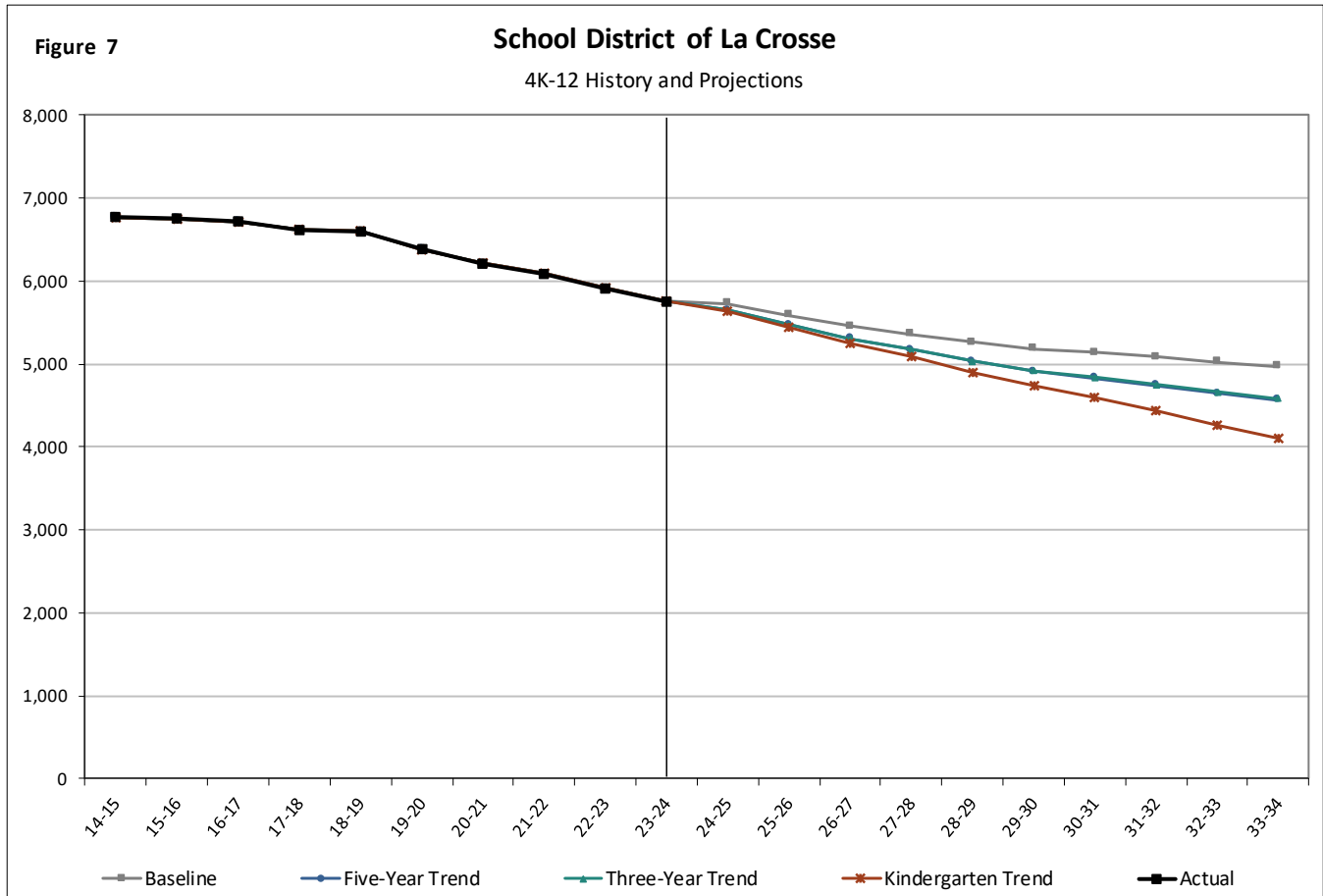
**TABLE 11**  
**Kindergarten Trend Projection Model**  
**School District of La Crosse**

GRADE	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
4K	332	324	315	315	312	307	302	296	291	286
K	386	371	356	341	325	310	295	280	265	250
1	373	383	368	353	338	323	308	293	277	262
2	405	361	371	356	342	327	313	298	283	269
3	401	392	349	359	345	330	316	302	288	274
4	388	391	382	340	349	336	322	308	295	281
5	393	376	380	371	330	339	326	313	299	286
6	376	371	355	358	349	311	320	307	295	282
7	370	372	367	351	354	346	308	316	304	292
8	399	361	363	357	342	345	337	300	308	296
9	428	404	366	368	362	347	350	342	305	313
10	426	430	406	367	369	364	349	352	343	306
11	464	429	433	409	370	372	367	351	354	346
12	496	471	436	440	416	376	378	373	357	360
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,637</b>	<b>5,436</b>	<b>5,246</b>	<b>5,085</b>	<b>4,905</b>	<b>4,735</b>	<b>4,590</b>	<b>4,432</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>4,102</b>
K-12	5,304	5,112	4,930	4,770	4,593	4,428	4,288	4,135	3,974	3,817
K-5	2,346	2,274	2,205	2,119	2,029	1,965	1,880	1,794	1,708	1,622
6-8	1,145	1,104	1,084	1,067	1,046	1,002	965	924	907	870
9-12	1,813	1,734	1,641	1,585	1,518	1,460	1,444	1,417	1,359	1,325



## Comparison of Projection Models

Figures 7-11 and Tables 12-16 compare the student projections broken down by 4K-12 and K-12 enrollment and by grade groupings (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12).

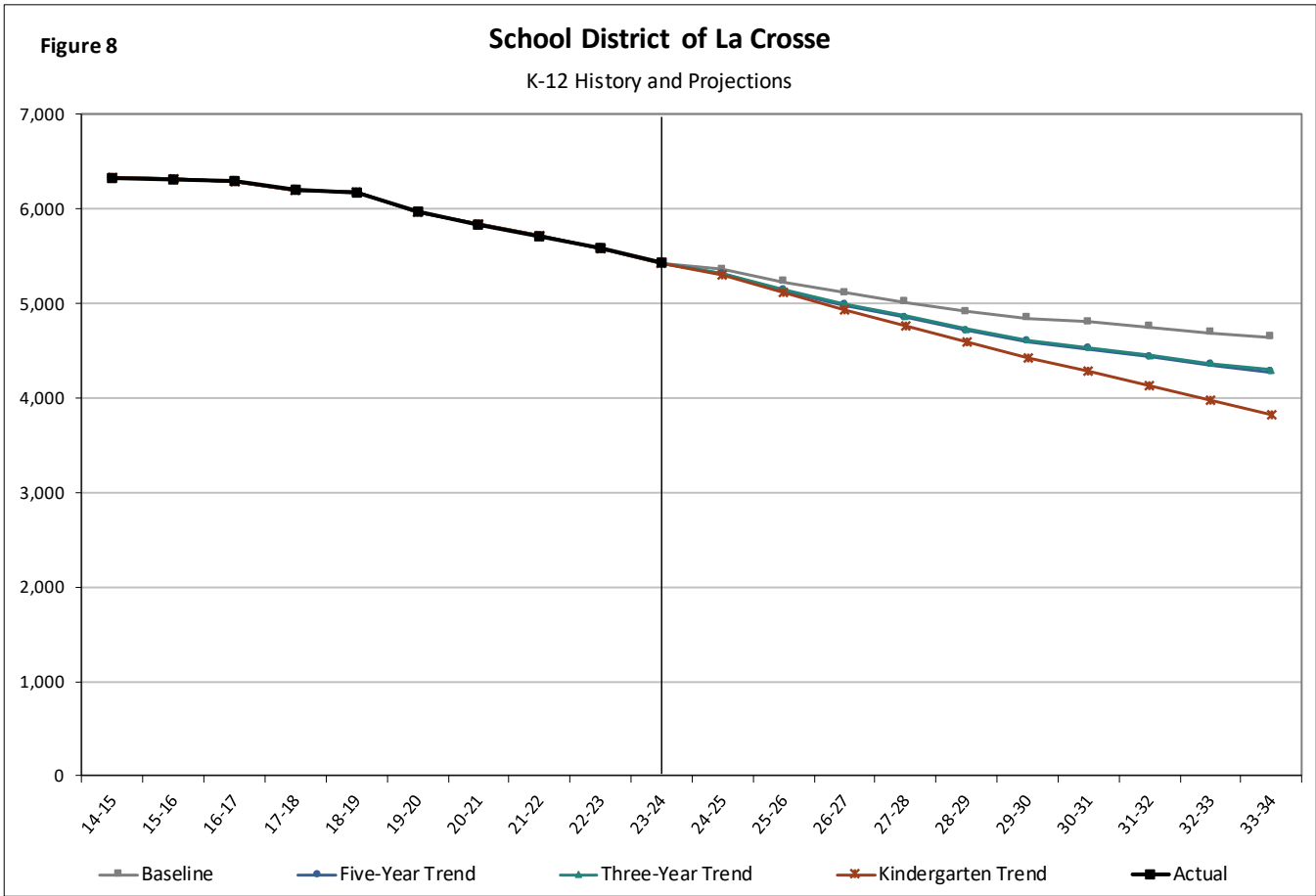


**TABLE 12**  
**Summary of 4K-12 Projections**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
Baseline	5,728	5,588	5,458	5,365	5,267	5,188	5,144	5,087	5,022	4,970
Five-Year Trend	5,653	5,471	5,304	5,171	5,033	4,915	4,831	4,740	4,649	4,568
Three-Year Trend	5,650	5,474	5,310	5,179	5,038	4,919	4,837	4,749	4,660	4,583
Kindergarten Trend	5,637	5,436	5,246	5,085	4,905	4,735	4,590	4,432	4,265	4,102

From the 2023/24 enrollment of 5,753, the projection models show decline over the next five years and beyond. The Kindergarten Trend model projects the greatest enrollment decrease, while the Baseline model projects the least amount of enrollment decline. The projections five years from now (2028/29) range from 4,905 to 5,267 students.



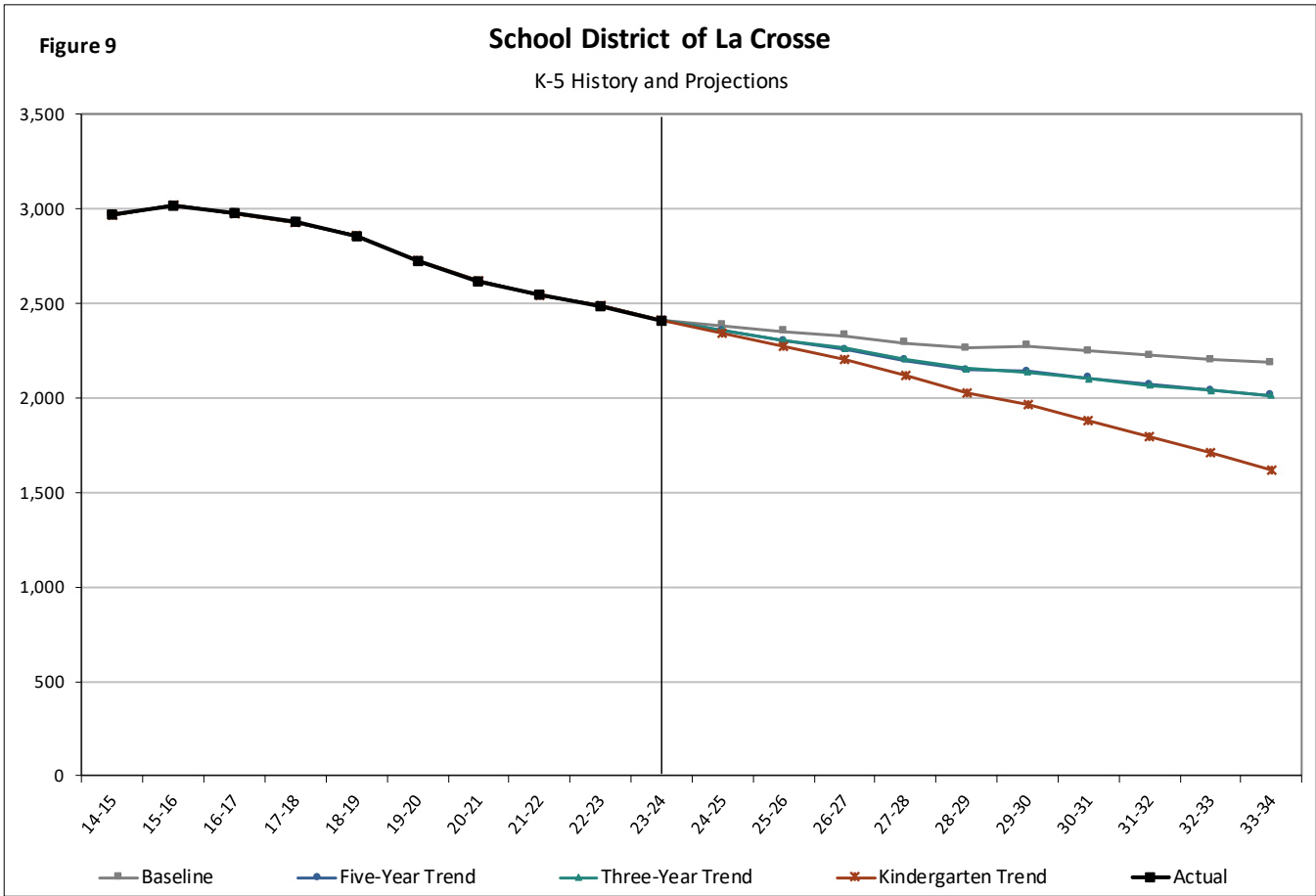


**TABLE 13**  
**Summary of K-12 Projections**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
Baseline	5,363	5,232	5,112	5,014	4,916	4,842	4,803	4,750	4,690	4,643
Five-Year Trend	5,313	5,140	4,982	4,849	4,713	4,601	4,523	4,437	4,351	4,275
Three-Year Trend	5,317	5,150	4,995	4,864	4,725	4,612	4,535	4,453	4,369	4,297
Kindergarten Trend	5,304	5,112	4,930	4,770	4,593	4,428	4,288	4,135	3,974	3,817

From the 2023/24 K-12 enrollment of 5,429, the models show declining enrollment similar to the 4K-12 projections. The Kindergarten Trend model projects the greatest enrollment decrease, while the Baseline model projects the least amount of enrollment decline. K-12 projections forecast five years from now (2028/29) a range of enrollment from 4,593 to 4,916.



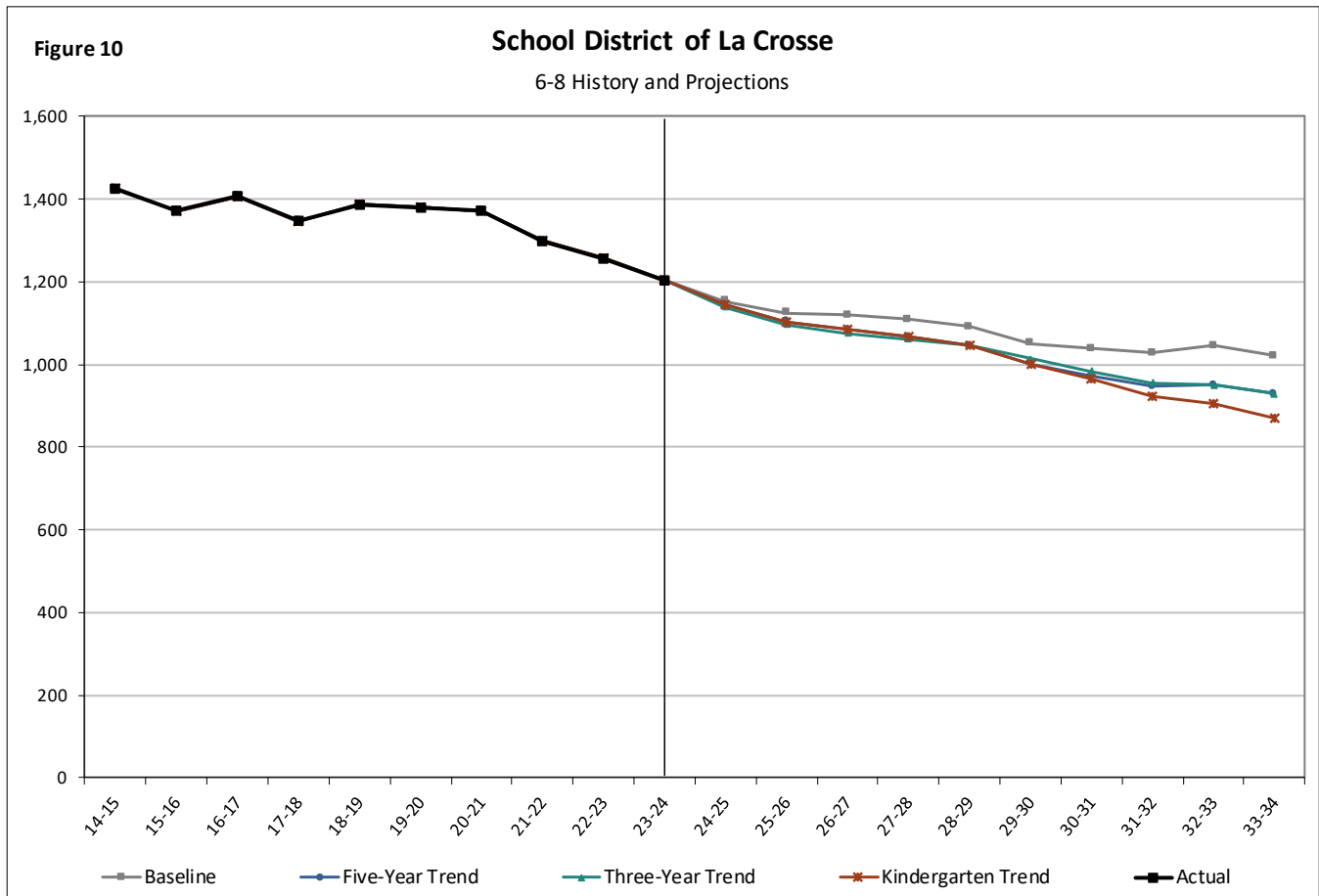


**TABLE 14**  
**Summary of K-5 Projections**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
Baseline	2,385	2,355	2,331	2,291	2,263	2,275	2,250	2,225	2,204	2,188
Five-Year Trend	2,355	2,302	2,256	2,198	2,150	2,139	2,106	2,073	2,042	2,015
Three-Year Trend	2,359	2,308	2,266	2,207	2,155	2,136	2,103	2,069	2,039	2,012
Kindergarten Trend	2,346	2,274	2,205	2,119	2,029	1,965	1,880	1,794	1,708	1,622

K-5 enrollment in 2023/24 is 2,411. For elementary school grades, the projection models show decreasing enrollment for the foreseeable future. The Kindergarten Trend model projects the greatest enrollment decline, while the Baseline model projects the least amount of enrollment decrease. Grades K-5 projections five years from now (2028/29) forecast a range of enrollment from 2,029 to 2,263.



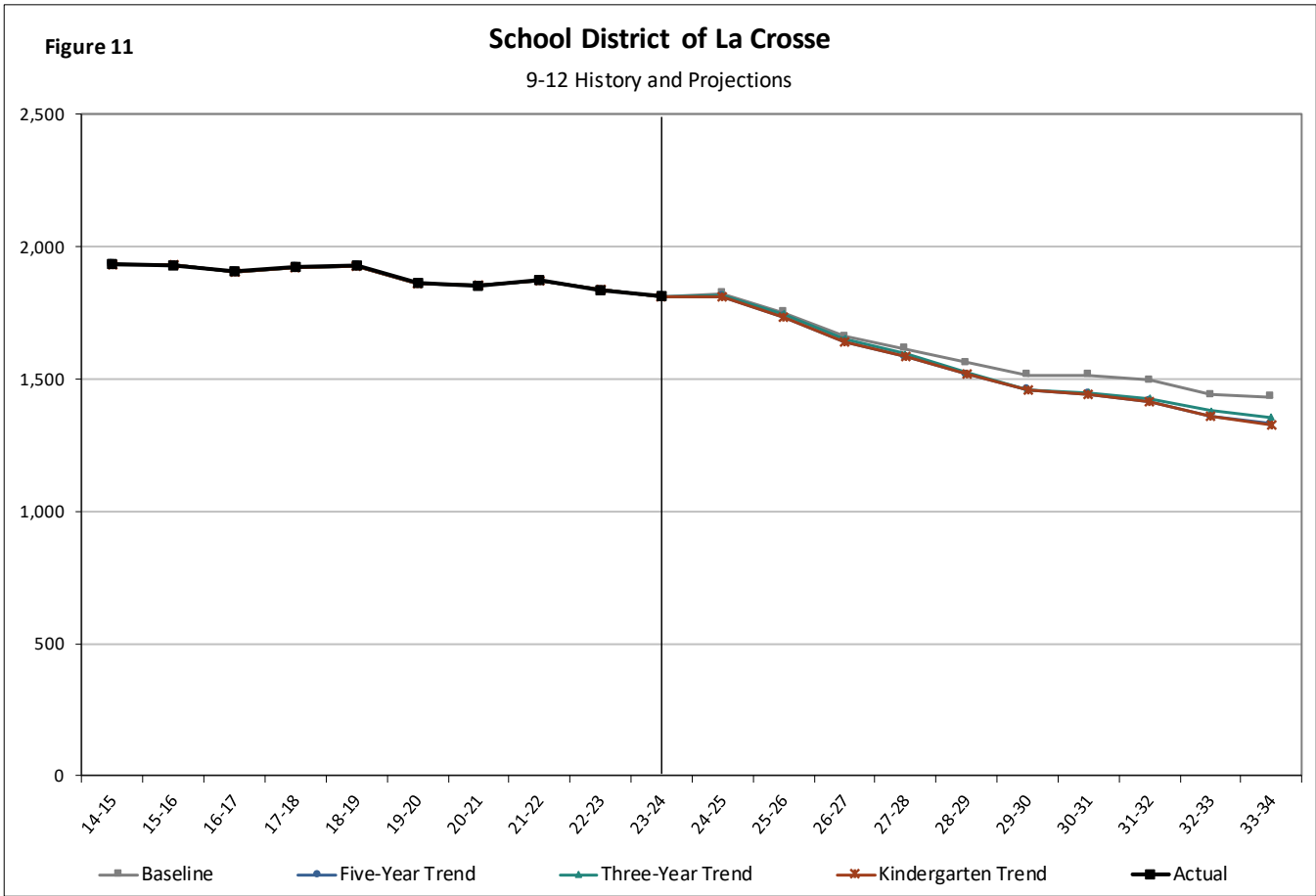


**TABLE 15**  
**Summary of 6-8 Projections**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
Baseline	1,154	1,125	1,119	1,109	1,091	1,051	1,039	1,028	1,045	1,022
Five-Year Trend	1,145	1,104	1,084	1,067	1,046	1,002	972	947	950	929
Three-Year Trend	1,140	1,096	1,075	1,062	1,047	1,015	984	955	950	929
Kindergarten Trend	1,145	1,104	1,084	1,067	1,046	1,002	965	924	907	870

6-8 enrollment in 2023/24 is 1,205. For the middle school grades, all models project declining enrollment. Grades 6-8 projections five years from now (2028/29) project a range of enrollment from 1,046 to 1,091.





**TABLE 16**  
**Summary of 9-12 Projections**  
**School District of La Crosse**

	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29	29-30	30-31	31-32	32-33	33-34
Baseline	1,824	1,752	1,662	1,615	1,562	1,516	1,514	1,497	1,442	1,433
Five-Year Trend	1,813	1,734	1,641	1,585	1,518	1,460	1,444	1,417	1,359	1,332
Three-Year Trend	1,818	1,746	1,654	1,595	1,524	1,462	1,448	1,428	1,380	1,356
Kindergarten Trend	1,813	1,734	1,641	1,585	1,518	1,460	1,444	1,417	1,359	1,325

From the 2023/24 enrollment of 1,813, high school projection models forecast similar enrollment next year followed by decreasing enrollment. The 9-12 projections five years from now (2028/29) project a range of enrollment from 1,518 to 1,562.





## Conclusion

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These district-level enrollment projections are based on models that incorporate past and current demographic information and the district's own enrollment. Because most of the students in the district's schools over the next few years have already been born or are already in school, and because their grade progression from one year to another is reasonably predictable, the total district-level projections should be viewed as having high accuracy over the next few years.

After several years, and increasingly for the lower elementary grades, actual enrollment figures will likely deviate from these projections by ever-increasing amounts. The reason for this divergence is that birth trends and in-migration of pre-school age children are more difficult to predict. As with nearly all types of forecasts, accuracy in these enrollment projections decreases over time.

District-wide student projections point to the School District of La Crosse experiencing mostly declining enrollment in the near term with all grade groupings decreasing. Over the next five years, the district might expect:

- 4K-12 enrollment will likely decline between 486 and 848 students, or a decrease averaging 12%.
- Elementary school enrollment will likely decline between 148 and 382 students or averaging an 11% decrease.
- Middle school enrollment shows a decrease of 114 to 159 students or averaging a 12% decline.
- High school enrollment will lose from 251 to 295 students, or a decline of 16%.

Because the projections found in this report incorporate the consequences of migration to and from the district, any significant and sustained interruption of current or recent migration patterns will erode these models' accuracy from the initiation point of the new pattern. The district should continue to monitor enrollment change and compare it with these projections, to assess the district's trajectory of future growth and the best-fitting projections model.

