

Enrollment History & Projections



ENROLLMENT

This section of the budget presents student enrollment history and projections. The historical review presents the previous five fiscal years, and compares the actual enrollment to the projections. Each year, the district provides the State of Connecticut with the number of enrolled students by school as of October 1. The district uses these numbers as the official count for the current fiscal year. We use our student information system, SASI, to upload electronically the enrollment data to the state's computer system. In addition, we update these numbers periodically during the school year. Student enrollment is a factor in most federal and state entitlement grants. Therefore, the Business Services Office and Technology Office maintain a record of the data so that the school district's independent auditors can perform their required testing.

The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) provides the district with enrollment projections, which they update annually. They use the cohort survival method to calculate these projections. This statistical model projects student enrollment by using historical enrollment data for each school by grade along with published birth rates. The model looks at the previous five years of enrollment progression by grade at each school, and assumes similar ratios for the future. Experience has taught us that reasonable variances between actual and projected enrollments occur for a variety of reasons. Therefore, we also consider new and resale housing rates, and non-public school enrollment data when appropriate.

Enrollment projections provide the basis for both operating and capital budget planning. These enrollment projections, developed annually, provide important data for program and budget planning, and staffing for the 2009-10 school year. Mr. Arvid Anderson prepared the following report after NESDEC released Weston's updated enrollment projections in the fall of 2008. Please keep in mind that NESDEC DOES NOT provide projections for the number of pre-school special education students and their typical peers, or for the students that are placed in facilities outside the district. The district's Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services calculates these numbers. The district adds both projections to arrive at the total enrollment figures.

Projection Methodology

As you may know, in developing projections for member school districts, NESDEC uses the cohort survival technique, the most common method for preparing enrollment forecasts. By incorporating some appropriate modifications, NESDEC is able to consider information specific to an individual school district and consequently, avoid forecasts that are entirely formula driven.

Basically, NESDEC calculates percentages from historical data and determines reliable percentage increases or decreases between each pair of consecutive grade levels. For example, if 100 students enrolled in Grade 1 in 2007-08, increased to 104 students in Grade 2 in 2008-09, the percentage of survival would have been 104% or a ratio of 1.04. Such ratios are calculated between each pair of grades or years in school over several recent years.

The ratios used are the key factors in the reliability of the projections, given the validity of the data at the starting point. The strength of the ratios lies in the fact that each ratio encompasses collectively the variables that account for increases or decreases in the size of a grade enrollment as it moves on to the next grade. Each ratio represents the cumulative effect of the following factors:

1. Migration, in or out, of the schools;
2. Retention in the same grade;
3. Drop-outs, transfers, etc.;
4. Births and deaths;
5. New house construction.
6. Economic conditions

The ratios thus selected are applied to the present enrollment statistics for a pre-determined number of years.

Effective Use of Enrollment Projections

Projections can serve as useful guides to school administrators for educational planning. In this regard, the projections are generally most reliable when they are closest in time to the current year. Projections six to ten years out may serve as a guide to future enrollments, and are useful for long-range facilities planning. However, they should be viewed as subject to change given the possibility for anomalies that may crop up in the underlying assumptions. Annual updates allow for the identification of any recent changes in historical trends.

Review of Enrollment - 2008-09

Last year, NESDEC projected a K-12 enrollment for 2008-09 of 2479, which excludes the projected 29 students in the Pre-K Early Learning Center program. The actual K-12 October 1st total enrollment for 2008-09 is 2540, a difference of 61 students more than projected. This larger than normal variance is unexpected, as NESDEC's enrollment projections the past four years have been at or under 1% of actual. The enrollment increases, for the most part, show up in the entry grades at Hurlbutt, Weston Intermediate and Weston Middle School, and spread over several grades at Weston High School. These totals are noted in the individual school enrollment summaries.

At Hurlbutt Elementary School there was an increase of 10 students over the projection (546 actual vs. 536 projected). A sizeable increase occurred in Kindergarten, which enrolled 15 students more than the projection.

At Weston Intermediate School enrollment was projected at 597 vs. the actual enrollment of 610, an increase of 13 students. As was mentioned previously, Grade 3, the entry level grade increased by 15 students.

At Weston Middle School enrollment was projected at 556 vs. the actual enrollment of 575, an increase of 19 students. Again the entry Grade 6 had the largest increase with 11 additional students over the projection.

At Weston High School, the total 9-12 enrollment increased by 19 students (809 actual vs. 790 projected).

Review of NESDEC’s 2009-10 Enrollment Projections

NESDEC’s most recent system-wide projections indicate a decrease in student enrollment. Total K-12 projected enrollment for 2009-10 is forecasted at 2511, a decrease of 29 students, as compared to the actual 2008-09 enrollment of 2540, a 1.1% decrease over last year, but an increase of 32 students from the 2008-09 projection of 2479.

Hurlbutt Elementary School—Grades PK-2

Enrollment at this school level is projected to decrease by 37 students, as compared to the actual enrollment in these grades in 2008-09 (546 actual vs. 509 projected). This decrease is mainly attributed to the current larger than usual Grade 2 class moving into Grade 3, and a projected 2009-10 Grade 2 enrollment of 160, resulting in a net decrease of 58 students over the current Grade 2 enrollment of 218.

Kindergarten enrollment remains the most difficult to forecast and somewhat elusive to accurately project. In developing the enrollment projections for the Kindergarten class of 2009, NESDEC is using a higher Birth-to-Kindergarten ratio (a factor of 1.75), partially adjusting for the higher actual enrollment in 2008-09. This is the third consecutive year that NESDEC has adjusted upward the ratio based on higher than projected Kindergarten enrollment.

It is important to note that the trend over the past ten years, illustrated by the following chart, indicates that the in-migration/growth rate between the year of birth and Kindergarten eligibility five years later has been on a general decline, with the exception of the past two years, perhaps signaling a new upward trend.

In-Migration Between Year of Birth and Actual Kindergarten Enrollment

Years, Birth to K	Birth Cohort	K Enrollment	Difference
1994 to 1999	119	187	+68
1995 to 2000	132	208	+76
1996 to 2001	114	158	+44
1997 to 2002	114	163	+49
1998 to 2003	146	191	+45
1999 to 2004	129	184	+55
2000 to 2005	129	182	+53
2001 to 2006	138	210	+72
2002 to 2007	77	147	+70
2003 to 2008	93	153	+60

Note: NESDEC’s enrollment projections for 2009-10, utilizing the 1.75 growth ratio forecasts Kindergarten enrollment at 170 students, which is +73 over the size of the birth cohort five years previously (97). This difference in the birth to Kindergarten enrollment needs to be monitored carefully, especially in light of the low birth rates reported in 2002 and 2003.

As in the past two years, we plan to continue our effort to gather the most accurate Kindergarten enrollment data through the following activities:

- Scheduling a late fall pre-registration for Kindergarten to help with staff planning and the number of sections needed for the fall of 2009.
- Continuing the process of contacting all area pre-school programs to obtain an earlier update on the number and ages of children enrolled in these programs.
- Sending parents of Kindergarten age children pre-registration letters, providing information on the school district website and posting information in the Weston Forum about the registration process and deadlines.
- Continuing to work closely with NESDEC to identify strategies and methods to better identify 3-5 year-old children who may have moved into the community.

Hurlbutt Elementary School (con’t)

The enrollment variances by grade level at Hurlbutt Elementary School will continue to impact on the number of sections, particularly in Grade 2 as noted in a grade by grade class size distribution, which illustrates this variance.

	Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	
2008-09 (actual)	168	160	218	
2009-10 (projected)	<u>170</u>	<u>179</u>	<u>160</u>	
Variance	+2	+19	-58	(-37 net)

Weston Intermediate School—Grades 3—5

Enrollment at the intermediate school level is projected to increase by 5 students in 2009-10 (615 projected vs. 610 actual). Similar to last year the grade level class sizes are projected to change as two larger classes continue to move through grade levels. A grade by grade class size distribution illustrates this variance.

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	
2008-09 (actual)	203	195	212	
2009-10 (projected)	<u>220</u>	<u>204</u>	<u>191</u>	
Variance	+17	+9	-21	(+5 net)

Weston Middle School—Grades 6-8

Enrollment at the middle school is projected to increase by 10 students (575 actual vs. 585 projected). There are class size variances in grades 6 and 8, which is likely to have some impact on staff planning and deployment. A grade by grade class size distribution illustrates this variance.

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	
2008-09 (actual)	182	188	205	
2009-10 (projected)	<u>218</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>189</u>	
Variance	+36	-10	-16	(+10 net)

Weston High School—Grade 9-12

Enrollment at the high school is projected to decrease by 7 students (802 projected vs. 809 current), with Grade 11 projected to enroll 20 more students than the current Grade 11 enrollment. For the period 2000-01 through 2008-09 high school overall enrollment grew from 578 students to 809, an increase of 231 students, and a 40% growth rate for that period.

General Comments (Five Year “Look-Ahead” Perspective)

K-12 Enrollment

Since the 1998-99 school year, total enrollment in the Weston Public Schools has increased by 404 students, a 18.9% growth rate for that period. The forecast for the next five years, using 2008-09 as the base year, forecasts a decline of 147 students, a 5.8% decrease in enrollment to 2393 students in 2013-14.

It is important to note that the overall K-12 projected enrollment decline has moderated slightly from last year’s NESDEC Enrollment Report, which forecasted a 7.2% decline over the next five years (-182) vs. the 5.8% decline forecasted in this year’s enrollment report.

Hurlbutt Elementary School Enrollment (Grades PK-2)

Enrollment at Grades K-2 is forecasted to decline over the next five years with a total enrollment decrease of 51 students during that period. This decrease has moderated during the last several years mainly attributed to the modest upturn in the birth rates from 2003-2005 and a higher than projected actual Kindergarten enrollment.

Weston Intermediate School (Grades 3-5)

Enrollment at the intermediate school for the next five years is forecasted to decline by 49 students, to 524 in 2013-14, a decline of 8%. However, enrollment projections for the four previous years range from 560 to 615, with a four year average enrollment of 580 during that period, which approaches the functional capacity of this school (600).

Weston Middle School (Grades 6-8)

Over the next five years, enrollment at the middle school is forecasted to remain fairly steady, averaging 600 students per year during this period, with enrollment ranging from 585 students (2009-010) to 586 students (2013-2014).

Weston High School Enrollment (Grades 9-12)

During the next five years enrollment at the high school is projected to decrease by 51 students to 751 in 2013-14, a 6.3% decline. Last year NESDEC projected a five-year decline of 86 students. This lessening of the enrollment decline reflects some of the larger than previously projected classes moving up through the grade levels.

Summary Comments

Although NESDEC projections have proved consistent, reliable, and useful, we should not unduly rely on any single year's projections. Small shifts may occur each year depending upon economic conditions, in and out migrations, transfers from private/parochial schools, housing construction and other factors that cannot be anticipated with absolute precision.

ENROLLMENT HISTORY
PROJECTIONS vs ACTUALS

	2004-05			2005-06			2006-07			2007-08			2008-09		
	Proj	Actual	Diff.	Proj	Actual	Diff.	Proj	Actual	Diff.	Proj	Actual	Diff.	Proj	Actual	Diff.
K	177	184	7	178	182	4	193	210	17	117	147	30	153	168	15
1	201	204	3	195	194	-1	193	194	1	224	220	-4	156	160	4
2	170	176	6	208	213	5	199	200	1	202	191	-11	227	218	-9
Primary	548	564	16	581	589	8	585	604	19	543	558	15	536	546	10
3	181	184	3	176	174	-2	213	210	-3	198	196	-2	188	203	15
4	196	201	5	188	191	3	178	174	-4	213	213	0	199	195	-4
5	198	197	-1	203	206	3	193	186	-7	176	170	-6	210	212	2
Intermediate	575	582	7	567	571	4	584	570	-14	587	579	-8	597	610	13
6	212	211	-1	198	199	1	207	208	1	187	187	0	171	182	11
7	217	226	9	210	201	-9	195	191	-4	201	203	2	181	188	7
8	217	206	-11	224	232	8	201	201	0	191	192	1	204	205	1
Middle	646	643	-3	632	632	0	603	600	-3	579	582	3	556	575	19
9	206	207	1	201	212	11	226	225	-1	195	200	5	190	195	5
10	177	170	-7	200	203	3	203	208	5	221	219	-2	195	200	5
11	162	167	5	169	166	-3	202	199	-3	205	199	-6	212	214	2
12	173	171	-2	164	163	-1	163	169	6	197	189	-8	193	200	7
Senior	718	715	-3	734	744	10	794	801	7	818	807	-11	790	809	19
Pre-K	29	31	2	31	38	7	38	40	2	34	39	5	47	50	3
Outplaced	32	27	-5	26	28	2	22	27	5	25	28	3	24	22	-2
Total	2,548	2,562	14	2,571	2,602	31	2,626	2,642	16	2,586	2,593	7	2,550	2,612	62

Change

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**WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WESTON, CONNECTICUT**

**ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS
2009-10 TO 2013-14**

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-2014
Grade	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected
K	170	184	149	160	165
1	179	181	196	159	171
2	160	179	181	196	159
Primary	509	544	526	515	495
3	220	162	181	183	198
4	204	221	162	182	184
5	191	200	217	159	179
Intermediate	615	583	560	524	561
6	218	196	206	223	164
7	178	214	192	202	219
8	189	179	215	193	203
Middle	585	589	613	618	586
9	204	188	178	214	192
10	192	201	185	175	211
11	194	187	195	180	170
12	212	192	185	193	178
Senior	802	768	743	762	751
Pre-School	53	53	53	53	53
Out-Placed	21	21	21	21	21
Total	2,585	2,558	2,516	2,493	2,467
Projected Change	-27	-27	-42	-23	-26