

**DATE:** February 4, 2014

**TO:** Board of Trustees

**FROM:** Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT:** Student Population Projections (Response to Request for Information #006)

**ORIGINATOR:** David Fraser, Executive Director, Corporate Services

**RESOURCE STAFF:** Leanne Fedor, Lorne Parker, Jim Ray, Amy-Irene Seward

**REFERENCE:** December 3, 2013 Board Meeting (Trustee Chubb)

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**ISSUE**

The following information was requested: Provide information regarding student population projections by school-based and geographic location.

**BACKGROUND**

Enrolment projections are used as a planning tool to assist in student accommodation and program planning. Projections are also used by schools and administration to plan budgets and staffing complements for the upcoming school year. Annually, enrolment projections are completed by the Planning department in December and January in order to plan for September of the following school year. Projections are made for the District as a whole, as well as on a school-by-school basis.

The District conducts an annual enrolment projection using available external demographic data and a review of historical and current district enrolment data. Census and other demographic data provide valuable information, as well as overall school aged residency in Edmonton. Principals are invited to provide input to their projections by responding to the first draft projection for their school. Principals' input at the outset of the process provides useful qualitative information about local conditions to improve the accuracy of the projections.

Factors considered in projections include but are not limited to:

- The study of current population growth and attrition to a school on a community basis;
- Projected population and housing construction;
- Annual analysis of demographic and economic forecasts (national, provincial and civic);
- Direct input from principals on school enrolment and local conditions on a school by school basis;
- Program distribution activities (district centre alternative and special education programs); and
- Attendance area amendments.

The process for district enrolment projections is as follows:

- District staff prepare a district wide projection.
- Once a district wide projection is established, the first draft of school by school projections is produced using the aforementioned demographic data. Any optimal enrolment limits a school may have are adhered to during this process.

- Kindergarten projections are produced using historical enrolment numbers as well as growth and development data.
- The first draft of school projections is sent to the respective principal for feedback and/or suggested changes. If the principal agrees with the initial projection it is considered to be signed off and complete.
- School requests for changes are discussed centrally and the projection is adjusted where feasible.
- Projections for specific alternative and district centre special needs programs are balanced and amended where necessary.
- Final drafts are prepared and signed off by principals.
- When all school by school projections are completed the information is forwarded to budget services.
- Schools use their projection to facilitate planning for the upcoming school year in terms of staffing and organization of classes.

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

The process for district enrolment projections for the 2014-2015 school year has been delayed in response to the ongoing work of the District Accommodation Plan. As a large number of district schools could potentially be affected by the outcomes of the District Accommodation Plan, it was believed that the enrolment projection process should be delayed.

Work will begin on enrolment projections for the upcoming school year shortly after decisions have been made with regard to recommended options within the District Accommodation Plan.

This table represents a ten year history of district enrolment as well as the projection for that given year.

<b>Year</b>	<b>September 30 Actual Enrolment</b>	<b>September 30 Projected Enrolment</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
<b>2004</b>	80155	81200	1.30 %
<b>2005</b>	79133	78600	0.67 %
<b>2006</b>	80263	78600	2.07 %
<b>2007</b>	79232	80600	1.61%
<b>2008</b>	79608	78701	1.14 %
<b>2009</b>	79894	79034	1.08 %
<b>2010</b>	79911	79799	0.14 %
<b>2011</b>	80767	79698	1.32 %
<b>2012</b>	83442	80595	3.41 %
<b>2013</b>	86554	84552	2.31 %

With respect to the table above:

- Over the past 10 years the average variation between the district projection and actual September 30 enrolments is 1.51 per cent.
- The higher variations in projected and actual enrolments in 2012 and 2013 can be attributed to the after effects of rapid population growth (12.1 per cent population change in Edmonton between 2006 and 2011).

- Beginning in 2011, the District no longer received provincial data on the number of four year old children residing in each City of Edmonton neighbourhood. This demographic information was previously used to produce Kindergarten projections. The method in which kindergarten projections were done had to be adapted due to the absence of this data.

**KEY POINTS**

- Traditionally, our newest schools are projected to have the greatest increase in student enrolment year over year. This can be attributed to the small cohort of Grade 9 students leaving the schools and the large cohort of students entering the schools in Kindergarten. Schools which are designated receiving schools for new and rapidly developing neighbourhoods typically have growing enrolment from students residing within these neighbourhoods.
- Projections do not take into account the possibility of initiatives or programming changes that occur prior to the next school year, which could affect enrolment. For example, recommendations to the Superintendent that are in development during or after the enrolment projection process would not have been factored into the projection process as they were not yet approved.
- Projected enrolments cannot be predicted with 100 per cent accuracy due to several factors which impact schooling choices. Within the timeframe of the completion of enrolment projections in early February of each year and September 30 of the following year many variables can change. Enrolment projections are dependent on a variety of demographic, social and economic factors on a national, provincial, local and individual scale. These factors are not static.
- District projections for the 2014-2015 school year may be provided to the Board of Trustees once they are finalized in the spring of 2014.

**ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES**

N/A

LF:gm