

Concord School District
Special Board Meeting
February 11, 2019

Board members present: Jennifer Patterson, Tom Croteau, Liza Poinier, Danielle Smith, Pam Wicks, Jim Richards, Nancy Kane

Board member absent: Barbara Higgins, Chuck Crush

Administrators: *Superintendent* Terri Forsten, *Business Administrator* Jack Dunn

Others: Lorne Woods, Davis Demographics

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Lorne Woods of Davis Demographics began with a short video on his firm and its work to support school districts in projecting student populations and their future demographic. He explained that development of the report began with mapping the District's anonymized student data geographically on a map of City neighborhoods over a period of four years. This enabled a view of how some neighborhoods changed demographically in recent years. The city was divided into study areas, smaller grids of 50 or fewer students. The intent of this process was to analyze where students live and where elementary boundaries might be moved, if that recommendation arose from this work.

The student density map showed the areas of greatest density in the city.

The elementary school attendance matrix provided numbers around students who live in a neighborhood and who attend the elementary school in that neighborhood. This matrix also provided an overview of the schools' capacity, and the number of "special permissions." Mr. Woods shared Davis Demographics' projection methodology. The three major pieces that applied to Concord's demographic included birth data, mobility factors and student yield factors.

- Birth data – current kindergarten student counts, historical birth data
- Mobility factors – current student counts, historical student counts
- Student yield factors – assessor data, current student counts

These factors all contribute to student projections for the District.

The chart on historic, current and trending birthrates connected the live birth rates in the city to kindergarten enrollment to the "market share" – the percentage of kindergarten students born in the city and then enrolled in a District school five years later. The percentage of students attending kindergarten in the current year compared to birth rates five years ago was high; this would be attributed at least in part to full-day kindergarten.

Mr. Woods introduced the "student survival cohort" of the school year 2019. This provided information on the percentage of gain or loss for each grade level as students

progress through the grades. This information was provided by examining elementary attendance areas. Overall, it can be seen that at the middle school level, students tend to leave the District and then return for high school. Mr. Woods noted that District data from kindergarten to first grade is not likely to see as large an increase because of full-day kindergarten this year. The numbers projected for ninth grade include students joining Concord High School from Deerfield and from charter and/or private schools.

Overall trends for the past three years, the current year, and the next 10 years for grades preschool through 12, grades preschool through 5, grades 6 through 8, and grades 9 through 12, were reviewed. Enrollment overall is projected to continue to decline. Administrators briefly discussed the contract with Deerfield for their high school students to attend CHS.

Over 10 years, Abbot-Downing is expected to lose 48.4 students; Beaver Meadow is expected to grow by 35.3 students; Christa McAuliffe is expected to increase by 30.2 students, while Mill Brook/Broken Ground are expected to lose 4.9 students. These numbers, projected over a 10-year period, are not substantial in a district of this size.

Mr. Woods showed the resident student changes that are projected by neighborhoods over the next 10 years. He explained the use of GIS in supporting this view of projections. The forecast in the coming 10 years is that enrollment will decline from 4,423 students currently enrolled to 4,125 students.

Mr. Woods shared several summary pieces of the demographic study.

- The student population for the District is expected to decrease in enrollment over the next 10 years.
- Currently, there are no proposed or active residential developments in the city that would add significantly to the existing enrollment.
- Concord introduced full-day kindergarten this year, creating an enrollment increase in one zone, and the largest percentage of kindergarten enrollment relative to birthrates.
- The District's high school population may continue to experience loss in enrollment through school year 2027 with an enrollment nearing 1350.
- The District's middle school population (grades 6–8) is projected to decline annually starting school year 2020 with an annual loss of 14-49 students per year.
- The elementary school population (preschool – grade 5) is projected to be stable, compared to middle and high school grades, after experiencing declines in the last four years.

A more detailed report will be developed to complete this process, offering more details about the data in this report outline. The full report will allow the Board to see more fully how shifting grade configurations would impact the school community and how shifting boundaries might offer relief to elementary schools.

Concord has become an aging community, where the balance of age groups is mostly equalized and the average age is 47 years old.

Mr. Woods responded to a question about developing a report available to post online. His firm can create an online “story map page” that would allow people to see highlights and check out details of the report. The Board can decide what aspects of the report it would like to present online.

The Board voted 7-0 to adjourn (motioned by Mr. Croteau, seconded by Ms. Kane).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Richards, *Secretary*

Terri Forsten, *Recorder*