

OCDSB Enrolment Projection Methodology

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The Board's Planning Staff use a variety of information in developing enrolment projections for the purpose of long term planning.

The primary methodology used to project school by school enrolment is termed a "cohort retention methodology". This methodology analyzes the historical grade to grade movement of students by program, predicting future enrolment based on a school's current enrolment and historical retention trends.

The cohort retention methodology is effective in predicting future enrolment where there is a lot of student movement and program choice, which is characteristic of the OCDSB system. Some of the student movement accounted for within the methodology includes:

- program choice - students who choose to register in a new program;
- program attrition - students who choose to transfer out of a particular program;
- school choice - students who choose to attend a school other than their designated school;
- market share - historical changes in the number of students who choose to enrol in the OCDSB or who choose to transfer to a coterminous Board;
- residential unit occupancy change - changes in the occupancy of existing residential units over time (captures students moving into and out of school areas);
- residential development - on going new residential development (captures typical rates of new development which has historically occurred within school areas and resulting student yields).

In addition to examining a school's grade by grade retention history, staff use other data to project future enrolment, especially within the younger grades.

Junior and Senior Kindergarten enrolments are projected using a variety of data. Historical trends in enrolment and registrations are examined. Trends in the number of births and the level of migration in the 0-4 age group within a school's local area are also significant indicators of future enrolment patterns.

New changes that may impact a school's projected enrolment and its historical retention trends (such as revisions to program offerings, policy changes, the construction of a new school in the area, etc.) are also addressed outside of the traditional cohort retention methodology.

During the enrolment projection process, on going discussion takes place with the

Principal of a particular school who may be able to provide local knowledge of a school or a community's particular circumstance.

As indicated above, anticipated enrolment growth from on going typical residential development is captured in a school's historical retention rates. In areas where there are proposed new family oriented residential developments that are significantly larger than what has occurred in the past, a different methodology is applied. An estimate of the number and timing of new residential units to be constructed is determined and a projected pupil yield per new residential unit is applied. This projected pupil yield is then added to the school's initial projection.

In projecting longer term enrolment, staff also use school age population data. These data are important in order to account for larger demographic trends taking place. An example of a demographic trend that has impacted enrolment in recent years is the end of the "baby-boom echo", the children of the baby boomers born between 1980 and 1995. The baby boom echo began exiting the OCDSB elementary system in 2000 and was followed by smaller numbers of students feeding into the system. At the system level, this demographic trend resulted in declining elementary enrolments from 2001 to 2007. By 2008, the baby boom echo cohort had, with the exception of the 13 year old age cohort, completely exited the elementary system and elementary enrolments then began to increase. This demographic trend and its impact on elementary enrolments at the system level is mirrored in the Centretown, Glebe and Old Ottawa South study area. These kinds of larger demographic trends are used to confirm and validate projection results obtained using the Board's cohort retention methodology.