

A Message from Superintendent Hoernemann



What do you think is happening with regard to enrollment growth in our schools and growth in Washington Township? It's an interesting question and rather than focusing on what we think based on beliefs, our Board commissioned a demographic study which has recently been completed. The results are fascinating and will inform our plans for the future. Here is a summary and a link to the entire study (for those who love detailed research). At upcoming board meetings we will discuss the implications of the study. We hope you will be involved in these important conversations!

Demographic Study Presentation Summary

On Feb. 22, 2016 the Avon Community School Board held a working session with Dr. Susan Brudvig presenting the Demographic Study recently prepared for the district. The Demographic Study was commissioned as a follow up to the Efficiency Task Force's work in the spring of 2015 during which boundaries and growth were discussed. At that time the Board elected not to address possible school boundary adjustments until an enrollment forecast could be completed.

Dr. Brudvig presented the key findings (see 12-slide handout and/or the entire 70+ page document)

Key Findings

- Enrollment Growth will continue to be steady but not explosive. (Slides 3 and 4 in handout)
- Enrollment Growth in our community is primarily a function of new residential construction with an estimated 50 school-aged children for every 100 new homes. (Slide 16)
- Once a housing permit is issued, it takes approximately two years until children impact enrollment.
- Apartments yield fewer students/unit than houses with 30 school-aged children/100 units.
- "Aging in place" is a factor that mitigates the impact of new construction. When a resident no longer has school-aged children but remains in his/her home, that existing home doesn't contribute new children to the district. The recent decline in home sales is being felt. Whether aging-in-place continues to influence remains to be seen.
- According to Census data the 50+ year population in Washington Township is growing at a faster rate than the total population. (Slide 7)
- The enrollment forecast includes a base, low and high forecast for next year, five years from now and 10 years from now. (Slides 10, 11, and 12)
- For grades K-4 the forecast for 2016-17 ranges from a low of +13 students to a high of +103 across all seven elementary schools.
- For grades 5-6 the forecast ranges from a low of -70 students to a high of -35 students.
- For grades 7-8 the forecast ranges from a low of +38 students to a high of +58 students.
- For high school the forecast ranges from a low of -27 students to -7 students.

Summary: Fewer students are anticipated in the intermediate schools and high schools in the short term. Very modest growth is forecast for elementary and middle schools. Without new residential development enrollment would decline.

Additional important information is contained in the full demographic study can be viewed at <http://www.avon-schools.org/Page/12857> including:

- o Narrative (Pages 61-65)
- o Forecast methodology and assumptions (Page 18)
- o Historical trends in enrollment/construction (Pages 19 & 21)
- o Birth rates in Hendricks County (Page 29)
- o Housing permit history (Page 47)
- o Private school enrollment (Page 31)
- o Enrollment forecast by grade levels (Pages 33-37)

Population forecast in north and south of township (Page 45)

Next Steps: The Board will have further discussion at its next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, March 7 at 7 p.m. in the Administration Center. The demographic study, coupled with other input, will be used for future planning. However, the Board did foreshadow its belief that adjusting K-4 boundaries will not be necessary for the 2016-17 school year. Additionally, building a new school does not appear to be imminent. However, portable classrooms at Hickory have been updated in case they are needed, and modifications to some existing schools may be needed in the case of overcrowding and/or a need for modernization (AIS East).

As always, I welcome your feedback. Feel free to email me at mehoernemann@avon-schools.org.

Sincerely,

Margaret Hoernemann
Superintendent

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