II. District Enrollment Trends

The Olathe Public Schools experienced continued enrollment growth from unification in 1965 until 2019. Due to the impacts of the ongoing pandemic, the district’s enrollment in 2020 declined by 1,055 students (3.5%). This decline was the result of students choosing other educational options (homeschool or online school). As the vaccine becomes available to a large segment of the population, it is estimated that the district will start growing again.

Olathe Public Schools has grown from 3,687 students served in 9 buildings to over 29,000 students served in 60 buildings in its 56 years. Recently enrollment growth in the District has slowed, resulting from a decrease in live birth rates. However, this year the district anticipates growing by 160 students.

Enrollment projections for Olathe Public Schools are based primarily upon historic enrollment information and new residential building permit information. Historic enrollment information would include District growth rate, program growth rate, student location and promotion rates. Enrollment data has been maintained since unification in 1965, with particular weight given to information in the past 3-5 years. This information is supplemented with residential building permit reports. The school District is broken down into 91 study areas (map grids). Building permits are mapped each quarter and information about the permit [the type of housing product (single family or multi-family), the developer of the subdivision and the price of the unit] is entered and analyzed with geographic information system (GIS) software. Changes within fully-developed areas of the District are estimated based on promotion rates by grade.

This process has created enrollment estimates that are within 1.0% of the actual enrollment of the District over the past 4 years, leading to a great deal of confidence in the methodology.

While the District’s methodologies have proven extremely accurate in projecting enrollment for the short-term, the District uses information from Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) for long-term enrollment projections. MARC is a non-profit association of city and county governments and the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the bi-state Kansas City region. MARC provides longterm enrollment estimates for the metro area and individual cities. Applying a ratio technique to those forecasts provides the District an estimate of 43,000-45,000 students at full build-out. Though with the district’s declining birth rate, and increasing average age of its population, the likelihood of reaching 40,000 students is decreasing.
II. District Enrollment Trends

The following chart provides actual enrollment information since 1965 and projected enrollments through 2024-25. All numbers represent student headcounts not FTE.

As demonstrated above, the District is anticipating a slower but steadily increasing enrollment over the next three years.