

Brief Summary of Local K-12 Enrollment Forecasts San Mateo Community College District

Introduction

According to projections made at the state level, San Mateo County's K-12 enrollment is projected to grow by 3% through 2019-20. Most of that growth (7%) is forecast for the secondary level; the California Department of Finance forecasts that the K- 6 cohort will grow by just one percent, signaling a coming decline in the college recruitment pool that will occur after the District's current strategic planning period.¹ The state's methodology for forecasting K-12 enrollments also will be subject to changes in coming years meaning that future projections may not be comparable with current forecasted trends.²

To supplement these state projections, the San Mateo Community College District's Executive Vice Chancellor asked her counterparts in elementary and secondary districts to share the projections they have developed. Not all districts responded; those that did are captured below. It is recommended that this process become a systematic, if not annual, exercise for SMCCCD that will allow more precision in anticipating future community college enrollment.

A demographic trend in the general San Mateo district area has been declining birthrates, particularly since the onset of the Great Recession. Some have predicted that this decline will lead to lower elementary school enrollment in the near-to-immediate future. However, as Enrollment Projections Consultants found in their study of Las Lomas Elementary District, the method of using local birthrates to forecast future elementary school enrollment is not hugely predictive of Kindergarten enrollment in the greater San Mateo area. This is because a of the highly mobile, knowledge-economy workforce now in this area and those that may come. On the other hand, outmigration by existing residents to counties in the Bay Area with more affordable housing than San Mateo and San Francisco Counties also is a factor in predicting future public school enrollments.³ Although birthrates are declining, in-migration into the district may offset that decline. These trends bear close monitoring by the District.

K-8 Projections

Las Lomas Elementary School District/Las Entrada K-8. Projections for enrollment growth in this district are modest. Even while controlling for declining birthrates and in-migration, the District expects to increase by 94 students between 2013 and 2023, for a total of 1,478 students.⁴ This represents a 6 percent increase.

Menlo Park City School District K-8. Menlo Park City School District forecasted enrollment growth over a ten-year period from 2013-2023. They expect enrollment to grow in K-8 by 221 students from 2,869 to 3,090, a total increase of 7.7 percent.⁵

Jefferson Elementary School District K-8. Comprising 14 schools, the Jefferson School District enrolled 6,229 students in the 2012-2013 school year. The District projects a modest decline in elementary school enrollment between 2013-14 and 2018 of 3 percent (138 students) with an increase of middle school students over that same period (178 students, or a 10 percent increase). Overall, the district expects a decrease of 12 students between 2013-14 and 2018-19, a decrease of less than one percent.⁶

South San Francisco Unified School District. Nine elementary schools are predicted to grow from 2011 to 2016 by 253 students, an increase of 6 percent. The District's three middle schools were predicted to grow during the same time period by 179 students, an increase of 9 percent.

Secondary School Projections

San Mateo Union High School District. The SMUHS District estimates an increase of 1,471 students between 2015 and 2020 in its seven high schools, representing a 17.7 percent increase.⁷ As seen below, forecasts for individual high schools vary.

San Mateo Union High School District Enrollment Predicted Change in Student Enrollment, 2015-2020

	Increased Students	Percentage change
Aragon High School	364	24.7%
Burlingame High School	254	18.6%
Capuchino High School	52	4.6%
Hillsdale High School	321	23.8%
Mills High School	161	12.9%
Peninsula Alternative High School	-15	-8.7%
San Mateo High School	334	21.3%
TOTAL	1471	17.7%

South San Francisco Unified School District. Taken as a whole, little enrollment change is forecast for secondary enrollment in this District. Its two high schools, however, will vary considerably.⁸ El Camino High School was expected to lose 181 students from 2011 to 2016, a decrease of 14 percent. South San Francisco High School, in contrast was expected to grow by 202 students to 1,837 from 2011 to 2016, an increase of 12 percent.

¹ California Department of Finance. (2013, December). California Public K–12 Graded Enrollment and High School Graduate Projections by County — 2013 Series. Retrieved at <http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/projections/k-12/>

² Enrollment projections are generally based on projected kindergarten counts, which in turn are based on birthrates in those districts. Kindergarten counts, however, have been changing in California as the state mandated a shift in the official cutoff date for Kindergarten entry, which had previously been December 2 has been shifted to November 1 for 2013, October 1 for 2014, and will be September 1 for years going forward. This will create a distributional shift in Kindergarten and subsequent enrollment in the coming years and may create a short-term shift in community college enrollments between 2025 and 2030.

³ Sulek, J. California report: Bay Area Population Gains are Strongest in State. San Jose Mercury News. 13 December 2013. Web. Accessed January 20, 2015.

⁴ 2014. Las Lomas Elementary School District Projected Enrollments from 2013-2023 (2014, March). Enrollment Projection Consultants, San Mateo, CA.

⁵ Sheikholeslami, Ahmad, Director of Facilities and Operations, Menlo Park City School District. Response to request for enrollment projections. October 22, 2014.

⁵ McManus, Elizabeth, Deputy Superintendent, San Mateo Union High School District. Response to request for enrollment Projections. October 22, 2014.

⁶ Demographic Study 2012-13. Jefferson Elementary School District

⁷ McManus, Elizabeth, Deputy Superintendent, San Mateo Union High School District. Response to request for enrollment projections. October 22, 2014.

⁸ Ernsberger, Patricia, Assistant Superintendent Business Services. Response to request for enrollment projections. October 22, 2014.