

# Population Notes

A look at the demography and geography of Wisconsin



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Applied Population Laboratory • Department of Community and Environmental Sociology • UW-Madison

## Projecting Statewide Public School Enrollment in Wisconsin

In 2007, the Applied Population Laboratory conducted a statewide enrollment projections study examining school enrollment changes as they related to Wisconsin's broader demographic trends. This newsletter examines school enrollment patterns since that time and the impact that demographic and economic trends have had on public school enrollment. A set of updated public school enrollment projections will also be highlighted.

### Patterns of Growth and Decline

Between 2008/09 and 2013/14, 59% of Wisconsin's school districts experienced enrollment decline. However, enrollment decline has not occurred uniformly across the state. Several school districts have seen increases in enrollment over the last several years. Districts experiencing growth and those declining balance out one another, so that statewide school enrollment has seen

only a slight decline (0.1% decline in students between 2008/09 and 2013/14). Some urban school districts and several suburban and exurban school districts have seen increases in enrollment, while rural school districts and larger urban school districts have experienced decline (Figure 1).

### Fewer Kindergarteners/More 4-K

The number of kindergarteners enrolling in school in recent years has not replaced the number of graduating high school seniors largely due to the delay in births from the Millennial generation (children of the Baby Boomers). However, the growing popularity of the four-year old kindergarten program to many districts throughout the state has meant that recent decline in enrollment has not been as severe as it may have been without the program.

### Updated Enrollment Projections

Based on cohort component models, the Applied Population Laboratory generated projections for statewide public school enrollment including projection by race/ethnicity and by urban/suburban/rural locale. It should be noted that our public school enrollment projections do not include charter schools outside of public school districts. The models suggest that there will be a slight increase at the state level for two years followed by more significant growth (Figure 2). The majority of growth will be at the in middle schools and high schools, while elementary school enrollment will decline after two years of growth.

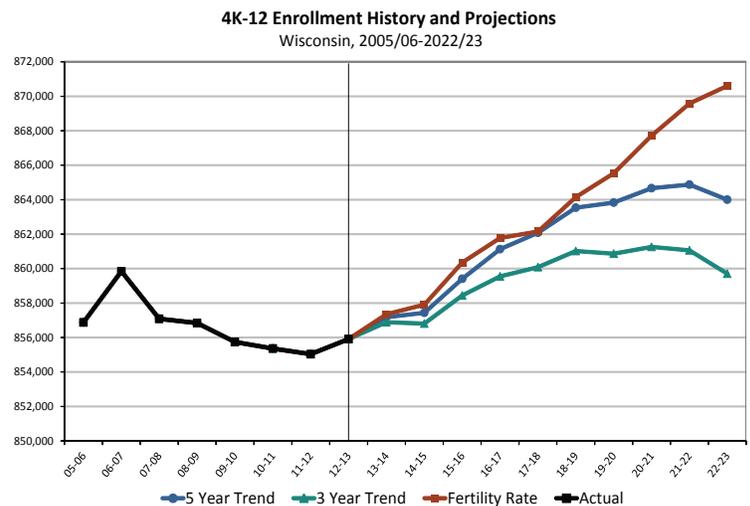
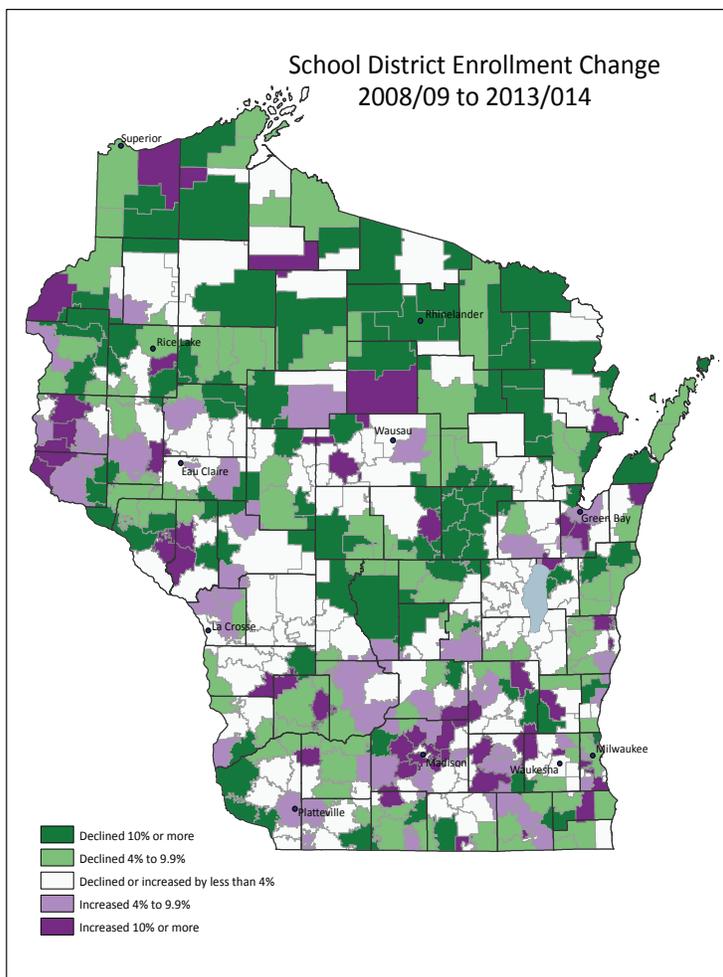


Figure 2 Enrollment trend with projections

Figure 1 Map of School District Enrollment Change



## Differences in projected enrollment by race and ethnicity

Projections by race/ethnicity point to the growing influence of the Hispanic population on Wisconsin's schools. Hispanic and Asian students are projected to increase while African American and Native American students are projected to remain steady in the coming years. Non-Hispanic White enrollment is projected to decline fairly significantly for the foreseeable future.

## Differences in projected enrollment by area type

Enrollment change will vary depending on the location of a school district. Urban school districts are projected

to decline slightly and then rebound with steadily increasing enrollment. Suburban districts are projected to experience continued enrollment growth over the next several years. Rural districts, on the other hand, are projected to decline due to fewer births and older adults aging in place. (Figure 3). Even if statewide public school enrollment and enrollment in urban and suburban districts generally increases over the next ten years, many Wisconsin's districts may still face decline, especially in the elementary grades.

Although projections models suggest that total statewide enrollment will increase in the near future, rates of growth and decline will vary greatly by grade grouping, race/ethnicity, and the location of school districts. These school enrollment projections provide a realistic range of migration and transfer effects on public schools in Wisconsin. A more detailed paper regarding these statewide projections can be found here:

[http://apl.wisc.edu/publications/WI\\_School\\_Enrollment\\_Projections\\_2014.pdf](http://apl.wisc.edu/publications/WI_School_Enrollment_Projections_2014.pdf)

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To find out more information about this and other APL projects visit our website at: [www.apl.wisc.edu](http://www.apl.wisc.edu)

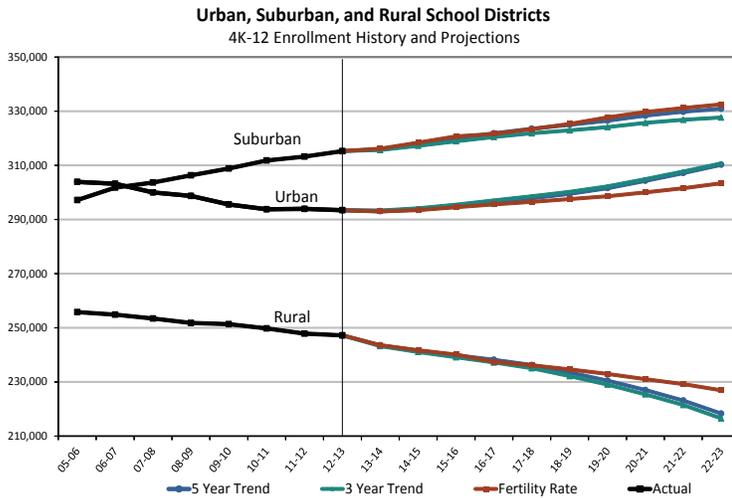


Figure 3 Enrollment trends and projections by type of area

## APL News

In January, **Dan Veroff** stepped away from his role as Director of the Applied Population Laboratory. Dan will still be at the APL and will be focusing more on outreach and education activities for Extension and for the Wisconsin State Data Center. The APL will now be in the very capable hands of **Katherine Curtis**, who was appointed as director, and **David Long**, who was appointed as Associate Director. Both Katherine and Dave bring experience and vision to their roles and will be wonderful guides for future directions and development of the APL. In February, the Applied Population Laboratory will be saying farewell to **James Beaudoin**. Jim accepted a position at the State of Wisconsin Legislative Technology Services Bureau. Over the years, Jim has played a vital role in the APL and has been a wonderful colleague and friend. We will all miss him but are happy that he is nearby and in a partner agency. We wish Jim the best of everything and look forward to ongoing collaborative work on several important projects.

## Ongoing at the APL

-  Follow the APL on Twitter by clicking here [@AppliedPopLab](#) or by searching for UW-APL on Twitter
- For information about recent APL publications and projects, please visit: <http://www.apl.wisc.edu/publications.php>
- The US Counties Net Migration site ([www.netmigration.wisc.edu](http://www.netmigration.wisc.edu)) was featured in a poster session at the 2014 Applied Demography Conference in San Antonio, TX. View the poster here: [http://www.apl.wisc.edu/publications/migration\\_signatures\\_poster.pdf](http://www.apl.wisc.edu/publications/migration_signatures_poster.pdf)
- Bill Buckingham and David Egan-Robertson are using innovative small area population forecasting methods and age-specific incidence rates to help policymakers in New Hampshire plan for healthcare needs of state residents. Their efforts are part of a collaborative effort to build an interactive tool called MapNH Health: <http://www.unh.edu/campusjournal/2014/01/map-nh-health-brings-states-health-future-focus>



The Applied Population Laboratory (APL) is a research and outreach unit within the Department of Community and Environmental Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Please contact us at:

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