

## Colorado Springs District 11 - Competitiveness Strategies and Potential Enrollment Forecast Effects – 12/19/18

**Introduction** – A variety of dynamics will result in District 11 continuing to decline in enrollment during the next five to ten years. A declining birth rate, student departure to adjacent districts and charters and the departure of families from the heart of the city in favor of the suburbs will contribute to this decline. The District is well positioned to use competitiveness strategies to reduce departure and attract students from throughout the County. These strategies could possibly defray 25 – 33 percent of the forecast departure. The impacts on individual schools during the next five years and overall enrollment during the next ten years are forecast in this report along with recommendations to address competitiveness.

**Strategies to Address Declining Enrollment** – School districts with declining enrollments have adopted a variety of strategies to attempt to reverse departure. Many districts have closed schools as enrollment has contracted, but have created neighborhood voids where no public schools exist in a 1- 2-mile square area. In some cases, these districts have seen even more departure as families have looked for other options such as adjacent districts or charters when their local schools closed.

**Competitiveness Strategies** – Declining districts that have chosen to implement a variety of competitiveness strategies in order to retain existing residents or attract students from adjacent districts. Strategies employed include the following:

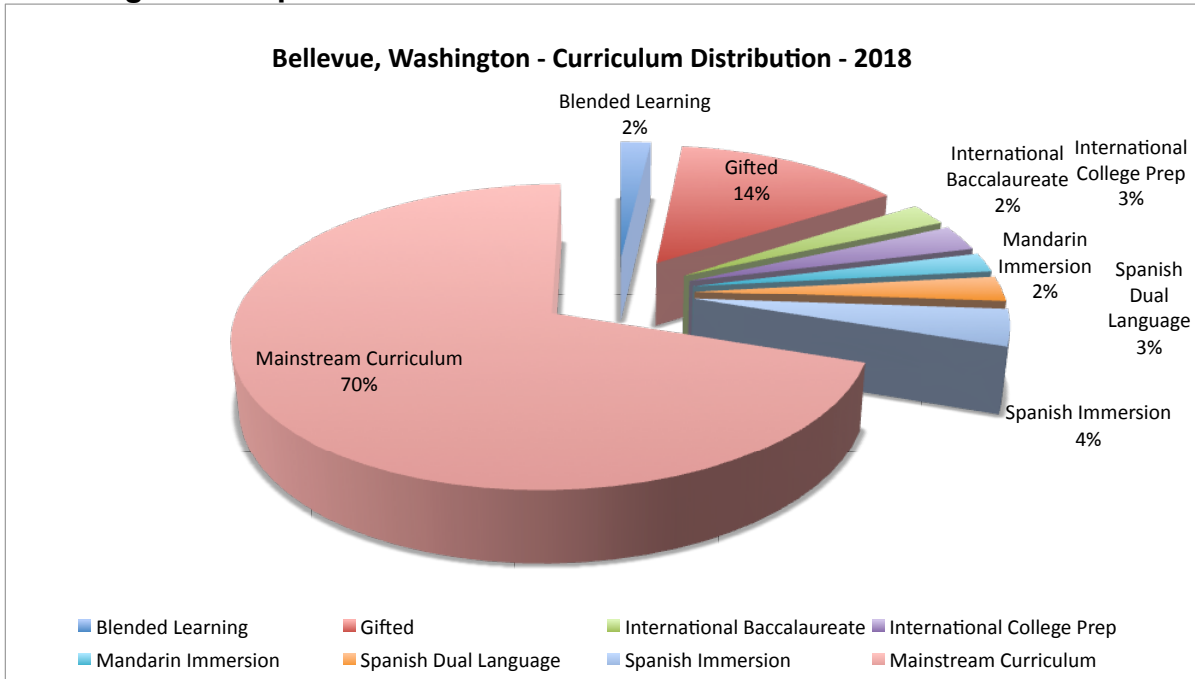
- Specialized Curriculums
  - Curriculum Stranding
- Individual School Branding and Marketing
- Enhanced Service Levels / 7am-5pm / 6am-6pm School Hours / Preschool / Full Day K
  - Building Renewal
  - Pervasive Chartering

**Effective Practice in Specialized Curriculums** - Many districts have become more competitive in order to retain enrollment and have used specialized curriculums in order to attract students from geographic areas larger than their attendance areas and districts. Effective practice includes marketing curriculum identity over school identity. Districts also implement stranding strategies to keep students in specialized curriculums as they advance from elementary to middle to high school. Specialized curriculums can include STEM / STEAM, World Languages, Blended Learning, Gifted, Space, Technology, IB, Core Knowledge, College Prep and Others. Some districts engage specialized curriculums as extensive as thirty percent of total enrollment or more.

In Colorado, Poudre, Denver Public Schools, Academy 20 and several other districts have effectively engaged specialized curriculums in order to attract and retain enrollment and these three districts have cemented effective practices in this regard. Elsewhere, throughout the western U. S. other districts have discovered that informed parents are actively seeking unique curriculums for their students and have the financial ability to transport their students to schools that meet their goals. Bellevue School District 405 in Bellevue, Washington is an

example of a wealthier district that supports 30 percent or more specialized curriculums, predominantly without transportation to the sites that offer the specialized curriculums.

**Figure 1 – Specialized Curriculums in Bellevue 405 School District**



While District 11 may not chose to go quite this far in deploying specialized curriculums, it should keep in mind that the majority of its departing students do have the ability to transport themselves elsewhere and these families might choose to remain if a specialized program met their needs.

**Recommendation #1** – The district should Catalog its existing specialized curricular offerings and conduct an assessment of curricular voids in El Paso County that might be successful programs offered in District 11.

**Barriers to Achievement of Recommendation #1**

- Cost of Implementing Specialized Curriculums
- Pressure to Adhere to a Single Unified Curriculum
- State Testing Goals
- Resistance to Change

**Effective Practice in School / Curriculum Stranding** - In order to retain students level-to-level, specialized curriculums must matriculate clearly from elementary to middle to high school levels. Fewer students depart given these opportunities and guest students from other districts are retained. Student peer relationships are better preserved and become more of a factor for retention. Transportation needs must be addressed, but in many cases districts are able to use shuttles, transfer buses and ride sharing programs to offer parents transportation options. Both Poudre School District in Ft. Collins and Bellevue are examples that have programs at all levels for their major specialized curriculums. These districts work to market these curriculums as continuous strands and target marketing toward the curriculum and the buildings that offer it rather than linking to the district.

Curricular stranding is a strategy effectively used by the Classical Academy Charter and other El Paso County charter schools to build brand loyalty to the curriculum and then offer it at all three levels by expanding grade levels as funding allows. This is a strategy that serves districts with well-developed specialized curriculums such as IB and Core Knowledge in Poudre School District where there are three or four facilities at two or three levels offering this curriculum for parents and students that are committed to the curriculum. Poudre currently has three IB World School elementary schools, an Early Years middle school IB program followed by its high school program at Poudre High School. Core Knowledge is widely deployed in elementary and middle school locations in the southeastern portion of the District and is only partially implemented at Fossil Ridge High School because the Hirsch curriculum does not extend beyond 9<sup>th</sup> grade. District 11's degree of curricular stranding is limited by a variety of factors and does not approach the extent of these examples and the District yields competitiveness to adjacent districts in this regard.

**Recommendation #2** – The District should conduct a careful examination of its efforts to strand its specialized curriculum offerings so that interest in these will survive as students move from elementary to middle to high school. The District should further identify the barriers for matriculation for students seeking to remain in these programs.

**Barriers to Achievement of Recommendation #2**

- Cost of Expanding Specialized Curriculums So That They Cover Elementary, Middle and High School
- Available Space in Buildings in Appropriate Locations So That the Schools May Be Linked
- Transportation Costs
- Coordination Between the Buildings Offering Specialized Curriculum
- Lack of a Unified Strategy for the Curriculums

**Effective Practice in Individual School Branding** - Parent awareness of school locations, programs and branding can frequently be stronger than district boundary and branding knowledge. Urban districts that focus on school identities and curriculum identities are frequently more able to retain students. Charters schools, including those in El Paso County, frequently use signage, print and television advertising, social media and billboards to market their programs. Many school districts have begun to use similar techniques, but most use a centralized district identity that can frequently be counter productive.

Inexpensive banners are easily created by local signage companies and can be easily attached to the outside of buildings. Many of the local charters have used this avenue to freshen and excite the external appearance of their buildings. Even newer District 11 buildings seem bland when there are no “ornaments on the tree”. The charters, many of which are in older buildings, are using signage, entry banners and billboards to promote programs in direct competition with public programs. Much of this material references multiple curriculums housed in single facilities. Trailblazer is an example of a newer building that seems to fade into its surroundings.

**Figure 2 – Trailblazer Elementary**

Much success is possible when districts establish school-based identities and assign marketing resources to schools and not an overall district identity that might be hampered by reputations or incidents completely unrelated to individual schools. Marketing consultants and stand-alone websites are among the considerations that can assist individual schools. Principals, teachers and office staff can all be trained to be advocates and sale people for their buildings. Many charters train staff in this regard in order to attract and retain enrollment. Brochures and individual-school-specific promotional material should also be dependably available. Concentrating individual school web presence on central district websites creates a confused message for many parents. Website technologies can just as easily create individual school websites on centralized web servers without emphasizing the overall district identity.

**Recommendation #3** – The District should pursue a pragmatic marketing strategy that borrows the best strategies from the business world and the charter schools and abandons the insistence on the District brand over individual school identities.

**Barriers to Achievement of Recommendation #3**

- Cost of Developing Strategies, Training and Materials
- Hubris
- Lack of a Strategy and Cost-Benefit Analysis

**Effective Practice in Enhanced Service Levels** – Given the lower socio-economic status of many District 11 residents, a program of enhanced level of service could effectively retain and attract enrollment. The following services are effective practices for school districts seeking to better serve families and retain and attract enrollment:

- Extended School Day Services
  - Preschool Programs
  - Full Day Kindergarten Programs
- Family Health Care Services Offered in the School
  - Adult Education Opportunities for Parents

Many urban charters are exploring 7am to 5pm or 6am to 6pm building hours and using a variety of mechanisms to augment the childcare capacity of families with low- or no-cost services. Public school districts are increasingly exploring comprehensive strategies to combine the normal school day with funded before and after school child care programs in order to offer a longer school day. Funding for preschool programs and low cost user-pay programs can also be developed to serve four- and three-year-old students. These efforts might develop customer loyalties and retain and attract enrollment.

**Recommendation #4** – The District should develop an inventory of existing services for low and moderate-income families and develop a strategic plan addressing how a higher level of service could retain and attract enrollment.

#### **Barriers to Achievement of Recommendation #4**

- Cost
- Lack of Data, Analysis and a Plan
- Logistics of Implementing a Coordinated System

**Building Renewal** – Many Colorado school districts have begun a process of school building replacement as baby boom era facilities have either worn out or have become expensive to operate. District 11 operate dozens of school buildings older than 1970 and many older than 1960 as shown in Figure 3. Many of these facilities operate with enrollments around 300 or smaller which is a National threshold for the consideration of closure or consolidation. Newer facilities typically attract more students and many districts have realized that combining multiple smaller, older facilities into fewer new, larger facilities can attract enrollment. Also, staff deployment can be more efficient and effective when elementary student body size is 500 or more. Denver Metro Area districts are examining the benefits of four- and five-round schools as they relate to special teachers such in these content areas: Art, music, physical education, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language therapy, special education, STEM and other content delivered by partial FTE and itinerate teachers.

**Recommendation #5** – The District should explore its smaller, older schools regarding their potential for replacement, consolidation, combination and/or partial renewal.

#### **Barriers to Achievement of Recommendation #5**

- Cost of Replacement Facilities
- Reluctance to Close Additional Schools in the Wake of the 2009 Closures

**Figure 3 – District Facilities Sorted by Year-built**

School	2018 Enroll	Capacity w/o Portables	Portable Capacity	Capacity w Portables	Year Built
West_Elem	229	338	0	338	1923
North	688	878	0	878	1923
West_MS	286	349	0	349	1923
Palmer	1588	2244	0	2244	1939
Queen_Palmer	220	263	50	313	1948
Steele	293	288	0	288	1953
Stratton	301	275	0	275	1953
Taylor	226	288	0	288	1953
Galileo	503	720	0	720	1954
Audubon	353	425	0	425	1956
Buena_Vista	165	250	0	250	1956
Edison	291	263	0	263	1956
Midland	199	263	0	263	1956
Mann	465	765	0	765	1957
Howbert	245	313	50	363	1959
Rogers	343	338	50	388	1960
Twain	382	550	0	550	1962
Adams	441	388	50	438	1963
Madison	294	363	0	363	1964
Monroe	403	375	50	425	1964
Mitchell	1140	1938	0	1938	1965
Grant	464	424	50	474	1966
Jackson	351	225	150	375	1966
Swigert	573	788	0	788	1967
Holmes	650	698	0	698	1968
Columbia	272	263	0	263	1969
Wilson	357	350	100	450	1969
Coronado	1315	1887	0	1887	1970
Bristol	232	300	0	300	1971
Carver	291	363	40	403	1971
Henry	317	375	50	425	1971
Keller	410	475	0	475	1971
Russell	610	810	0	810	1971
Fremont	397	400	100	500	1973
Penrose	376	413	100	513	1973
Sabin	739	968	0	968	1975
Doherty	2036	2117	0	2117	1975
Rudy	322	450	50	500	1978
King	330	475	0	475	1984
Chipeta	434	550	0	550	1987
Martinez	411	550	60	610	1988
Scott	570	550	55	605	1998
Trailblazer	294	525	0	525	1998
Jenkins	955	1058	0	1058	1999
Freedom	424	575	30	605	2007
McAuliffe	495	550	25	575	2007

**Pervasive Chartering** – Some urban districts have pervasively chartered schools with specialized curriculums and these efforts have resulted in the retention of enrollment. Denver Public Schools is an example of an urban district that has somewhat achieved this in an environment of housing evolution and gentrification. There may be some benefit for District 11 to take an analytical look at DPS Charter scale in order to understand the benefit to

that strategy and ascertain the extent to which chartering has benefited DPS. This exploration could potentially benefit District 11.

**Recommendation #6** – The district should explore Denver Public Schools charter school history and extent and ascertain its strategic relevance to District 11.

**Barriers to Achievement of Recommendation #6**

- Current Funding and Policy Trajectory

**Potential Increases in the Enrollment Forecast Realized From the Implementation of Competitiveness Strategies** – Estimates of the benefits that could be realized from the pervasive implementation of the competitiveness strategies mentioned here could result in the retention of 25% - 33% of the forecast enrollment loss through 2028. Figures 4, 5 and 6 offer these details in tabular form. Figure 4 illustrates the calculation of a credit against enrollment loss for individual schools that loose enrollment over the five-year period through 2023 and calculates overall credits for elementary, middle and high school for the period 2023 – 2028. Figure 5 calculates revised forecasts by school for the period 2019 – 2023 for the low benefit estimate of 25 percent shown in grey and the 33 percent high benefit estimate shown in yellow. Figure 6 shows a summary of school level revised projections through 2028 for the 25 and 33 percent models. Given the fact that these figures are estimates, the summary figures may not perfectly reconcile.

**Recommendation #7** – The district should explore and develop competitiveness strategies and articulate the potential enrollment retention benefits so that the cost / benefit of specific actions may be evaluated.

**Barriers to Achievement of Recommendation #7**

- Current Funding and Policy Trajectory

**Figure 4 - Calculation of Enrollment Preserved by Competitiveness Strategies**

**Colorado Springs Dist. 11 - Potential Reductions in Enrollment Loss Due to Competitiveness Strategies - 12/19/18**

Neighborhood Schools Only			2023 Enrollment Benefits from Competitive Strategies - Neighborhood Schools				2028 Enrollment Benefits from Competitive Strategies - All Schools					
School	2018 Enroll	2023	Enrollment Change 2018 - 2023	Percentage Loss Reduction - Low Range	Loss Reduction	Percentage Loss Reduction - High Range	Loss Reduction	2018 All Schools	2028 Summary Enrollment	Enrollment Change 2018 - 2028	Percentage Loss Reduction - Low Range	Percentage Loss Reduction - High Range
<b>Elementary</b>				<b>25%</b>		<b>33%</b>					<b>25%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Adams	440	460	20	25%		33%						
Audubon	354	294	-60	25%	-15	33%	-20					
Bristol	231	163	-68	25%	-17	33%	-23					
Buena Vista	172	185	13	25%		33%						
Carver	297	178	-119	25%	-30	33%	-39					
Chipeta	441	459	18	25%		33%						
Columbia	269	242	-27	25%	-7	33%	-9					
Edison	293	290	-3	25%		33%						
Freedom	433	422	-11	25%		33%						
Fremont	407	405	-2	25%		33%						
Grant	457	454	-3	25%		33%						
Henry	309	228	-81	25%	-20	33%	-27					
Howbert	247	242	-5	25%	-1	33%	-2					
Jackson	367	273	-94	25%	-23	33%	-31					
Keller	421	372	-49	25%	-12	33%	-16					
King	328	354	26	25%		33%						
Madison	301	298	-3	25%	-1	33%	-1					
Martinez	415	435	20	25%		33%						
McAuliffe	484	506	22	25%	5	33%	7					
Midland	199	169	-30	25%	-7	33%	-10					
Monroe	409	365	-44	25%	-11	33%	-14					
Penrose	374	377	3	25%	1	33%	1					
Queen Palmer	230	197	-33	25%		33%						
Rogers	342	331	-11	25%	-3	33%	-4					
Rudy	307	255	-52	25%	-13	33%	-17					
Scott	572	558	-14	25%	-4	33%	-5					
Steele	291	271	-20	25%		33%						
Stratton	299	331	32	25%		33%						
Taylor	228	151	-77	25%	-19	33%	-25					
Trailblazer	303	272	-31	25%	-8	33%	-10					
Twain	383	271	-112	25%	-28	33%	-37					
West Elem	242	191	-51	25%	-13	33%	-17					
Wilson	368	336	-32	25%		33%						
<b>Total</b>	<b>11213</b>	<b>10337</b>	<b>-876</b>		<b>-225</b>		<b>-298</b>	<b>12232</b>	<b>9373</b>	<b>-2859</b>	<b>-715</b>	<b>-943</b>
<b>Middle School</b>				<b>25%</b>		<b>33%</b>					<b>25%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Galileo	503	475	-28	25%	-7	33%	-9					
Holmes	660	552	-108	25%	-27	33%	-36					
Jenkins	958	771	-187	25%	-47	33%	-62					
Mann	462	298	-164	25%	-41	33%	-54					
North	684	616	-68	25%	-17	33%	-22					
Russell	611	478	-133	25%	-33	33%	-44					
Sabin	752	584	-168	25%	-42	33%	-55					
Swigert	598	452	-146	25%	-37	33%	-48					
West MS	289	226	-63	25%	-16	33%	-21					
<b>Total</b>	<b>5517</b>	<b>4451</b>	<b>-1066</b>		<b>-267</b>		<b>-352</b>	<b>5729</b>	<b>3894</b>	<b>-1835</b>	<b>-459</b>	<b>-606</b>
<b>High School</b>												
Coronado	1304	1119	-185	25%	-46	33%	-61					
Doherty	2004	1836	-168	25%	-42	33%	-55					
Mitchell	1254	1335	81									
Palmer	1581	1523	-58									
<b>Total</b>	<b>6143</b>	<b>5814</b>	<b>-329</b>		<b>-88</b>		<b>-116</b>	<b>7860</b>	<b>5977</b>	<b>-1883</b>	<b>-471</b>	<b>-621</b>
<b>Neighborhood School Competitive Effect Totals</b>	<b>22873</b>		<b>-2271</b>		<b>-580</b>		<b>-766</b>			<b>-6577</b>	<b>-1644</b>	<b>-2170</b>
<b>All Schools Competitive Effect Totals</b>	<b>26597</b>	<b>23454</b>	<b>-3143</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>-786</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>-1037</b>		<b>20020</b>	<b>-6577</b>	<b>-1644</b>	<b>-2170</b>





**Figure 6 – Increases in Enrollment Forecast by Level Given Implementation of Competitiveness Strategies – 2019 - 2028**

Current Forecast	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
K-5	12232	11793	11441	11065	10682	10469	10251	10027	9809	9591	9373
6-8	5729	5655	5369	5176	5005	4757	4490	4222	4118	4009	3894
9-12	7860	7784	7769	7726	7655	7452	7154	6931	6555	6275	5977
K-12	25821	25232	24578	23967	23342	22678	21894	21181	20482	19875	19244
PS	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776
Tot w PS	26597	26008	25354	24743	24118	23454	22670	21957	21258	20651	20020

25% Competitiveness Strategy Improved Projection	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
K-5	12232	11903	11638	11356	11070	10910	10746	10578	10415	10251	10087
6-8	5729	5673	5459	5315	5186	5000	4800	4599	4521	4439	4353
9-12	7860	7803	7792	7760	7706	7554	7330	7163	6881	6671	6448
K-12	25821	25379	24889	24431	23962	23464	22876	22341	21816	21361	20888
PS	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776
Tot w PS	26597	26155	25665	25207	24738	24240	23652	23117	22592	22137	21664

33% Competitiveness Strategy Improved Projection	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
K-5	12232	11938	11702	11450	11194	11051	10905	10755	10609	10462	10316
6-8	5729	5679	5488	5359	5244	5078	4899	4720	4650	4577	4500
9-12	7860	7809	7799	7770	7723	7587	7387	7238	6985	6798	6599
K-12	25821	25426	24988	24579	24160	23715	23190	22712	22244	21837	21414
PS	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776	776
Tot w PS	26597	26202	25764	25355	24936	24491	23966	23488	23020	22613	22190

**Conclusion** – A variety of dynamics will result in District 11 continuing to decline in enrollment during the next five to ten years. The District is well positioned to use competitiveness strategies to reduce departure and attract students from throughout the County. These strategies could possibly defray 25 – 33 percent of the forecast departure. The impacts on individual schools during the next five years and overall District enrollment during the next ten years are forecast in this report. The district could significantly benefit from the implementation of these strategies via the retention of as many as 2,170 students.