MICHIGAN ALLIANCE FOR student opportunity

Enrollment Projection Services
Interpretation Guide

Michigan Alliance for Student Opportunity (formerly Middle Cities Education Association) is introducing an updated enrollment projection report methodology that reflects national changes in enrollment projections. The Alliance has attempted to make our enrollment projection report as easy to understand as possible. However, being primarily a statistical report, it does require a certain amount of analysis. This guide is designed to assist you in using your report.

National enrollment methods have shifted in recent years due to several factors: Birth numbers do not have the same stable relationship with kindergarten enrollments; More school choice across and within communities creates challenges for smaller districts; A declining and more transient population have altered year-to-year consistency. Kindergarten enrollments will no longer be determined by county birth rates as the relationship between births and kindergarten enrollments is only relevant in very stable communities and larger districts, of which there are few. Instead, we will rely on a smoothed growth model for kindergarten.

New methodology for the Alliance's enrollment projections includes the following:

- An exponential smoothing projection for kindergarten (and Pre-K, if requested) enrollments as the most conservative approach for declining enrollment districts because recent data is weighted higher.
- A five-year moving average kindergarten enrollment level as the more aggressive approach for declining enrollment districts because past data is given equal weight to recent.
- A grade-by-grade weighted persistency ratio puts more emphasis on the most recent year.
- A two-year average persistency rate for each grade.
- Combined methods using each kindergarten projection and each grade level progression method.

Note: "persistency ratio" is defined as percentage of students continuing to the next grade from the previous grade in the prior year.

Your report contains **four models for enrollment projection using the methods described above along with a fifth model averaging them all.** The models follow the following formulas:

Model 1 – Exponential smoothing for kindergarten, subsequent grades assume students persist at a 3-year weighted moving average rate with the emphasis on the most recent year.

Model 2 – 5-year moving average kindergarten level, subsequent grades assume students persist at a 2-year moving average rate with equal weight on the two most recent years.

Model 3 – Exponential smoothing for kindergarten, subsequent grades assume students persist at a 2-year moving average rate with equal weight on the two most recent years.

Model 4 – 5-year moving average kindergarten level, subsequent grades assume students persist at a 3-year weighted moving average rate with the emphasis on the most recent year.

Model 5 – Average of Models 1-4.

Your projections are based upon enrollment numbers for mainstreamed K-12 students only. Special education students are usually not included in projections because of the unpredictable nature of their progress through each grade. Your report includes the following tables and graphs:

1. **Baseline table** – current and past enrollment: your district's enrollment for the past six years listed by grade along with average annual growth for each grade and the total.
2. **Baseline bar graphs** – current and past enrollment for your district as a total and by grade band.
3. **5-year enrollment projection tables, by method** – five tables with 5-year enrollment projections for your district based on the methods described previously. These tables include an overall 5-year growth/decline percentage comparing 5 years out with the most recent year.
4. **5-year enrollment projection tables by grade** – grade-by-grade tables comparing each of the five methods.
5. **Method tables** – detailed grade-by-grade projection table for each of the five methods including:
    a. 5-year change in number of students by grade
    b. 5-year overall percentage change in students by grade
    c. Average annual change for each grade
6. **Method graphs** – overall and grade band bar graphs for each of the five methods
7. **Method comparison line graph** – visual total enrollment projection comparison for each of the five methods
8. **Grade-by-grade method comparison line graphs** – visual enrollment projection comparison for each of the five methods for each grade level
9. **10-year enrollment projection tables** – 10-year projection for each grade level using the five methods. Also includes an overall projected 10-year percentage change in total enrollment.
10. **Method comparison tables** – a one-year side-by-side comparison by grade level for each of the five methods. Includes a number change in the number of students as well as the percentage change from the current year to next year's projection.