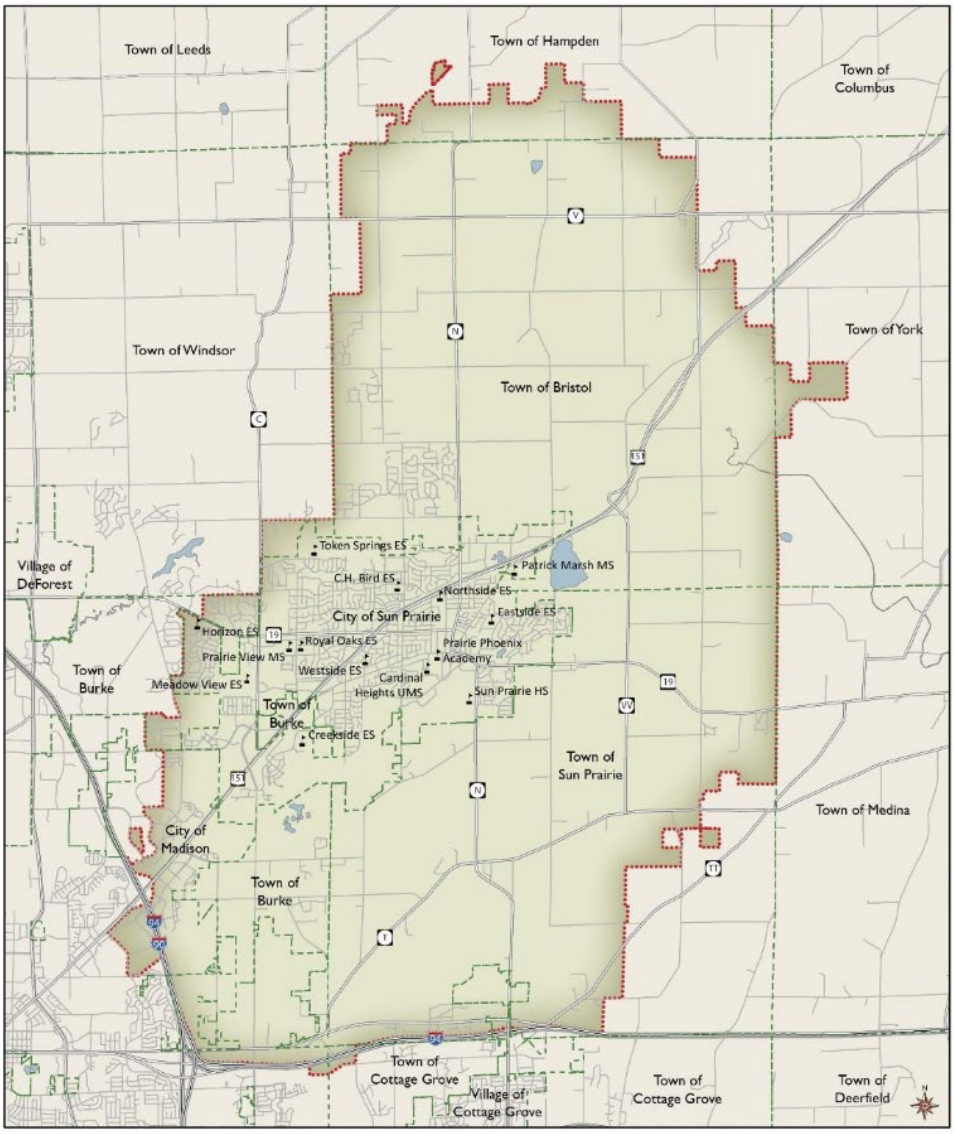
Planning for the Schools of Tomorrow



School Enrollment Projections

Sun Prairie Area School District

February 2026

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Executive Summary

This report provides an enrollment projections analysis for the Sun Prairie Area School District by the Applied Population Laboratory (APL) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The projections are presented district-wide, individually for each grade, and for grade groupings at the current elementary (5K through 5th), middle (6th - 8th) and high (9th - 12th) school levels. This report takes into consideration past enrollment, recent and projected births, and population and housing trends to predict future student change over the coming five to ten years. Some highlights of this report:

The district's Fall 2025 enrollment for PK through 12th grade was 8,519 students. Total district enrollment has increased by 289 students or +3.5% since 2016-17. Over the first half of decade, enrollment rose initially for two years then fell slightly. The last three years' enrollment has fluctuated slightly.

- The elementary schools' enrollment of 3,337 is 242 fewer (-7%) than in 2016-17. Decreases occurred particularly during the pandemic.
- The middle schools' enrollment, at 1,932 this fall, is 210 higher (+12%) than in 2016-17. Middle school enrollment also dropped during the pandemic.
- The high schools' enrollment, currently 2,783, has increased by 413 students (+17%) since 2016-17. High school enrollment grew significantly during the pandemic.

From 2010 to 2020, as measured by the decennial Censuses, the number of households with children in the district increased 787 or +13.5%. This growth contrasts with the percentage decline seen at the state level (-5.5%). The recent birth and kindergarten trends in the district have increased.

Overall, PK -12th grade enrollment, at 8,519 in 2025-26, is projected to range from 8,245 to 8,640 in five years, a numeric change of -274 to +121 students and percentage change of -3% to +1.4%.

- The 5K – 5th grade elementary classes, currently 3,337 students, are projected to range from 3,341 to 3,381 in five years, a change of +4 to +44 students or +0.1% to +1.3%.
- The 6th – 8th middle school grades, at 1,932 students, are projected to range from 1,634 to 1,779 in 2029-30, a change of -298 to -153 students or -15% to -8%.
- The 9th - 12th grade high school classes, with 2,783 students in 2025-26, are projected to range from 2,753 to 3,033 in five years, a change of -30 to +250 students or -1% to +9%.

Past Projections Compared to Enrollment

The APL completes an enrollment projections analysis for the Sun Prairie Area School District each year, allowing us to compare past projections to the current year's enrollment.

Table A compares the Fall 2025 4K-12 enrollment to the projections that were completed last year. All models over-projected enrollment for 2025-26 school year, with the range of +220 to +65 students or +2.6% to +0.8%. The Baseline model was the most accurate of the four models.

TABLE A
Comparison of Actual 2025-26 Enrollments with Previous Enrollment Projections
Sun Prairie Area School District

Grade	2025-26 Enrollment	Baseline Model 24-25	Baseline Model Difference	5-Year Trend Model 24-25	5-Year Trend Model Difference	2-Year Trend Model 24-25	2-Year Trend Model Difference	Kindergarten Trend Model 24-25	Kindergarten Trend Model Difference
4K	428	469	41	469	41	469	41	469	41
5K	542	568	26	560	18	566	24	545	3
1	542	574	32	569	27	572	30	572	30
2	535	549	14	548	13	559	24	553	18
3	556	569	13	576	20	591	35	582	26
4	591	576	-15	574	-17	583	-8	585	-6
5	571	577	6	577	6	582	11	580	9
6	666	656	-10	670	4	691	25	678	12
7	652	656	4	658	6	665	13	661	9
8	614	612	-2	613	-1	618	4	615	1
9	643	622	-21	638	-5	665	22	654	11
10	664	662	-2	665	1	678	14	672	8
11	698	700	2	703	5	711	13	716	18
12	778	755	-23	754	-24	750	-28	754	-24
TOTAL	**8,480**	**8,545**	**65**	**8,574**	**94**	**8,700**	**220**	**8,636**	**156**
5K-5	3,337	3,413	76	3,404	67	3,453	116	3,417	80
6-8	1,932	1,924	-8	1,941	9	1,974	42	1,954	22
9-12	2,783	2,739	-44	2,760	-23	2,804	21	2,796	13

Table B provides the percentage differences between the actual enrollment and the projections by grade groupings. Some highlights of differences between this year's actual and projected counts:

- For the district, the Baseline projections with a percentage error of 0.8% were closest to actual September 2025 enrollment. (The small numeric difference is minor for a district of Sun Prairie's size.)
- For 5K through 5th grades, the Five-Year Trend model was the most accurate with 2% error.
- For 6th through 8th grades, the Baseline model was most accurate with the exact count.
- For 9th through 12th grades, the Kindergarten Trend model was closest with 0.5% error.

TABLE B
Percent Error between 2025/26 Actual Enrollment and Projected Enrollment
Sun Prairie Area School District

4K-12 Enrollment		
	number	percent
Actual	8,480	
Baseline	8,545	0.8%
5-Year Trend	8,574	1.1%
2-Year Trend	8,700	2.6%
K Trend	8,636	1.8%

5K-5 Enrollment		
	number	percent
Actual	3,337	
Baseline	3,413	2.3%
5-Year Trend	3,404	2.0%
2-Year Trend	3,453	3.5%
K Trend	3,417	2.4%

6-8 Enrollment		
	number	percent
Actual	1,924	
Baseline	1,924	0.0%
5-Year Trend	1,941	0.9%
2-Year Trend	1,974	2.6%
K Trend	1,954	1.6%

9-12 Enrollment		
	number	percent
Actual	2,783	
Baseline	2,739	-1.6%
5-Year Trend	2,760	-0.8%
2-Year Trend	2,804	0.8%
K Trend	2,796	0.5%

During the COVID pandemic years, when many districts' enrollments fluctuated the APL switched from a Two-Year Trend to a Three-Year Trend model. Last year the Two-Year Trend model was used because it appeared to capture recent overall growth and Open Enrollment net gain. However, after analyzing the accuracy of last year's Two-Year Trend projections, we will return to using the Three-Year Trend instead for this report.

Enrollment History

Figure 1-A and Table 1-A display the last ten years of enrollment history for the Sun Prairie Area School District. Total district PK-12th enrollment increased by 3.5% with a gain of 289 students over the decade.

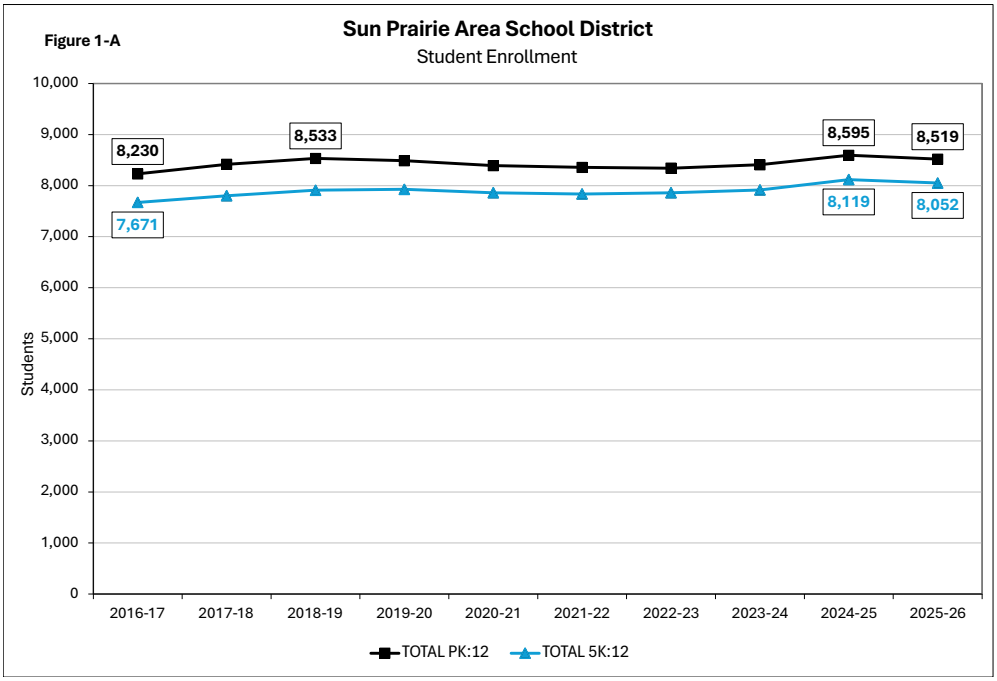


TABLE 1-A
Student Enrollment
Sun Prairie Area School District

	SCHOOL YEAR									
Grades	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**	**2025-26**
PK	43	48	49	37	45	37	39	35	41	39
4K	516	567	574	523	485	484	443	457	435	428
5K	559	573	620	623	555	543	532	529	562	542
1	573	594	581	643	611	573	553	537	542	542
2	601	594	588	587	617	633	572	553	570	535
3	636	629	589	590	578	618	625	581	586	556
4	610	625	617	568	555	557	620	628	572	591
5	600	618	627	597	559	566	560	621	650	571
6	615	599	633	636	611	561	568	596	659	666
7	549	627	596	620	630	607	557	571	603	652
8	558	567	634	607	628	635	614	566	590	614
9	565	582	601	651	634	651	681	673	655	643
10	643	562	610	600	641	641	656	708	694	664
11	566	642	564	613	604	620	670	673	724	698
12	596	590	650	593	638	631	652	680	712	778
TOTAL	**8,230**	**8,417**	**8,533**	**8,488**	**8,391**	**8,357**	**8,342**	**8,408**	**8,595**	**8,519**
5K-12	7,671	7,802	7,910	7,928	7,861	7,836	7,860	7,916	8,119	8,052
5K-5	3,579	3,633	3,622	3,608	3,475	3,490	3,462	3,449	3,482	3,337
6-8	1,722	1,793	1,863	1,863	1,869	1,803	1,739	1,733	1,852	1,932
9-12	2,370	2,376	2,425	2,457	2,517	2,543	2,659	2,734	2,785	2,783

While total enrollment has increased since 2016-17, variation is seen in the district's grade groupings and across time. Figure 1-B shows enrollment history of the district's grade groupings (PK is excluded here). Table 1-B displays change across the decade and in three time spans. The elementary school grades decreased by almost 7%, while middle school grades increased by 12%. The high school grades increased the most, growing by more than 17%.

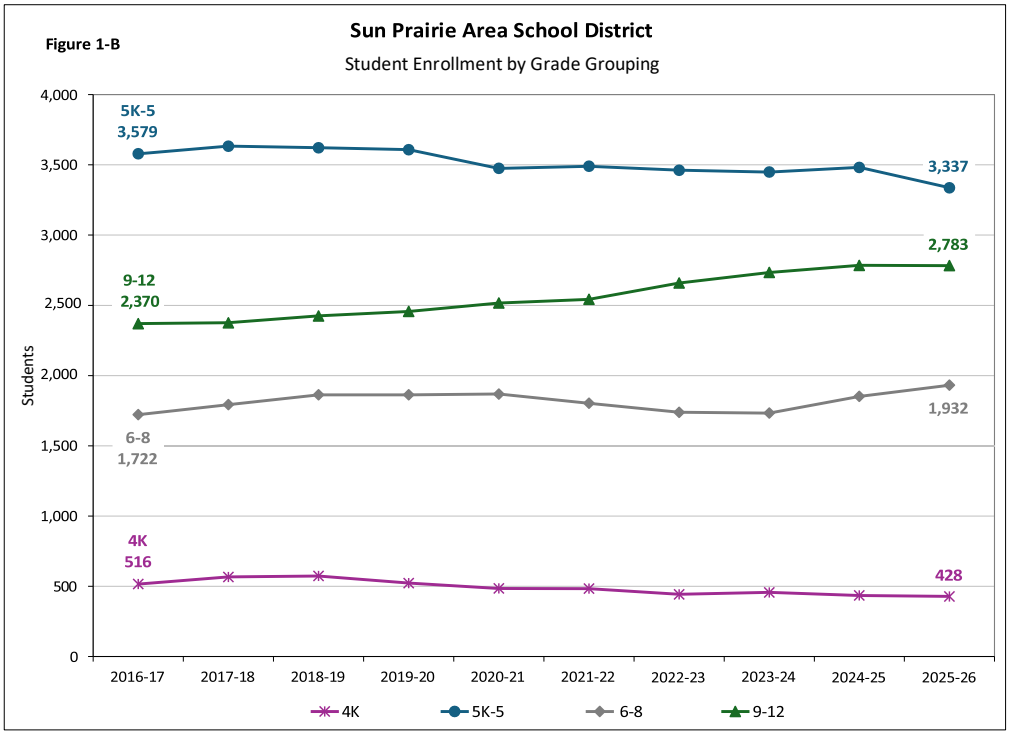


TABLE 1-B
Student Enrollment Changes
Sun Prairie Area School District

	ABSOLUTE CHANGE Three Year Periods				PERCENT CHANGE				AVERAGE ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGE			
Grades	'16 to '25	'16 to '19	'19 to '22	'22 to '25	'16 to '25	'16 to '19	'19 to '22	'22 to '25	'16 to '25	'16 to '19	'19 to '22	'22 to '25
PK	-4	-6	2	0	-9%	-14%	5%	0%	-1%	-5%	2%	0%
4K	-88	7	-80	-15	-17%	1%	-15%	-3%	-2%	0%	-5%	-1%
5K	-17	64	-91	10	-3%	11%	-15%	2%	0%	4%	-5%	1%
1	-31	70	-90	-11	-5%	12%	-14%	-2%	-1%	4%	-5%	-1%
2	-66	-14	-15	-37	-11%	-2%	-3%	-6%	-1%	-1%	-1%	-2%
3	-80	-46	35	-69	-13%	-7%	6%	-11%	-1%	-2%	2%	-4%
4	-19	-42	52	-29	-3%	-7%	9%	-5%	0%	-2%	3%	-2%
5	-29	-3	-37	11	-5%	-1%	-6%	2%	-1%	0%	-2%	1%
6	51	21	-68	98	8%	3%	-11%	17%	1%	1%	-4%	6%
7	103	71	-63	95	19%	13%	-10%	17%	2%	4%	-3%	6%
8	56	49	7	0	10%	9%	1%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%
9	78	86	30	-38	14%	15%	5%	-6%	2%	5%	2%	-2%
10	21	-43	56	8	3%	-7%	9%	1%	0%	-2%	3%	0%
11	132	47	57	28	23%	8%	9%	4%	3%	3%	3%	1%
12	182	-3	59	126	31%	-1%	10%	19%	3%	0%	3%	6%
TOTAL	**289**	**258**	**-146**	**177**	**3.5%**	**3.1%**	**-1.7%**	**2.1%**	**0.4%**	**1.0%**	**-0.6%**	**0.7%**
5K-12	381	257	-68	192	5.0%	3%	-1%	2%	0.6%	1.1%	-0.3%	0.8%
5K-5	-242	29	-146	-125	-6.8%	1%	-4%	-4%	-0.8%	0.3%	-1.3%	-1.2%
6-8	210	141	-124	193	12.2%	8%	-7%	11%	1.4%	2.7%	-2.2%	3.7%
9-12	413	87	202	124	17.4%	4%	8%	5%	1.9%	1.2%	2.7%	1.6%

Figure 1-C shows the age structure in Fall 2025 of the student population with the number of 4-year-old kindergarteners at the bottom and the number of 12th graders at the top.

- The average class size for the high school grades is 696, with 12th grade being the largest of the four grades.
- The average class size for the middle school grades is 644 with 6th grade being the largest of the three grades.
- The average class size for the elementary school grades (5K – 5th) is the smallest at 556, with 4th grade being the largest grade.

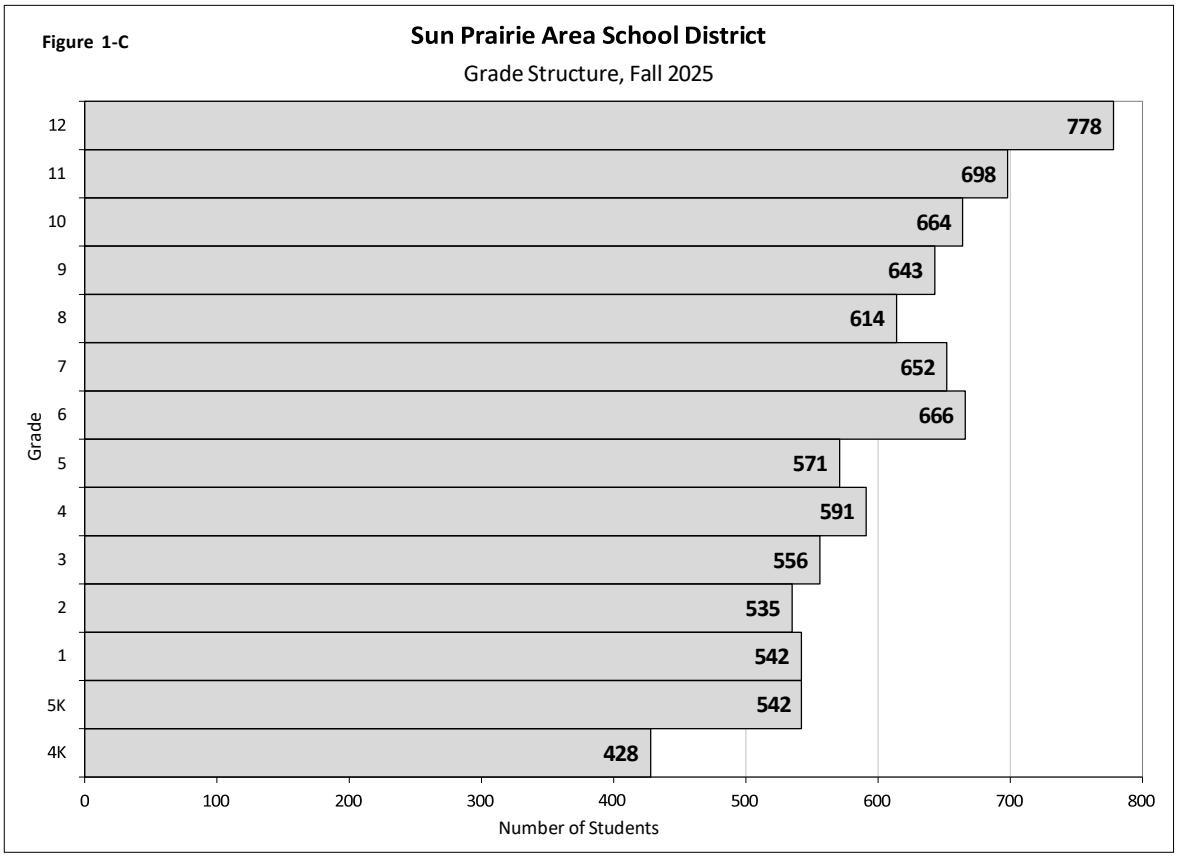
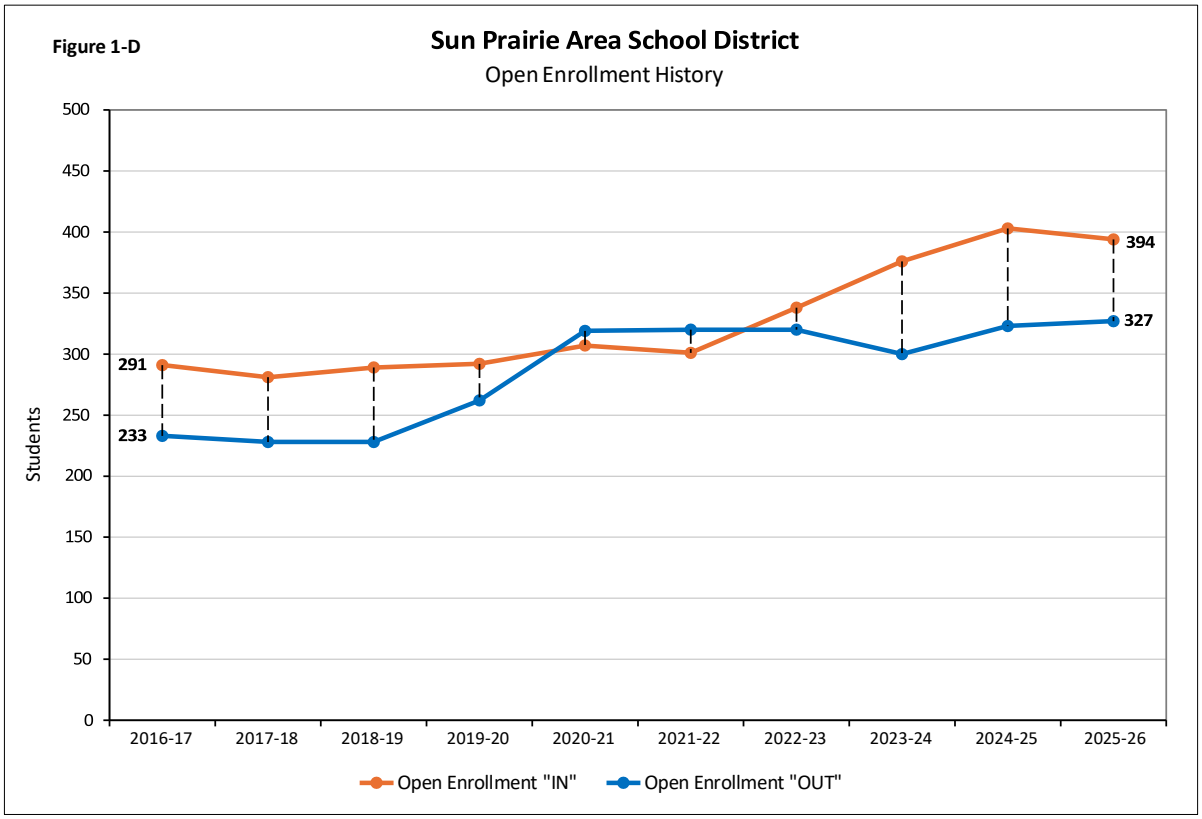


Table 1-D and Figure 1-D illustrate the Open Enrollment (OE) Program over the past ten years. The Sun Prairie Area School District has experienced a net inflow in eight of the last ten years with differences ranging from 18 to 80 numerically in the net gain years.

TABLE 1-D
Open Enrollment Transfers
Sun Prairie Area School District
(Grades 4K-12)

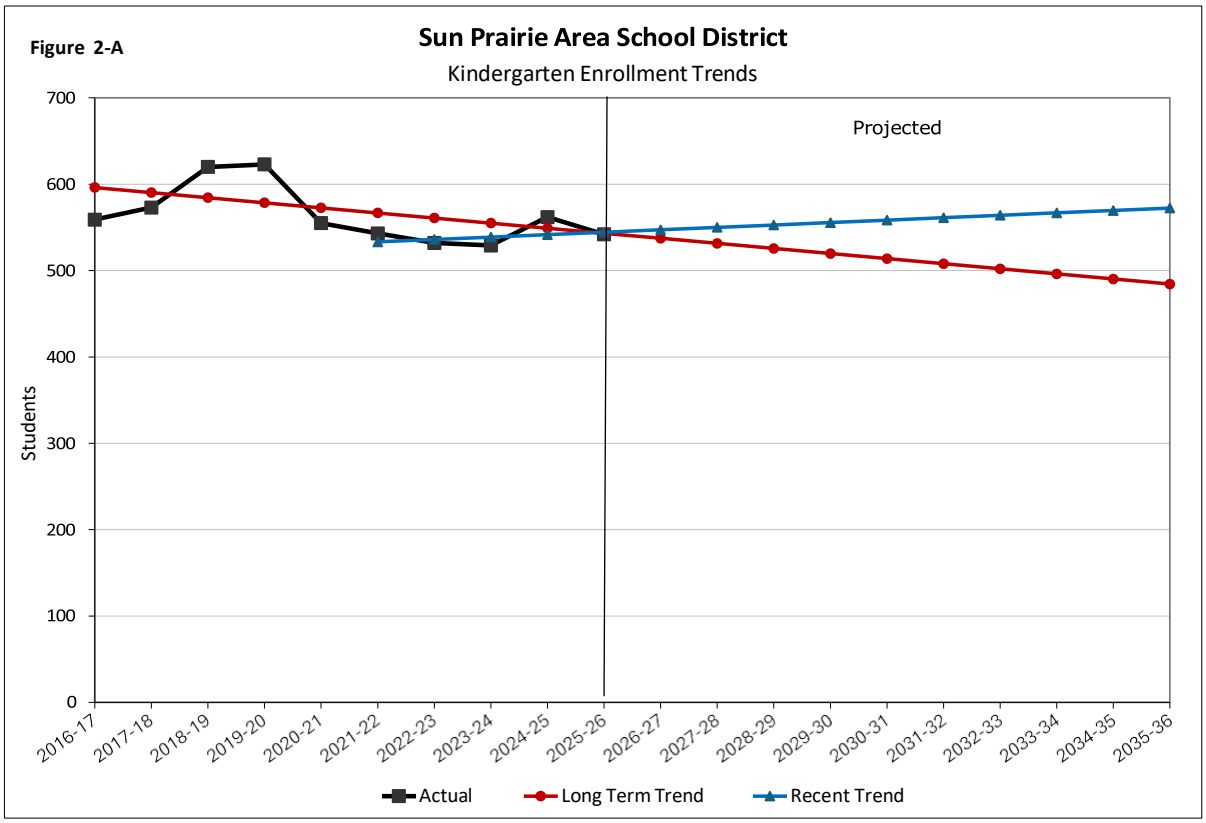
School Year	In	Out	Net	5K-5	6-8	9-12
2016-17	291	233	58	31	0	32
2017-18	281	228	53	39	3	29
2018-19	289	228	61	31	20	18
2019-20	292	262	30	29	23	-17
2020-21	307	319	-12	15	5	-23
2021-22	301	320	-19	-10	-1	5
2022-23	338	320	18	-20	18	41
2023-24	376	300	76	-1	29	40
2024-25	403	323	80	-13	28	77
2025-26	394	327	67	-18	16	67



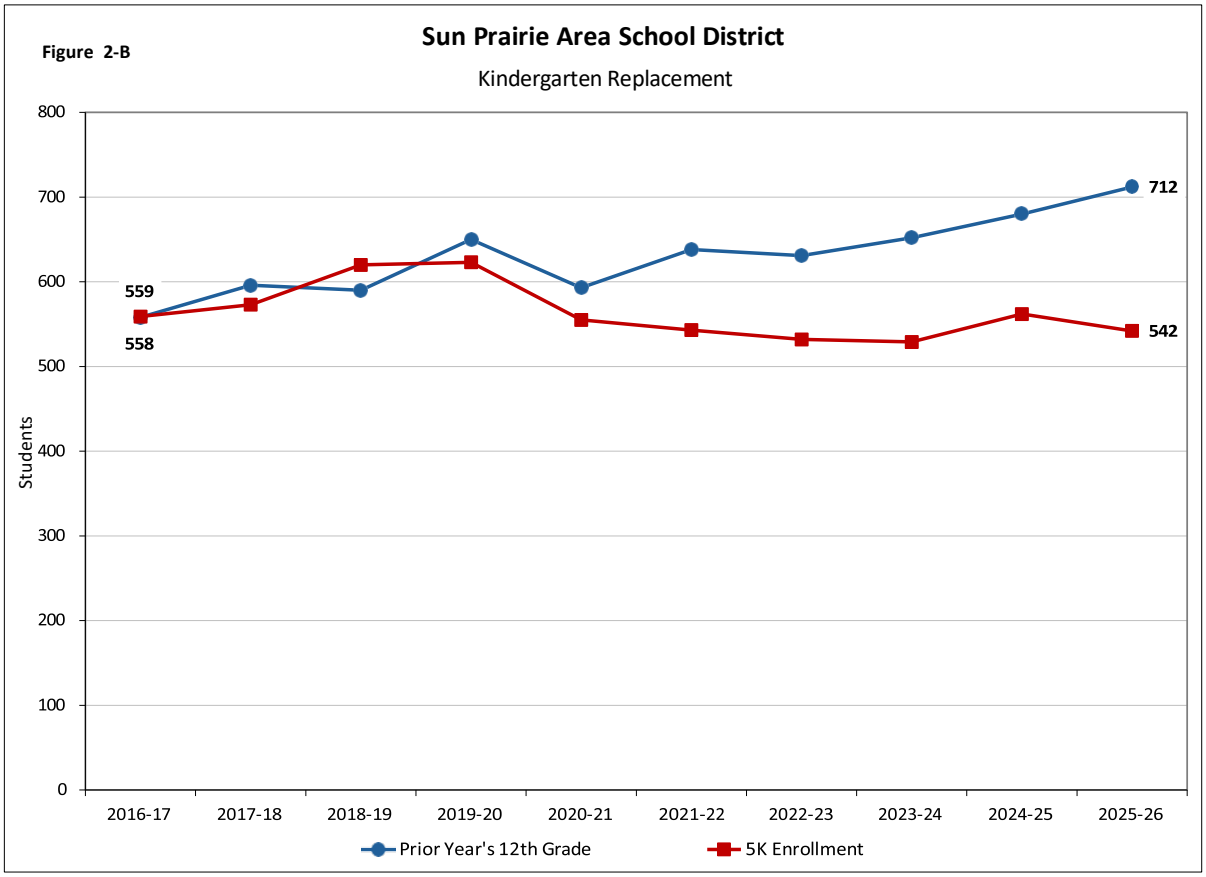
Kindergarten Enrollment Trends

Examining trends in kindergarten enrollment is particularly informative for gaining perspective on future district enrollment, as today's kindergarteners will gradually make up tomorrow's students at the higher grade levels as they age and move through the school system. When 5K enrollment is increasing, the number of elementary school students might be expected to increase in the near term, while middle school enrollment may increase farther in the future.

Figure 2-A shows the district's 5K enrollment history in black, and trend lines depicting projected 5K enrollment in red and blue. The "Long Term Trend" line (shown in red) averages kindergarten changes from 2016-17 through 2025-26. The "Recent Trend" line (shown in blue) emphasizes 5K changes over the last five years. The recent trend projects an increase of three 5K students per year, while the long-range trend predicts an annual decline of six 5K students per year. The Recent Trend will be used in the Kindergarten Trend model found later in the report.



In addition to projecting kindergarten enrollment, comparing incoming 5K classes to the previous year's outgoing 12th graders offers a snapshot of how the age structure of district enrollment is shifting. Districts tend to experience overall growth when kindergarten enrollment outpaces outgoing students, and they tend to experience decline when kindergarteners do not fully replace the number of graduates. As illustrated in Figure 2-B, kindergarteners have not replaced outgoing 12th graders in eight of the ten years.

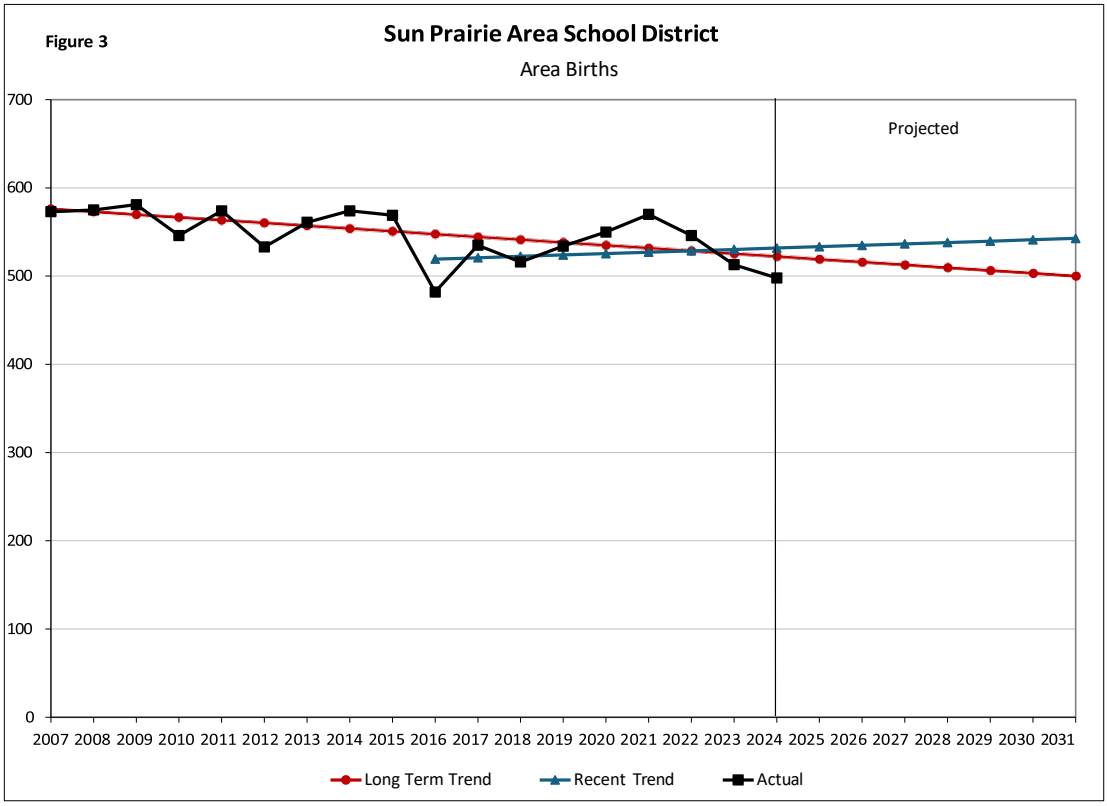


Birth Trends and Projections

We use historical and projected birth data to forecast 4K and 5K students who will enroll in the Sun Prairie Area School District in future years. Birth data, as collected and summarized by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, is available only for municipalities. Thus, the birth history presented here includes the City of Sun Prairie and the towns of Bristol, Burke, and Sun Prairie. Figure 3 shows (in black) the number of births to mothers living in these municipalities.

We extrapolate long-and short-range birth trends into the future to correspond with our Baseline and Recent Trend projection models, using the B:K progression ratios to transform births (B) into future kindergarteners (K).

- The red line represents the birth trend over the past 18 years and is utilized in the Baseline method projections later in this report. The long-term trend is slightly downward and predicts a decrease of three births annually through 2031.
- The blue line denotes birth patterns for the last nine years and is applied in the Five-Year and Three-Year Trend projection models shown later. This short-range trend predicts a slight increase of two births annually through 2031.



Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
# of Births	573	575	581	546	574	533	561	574	569
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**
# of Births	482	535	516	534	550	570	546	513	498

Source: WI Department of Health Services

Population Estimates and Age Structure

This section examines population trends of the recent past for the Sun Prairie Area School District. Changes in the total population of the district area, particularly when examined by age, provide clues into how the school-age population may be changing.

Table 3 provides the Census population counts for 2010 and 2020 and the Wisconsin Department of Administration's estimates for 2015 and 2025 for the district's primary municipalities. The aggregate population is estimated to have increased by over 11,000 or almost 30% since 2010. The percentage increase of the district area has increased more than Dane County or the state.

Table 3
Total Population, Area Municipalities: 2010-2025
Sun Prairie Area School District

	POPULATION				PERCENT CHANGE			
Municipality	Census 2010	Estimate 2015	Census 2020	Estimate 2025	2010 to 2015	2015 to 2020	2020 to 2025	2010 to 2025
Sun Prairie city	29,364	31,810	35,967	40,079	8.3%	13.1%	11.4%	**36.5%**
Sun Prairie town	2,326	2,352	2,391	2,380	1.1%	1.7%	-0.5%	**2.3%**
Bristol town	3,765	4,045	4,447	4,522	7.4%	9.9%	1.7%	**20.1%**
Burke town	3,284	3,339	3,265	3,235	1.7%	-2.2%	-0.9%	**-1.5%**
District Area	**38,739**	**41,546**	**46,070**	**50,216**	**7.2%**	**10.9%**	**9.0%**	**29.6%**
Dane County	488,073	508,379	561,504	611,149	4.2%	10.4%	8.8%	**25.2%**
State of Wisconsin	5,686,986	5,753,324	5,893,718	6,033,500	1.2%	2.4%	2.4%	**6.1%**

Source: U. S. Census Bureau & Demographic Services Center, WI Dept. of Administration

In terms of total population for the district—available through the decennial Census—the Sun Prairie Area School District increased from 41,472 residents in 2010 to 50,734 in 2020, a gain of 9,262 residents. Table 4 and Figure 4 illustrate the population by age for the district as enumerated at the 2010 and 2020 Censuses, showing the change in age structure. In specific age groups:

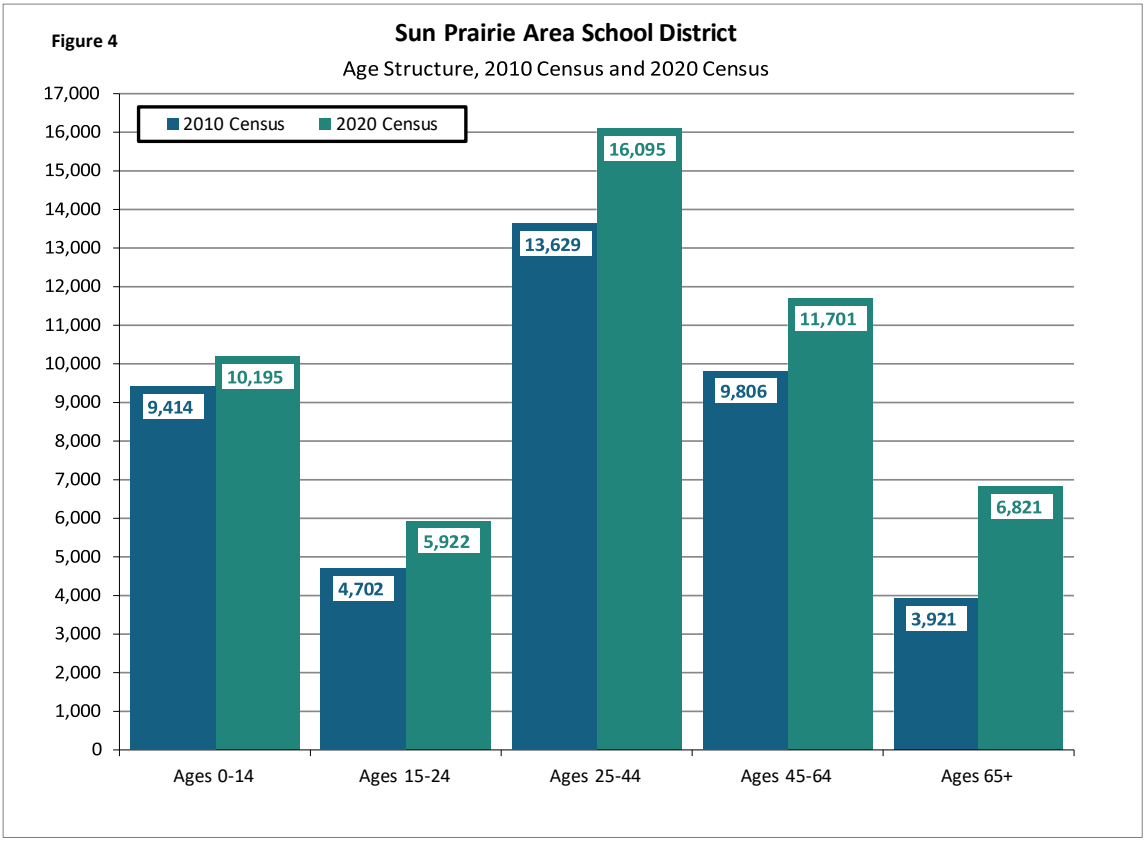
- The number of young people ages 0-14 increased by 781 or +8%. These youngest children are now in or entering elementary grades.
- Older teens and early adults in the college-aged cohort of 15-24 increased by 1,220 or +26%.
- Adults ages 25-44 also increased with a growth of 2,466 or +18%.
- Middle-aged adults ages 45-64 increased by 1,895 or +19%.
- Adults ages 65-and-over increased by 2,900 or +74%. This change is attributable mostly to the aging of the Baby Boom generation. The 65-and-over population's share of the district's residents rose from 9.5% to 13%.

TABLE 4
Population by Age, 2010 & 2020
Sun Prairie Area School District

Age	2010	2020	Difference
Under 5	3,273	3,063	-210
5 to 9	3,252	3,513	261
10 to 14	2,889	3,619	730
15 to 19	2,356	3,113	757
20 to 24	2,346	2,809	463
25 to 29	3,708	3,902	194
30 to 34	3,583	4,266	683
35 to 39	3,283	4,264	981
40 to 44	3,055	3,663	608
45 to 49	2,979	3,206	227
50 to 54	2,673	2,896	223
55 to 59	2,328	2,940	612
60 to 64	1,826	2,659	833
65 to 69	1,134	2,159	1,025
70 to 74	797	1,738	941
75 to 79	646	1,123	477
80 to 84	594	819	225
85plus	750	982	232
Total	41,472	50,734	9,262

Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Figure 4



Residential Development

Examining trends in recent housing development can help to explain how migration in the school district area might be affecting enrollment. If housing starts in the district area are expected to be reasonably consistent for the next several years, then we assume that migration of school-age children will also remain relatively consistent. If housing starts are expected to increase significantly above and beyond recent levels, in-migration may play an increasing role in enrollment. However, it is important to recognize that the number of housing starts in any given year is dependent upon many confounding variables (decisions of local, county, and state policy makers, residential developers, interest rates, demand for housing, etc.), making future growth patterns difficult to predict based on housing change.

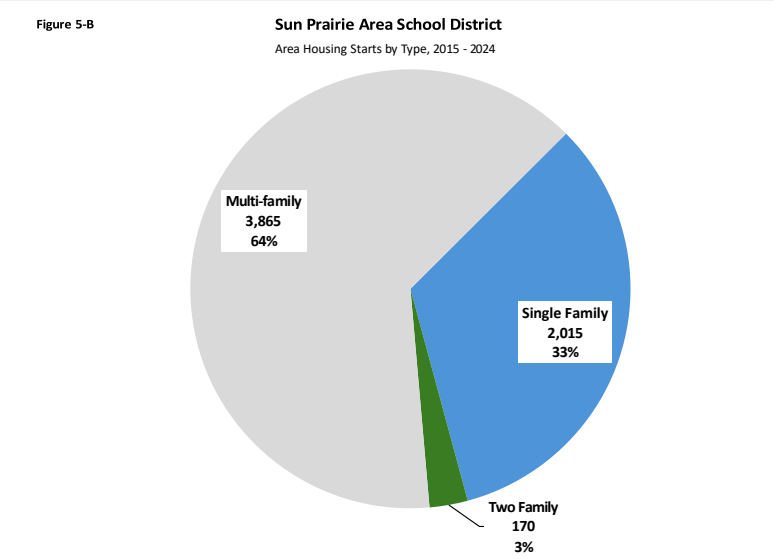
Table 5-A shows the housing starts in the primary municipalities, as well as the portion of Madison within the district's boundaries, by type and year since 2015.

TABLE 5-A
School District Area Housing Starts
Sun Prairie Area School District

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
District Area										
TOTAL	**327**	**338**	**850**	**928**	**366**	**330**	**941**	**1069**	**576**	**325**
Single Family	**203**	**193**	**193**	**259**	**217**	**241**	**180**	**193**	**201**	**135**
Two Family	**6**	**14**	**16**	**14**	**22**	**26**	**22**	**22**	**22**	**6**
Multi-family	**118**	**131**	**641**	**655**	**127**	**63**	**739**	**854**	**353**	**184**
Sun Prairie city										
TOTAL	**286**	**189**	**636**	**575**	**215**	**198**	**571**	**635**	**440**	**264**
Single Family	162	154	133	177	109	160	141	100	92	77
Two Family	6	14	16	12	18	24	18	22	16	6
Multi-family	118	21	487	386	88	14	412	513	332	181
Sun Prairie town										
TOTAL	**7**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**5**	**2**
Single Family	7	6	7	8	1	4	1	4	5	2
Two Family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multi-family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bristol town										
TOTAL	**31**	**18**	**23**	**25**	**30**	**17**	**8**	**9**	**13**	**11**
Single Family	31	18	23	25	30	17	8	9	13	11
Two Family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multi-family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Burke town										
TOTAL	**3**	**8**	**2**	**6**	**2**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**5**	**3**
Single Family	3	8	2	4	2	4	2	1	3	3
Two Family	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
Multi-family	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Madison city										
TOTAL	**0**	**117**	**182**	**314**	**118**	**107**	**359**	**420**	**113**	**45**
Single Family	0	7	28	45	75	56	28	79	88	42
Two Family	0	0	0	0	4	2	4	0	4	0
Multi-family	0	110	154	269	39	49	327	341	21	3

Source: Demographic Services Center, WI Dept. of Administration

Over the past decade, most of the new housing was built in the City of Sun Prairie with 66% of new construction followed by the City of Madison at 29%. Figure 5 illustrates the aggregate of new home construction numerically and the percentage share by type from 2015 through 2024. The number of multi-family units is almost double the number of single-family homes.



Across the past full decade, the Census Bureau enumerated 4,000 more households (+24%) living in the district in 2020 than in 2010. The percentage of occupied units rose from 94% to 96%. The increases in the numbers of owner-occupied and renter-occupied units were almost the same. Average household size slipped slightly (-0.5%), in line with the change at the state level (-0.06%). The number of households with children increased by 787 households or an increase of 13.5%.

Table 5-B
Housing Unit and Household Changes, 2010-2020
Sun Prairie Area School District

	Housing Units	Occupied Units (Households)	Percent Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Percent Owner	Percent Renter	Average Household Size	Households with Children
Census 2010	17,715	16,580	93.6%	10,383	6,197	63%	37%	2.49	5,839
Census 2020	21,510	20,581	95.7%	12,387	8,194	60%	40%	2.44	6,626
Change	3,795	4,001	2.1%	2,004	1,997	-2%	2%	-0.05	787

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Projection Method

To generate school enrollment projections, we rely on a common demographic technique called the "cohort survival method," also referred to as the "grade progression ratio method" when applied in an educational setting. This method advances current students through the school system over time and applies rates of transfer (or "survival") as the students who are now in school age from year to year and grade to grade. It is through these rates of transfer that we make assumptions about how migration into and out of the district and transfers to and from private schools or home schooling will impact future enrollment. To project incoming 4K and 5K students, we gather data on births from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and assume that, based on recent historical patterns, a certain percentage of the children born to mothers residing in the school district area will enroll in the kindergarten programs four to five years later.

Grade Progression Ratios

To predict future enrollment under different growth assumptions, three sets of grade progression ratios are calculated:

- Baseline averages ten years of progression ratios, with outlying ratios (those outside of one standard deviation of the mean) excluded;
- Five-Year Trend averages the past five years of progression ratios;
- Three-Year Trend averages the past three years of progression ratios.

Table 6 shows the grade progression ratios for the district.

TABLE 6
Grade Progression Ratios, 5K through 12th Grade
Sun Prairie Area School District

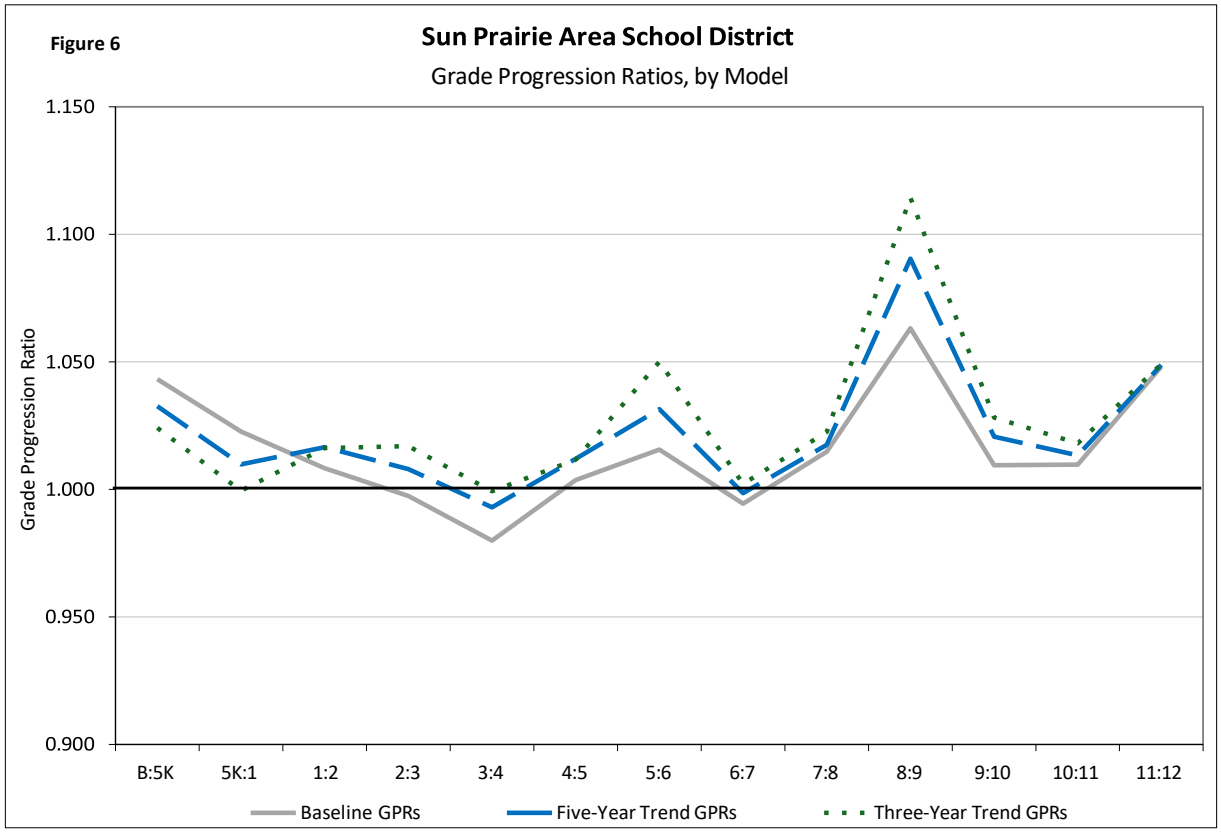
Year-to-Year	B:5K	5K:1	1:2	2:3	3:4	4:5	5:6	6:7	7:8	8:9	9:10	10:11	11:12
2016-17 / 2017-18	1.048	1.063	1.037	1.047	0.983	1.013	0.998	1.020	1.033	1.043	0.995	0.998	1.042
2017-18 / 2018-19	1.124	1.014	0.990	0.992	0.981	1.003	1.024	0.995	1.011	1.060	1.048	1.004	1.012
2018-19 / 2019-20	1.094	1.037	1.010	1.003	0.964	0.968	1.014	0.979	1.018	1.027	0.998	1.005	1.051
2019-20 / 2020-21	0.973	0.981	0.960	0.985	0.941	0.984	1.023	0.991	1.013	1.044	0.985	1.007	1.041
2020-21 / 2021-22	1.062	1.032	1.036	1.002	0.964	1.020	1.004	0.993	1.008	1.037	1.011	0.967	1.045
2021-22 / 2022-23	1.029	1.018	0.998	0.987	1.003	1.005	1.004	0.993	1.012	1.072	1.008	1.045	1.052
2022-23 / 2023-24	1.013	1.009	1.000	1.016	1.005	1.002	1.064	1.005	1.016	1.096	1.040	1.026	1.015
2023-24 / 2024-25	1.064	1.025	1.061	1.060	0.985	1.035	1.061	1.012	1.033	1.157	1.031	1.023	1.058
2024-25 / 2025-26	0.995	0.964	0.987	0.975	1.009	0.998	1.025	0.989	1.018	1.090	1.014	1.006	1.075
Baseline	**1.043**	**1.023**	**1.008**	**0.997**	**0.980**	**1.004**	**1.016**	**0.994**	**1.015**	**1.063**	**1.009**	**1.010**	**1.048**
Five-Year Trend	**1.033**	**1.010**	**1.017**	**1.008**	**0.993**	**1.012**	**1.031**	**0.999**	**1.017**	**1.090**	**1.021**	**1.013**	**1.049**
Three-Year Trend	**1.024**	**0.999**	**1.016**	**1.017**	**0.999**	**1.012**	**1.050**	**1.002**	**1.023**	**1.114**	**1.028**	**1.018**	**1.049**

*Shaded progression ratios are excluded from the Baseline Average

As examples, the grade progression ratios can be interpreted in the following manner:

- The Baseline ratio for 2:3 is .997. This means that, over the past ten years, 99.7% of second graders on average progress to third grade the following year.
- The Five-Year ratio for 8:9 is 1.090. This means that, in the Sun Prairie Area School District over the past five years, ninth grade has been on average approximately 9% larger than eighth grade of the previous year.

Figure 6 illustrates the patterns among these three grade progression ratio averages. With a few exceptions, the progression ratios are at or above 1.0, indicating that class sizes in the district tend to increase as class cohorts progress through their schooling.



Given that the Sun Prairie Area School District has had a 4K program for many years, Baseline, Five-Year and Three-Year trends may be calculated for births to 4K enrollment. Table 7 shows the observed progression ratios between births and 4K and between 4K and 5K. The 4K:5K ratios indicate that 5K classes are on average 17% larger than the preceding 4K classes. The 4K:5K ratios are not used in the projections' calculations. To generate 4K enrollment projections, the five-year grade progression ratio average will be used to project 4K enrollment.

TABLE 7
4K Grade Progression Ratios
Sun Prairie Area School District

Year-to-Year	B:4K	4K:5K
2016-17 / 2017-18	1.028	1.110
2017-18 / 2018-19	1.008	1.093
2018-19 / 2019-20	0.916	1.085
2019-20 / 2020-21	0.949	1.061
2020-21 / 2021-22	0.936	1.120
2021-22 / 2022-23	0.848	1.099
2022-23 / 2023-24	0.866	1.194
2023-24 / 2024-25	0.799	1.230
2024-25 / 2025-26	0.760	1.246
Baseline	**0.903**	**1.117**
Five-Year Trend	**0.842**	**1.178**
Three-Year Trend	**0.808**	**1.223**

*Shaded progression ratios are excluded from the Baseline Average

District Enrollment Projections

When considering all of the projections provided in this report for decision-making, it is important to recognize that population projections of all types, including school enrollment projections, are more accurate in the immediate future than they are farther into the future. This is especially true for grades 4K-5, because many of the students who may enroll in 4K starting in 2030-31 or 5K in 2031-32 have not yet been born, and those under age four have not yet entered the school system. Overall, the projections are more reliable over the next five years (through the 2030-31 school year) than they are in the latter half of the next decade.

Baseline Projections

The Baseline model (Table 8) projects enrollment using the assumption that relatively long-term progression ratios, year to year and grade to grade, will continue, as well as the longer-range trend in births. This model projects that PK-12th enrollment in the Sun Prairie Area School District will decrease in the next five years, from 8,519 students in 2025-26 to 8,245 in 2030-31, a decline of 274 students or a 3.2% decrease. The model then predicts continued decreases through 2035-36.

TABLE 8
Baseline Projection Model
Sun Prairie Area School District

	SCHOOL YEAR									
GRADE	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**2035-36**
PK	39	39	40	40	39	39	39	39	39	39
4K	466	441	423	439	450	451	452	454	455	456
5K	588	578	547	525	534	540	537	533	530	527
1	554	601	591	559	537	547	552	549	545	542
2	547	559	606	596	564	541	551	557	553	550
3	534	545	557	604	594	562	540	550	555	552
4	545	523	534	546	592	582	551	529	539	544
5	593	547	525	536	548	594	585	553	531	541
6	580	602	555	533	544	557	604	594	562	539
7	662	577	599	552	530	541	554	600	590	558
8	662	672	585	608	560	538	549	562	609	599
9	653	703	715	622	646	596	572	584	597	648
10	649	659	710	721	628	652	601	577	590	603
11	670	655	665	717	728	634	659	607	583	595
12	732	703	687	697	751	763	665	690	637	611
TOTAL	**8,474**	**8,404**	**8,339**	**8,295**	**8,245**	**8,137**	**8,011**	**7,978**	**7,915**	**7,904**
5K-12	7,969	7,924	7,876	7,816	7,756	7,647	7,520	7,485	7,421	7,409
5K-5	3,361	3,353	3,360	3,366	3,369	3,366	3,316	3,271	3,253	3,256
6-8	1,904	1,851	1,739	1,693	1,634	1,636	1,707	1,756	1,761	1,696
9-12	2,704	2,720	2,777	2,757	2,753	2,645	2,497	2,458	2,407	2,457

The Five-Year Trend model (Table 9) uses the district's average grade progression ratios for the five most recent years and the shorter-range trend in births to produce projected students. Applying these recent progression rates and birth trends, PK-12th enrollment in the Sun Prairie Area School District is projected to decline slightly over the next five years, from 8,519 in 2025-26 to 8,480 in 2030-31, a decrease of 39 or -0.5%. The model then predicts decreases through 2035-36.

TABLE 9
Five-Year Trend Projection Model
Sun Prairie Area School District

	SCHOOL YEAR									
GRADE	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**2035-36**
PK	39	39	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
4K	466	441	423	439	450	451	452	454	455	456
5K	582	572	541	519	539	552	553	555	557	558
1	547	587	578	546	525	544	557	559	561	562
2	551	556	597	587	556	533	553	567	568	570
3	539	555	561	602	592	560	537	557	571	573
4	552	535	551	557	598	588	556	534	553	567
5	598	559	542	558	564	605	595	563	540	560
6	589	617	576	559	576	581	624	614	580	557
7	665	588	616	575	558	575	580	623	613	580
8	663	677	598	627	585	568	585	591	634	623
9	670	723	738	652	683	638	619	638	644	691
10	656	683	738	753	666	698	652	632	651	657
11	673	665	692	748	763	675	707	660	640	660
12	732	706	697	726	785	800	708	741	693	672
TOTAL	**8,522**	**8,503**	**8,488**	**8,488**	**8,480**	**8,408**	**8,318**	**8,328**	**8,300**	**8,326**
5K-12	8,017	8,023	8,025	8,009	7,990	7,917	7,826	7,834	7,805	7,830
5K-5	3,369	3,364	3,370	3,369	3,374	3,382	3,351	3,335	3,350	3,390
6-8	1,917	1,882	1,790	1,761	1,719	1,724	1,789	1,828	1,827	1,760
9-12	2,731	2,777	2,865	2,879	2,897	2,811	2,686	2,671	2,628	2,680

The Three-Year Trend model (Table 10) uses the district's average grade progression ratios for the last three years and the shorter-range trend in births to produce projected students. For the Three-Year Trend model, PK-12th enrollment in the Sun Prairie Area School District is projected to increase from 8,519 students in 2025-26 to 8,640 in 2030-31, a growth of 121 students or 1.4% increase. The model then predicts a slight decrease through 2035-36.

TABLE 10
Three-Year Trend Projection Model
Sun Prairie Area School District

	SCHOOL YEAR									
GRADE	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**2035-36**
PK	36	36	37	37	37	37	37	37	38	38
4K	466	441	423	439	450	451	452	454	455	456
5K	577	567	537	515	534	547	549	551	552	554
1	542	577	567	536	515	534	547	549	550	552
2	551	550	586	576	545	523	542	556	557	559
3	544	560	560	596	586	554	532	552	565	567
4	556	544	560	559	595	586	554	532	551	565
5	598	562	550	566	566	602	592	560	538	558
6	600	628	590	578	595	594	632	622	588	565
7	667	601	629	591	579	596	595	634	623	590
8	667	682	614	643	605	592	609	609	648	637
9	684	743	761	685	717	674	660	679	679	722
10	661	704	764	782	704	737	693	678	698	698
11	676	673	716	778	796	717	750	706	690	711
12	732	709	706	751	816	835	752	787	740	724
TOTAL	**8,557**	**8,577**	**8,600**	**8,632**	**8,640**	**8,579**	**8,496**	**8,506**	**8,472**	**8,496**
5K-12	8,055	8,100	8,140	8,156	8,153	8,091	8,007	8,015	7,979	8,002
5K-5	3,368	3,360	3,360	3,348	3,341	3,346	3,316	3,300	3,313	3,355
6-8	1,934	1,911	1,833	1,812	1,779	1,782	1,836	1,865	1,859	1,792
9-12	2,753	2,829	2,947	2,996	3,033	2,963	2,855	2,850	2,807	2,855

For this method we perform a trend analysis to project the number of future 5K kindergarten students. Rather than relying upon the birth-to-5K progression ratios used in the previous three models, the kindergarten enrollment of the past five years is trended forward. Then, the Five-Year Trend grade progression ratios are used for projecting the other grades in the district. Thus, this model assumes that the number of new kindergarteners each year over the next decade will continue to follow a trend like that of kindergarten enrollment over the last decade, regardless of the number of observed births in the school district area.

According to this projection method (Table 11), PK-12th enrollment in the Sun Prairie Area School District is projected to decline only slightly over the next five years, from 8,519 students in 2025-26 to 8,487 in 2030-31, a decrease of 32 students or -0.4%. The model then predicts an enrollment decline through 2035-36.

TABLE 11
Kindergarten Trend Projection Model
Sun Prairie Area School District

	SCHOOL YEAR									
GRADE	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**2035-36**
PK	39	39	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	40
4K	466	441	423	439	450	451	452	454	455	456
5K	547	550	553	556	558	561	564	567	570	572
1	547	553	555	558	561	564	567	570	572	575
2	551	556	562	565	567	570	573	576	579	582
3	539	555	561	566	569	572	575	578	581	584
4	552	535	551	557	562	565	568	571	574	577
5	598	559	542	558	564	569	572	575	578	581
6	589	617	576	559	576	581	587	590	593	596
7	665	588	616	575	558	575	580	586	589	592
8	663	677	598	627	585	568	585	591	596	599
9	670	723	738	652	683	638	619	638	644	650
10	656	683	738	753	666	698	652	632	651	657
11	673	665	692	748	763	675	707	660	640	660
12	732	706	697	726	785	800	708	741	693	672
TOTAL	**8,487**	**8,447**	**8,442**	**8,479**	**8,487**	**8,427**	**8,349**	**8,369**	**8,355**	**8,393**
5K-12	7,982	7,967	7,979	8,000	7,997	7,936	7,857	7,875	7,860	7,897
5K-5	3,334	3,308	3,324	3,360	3,381	3,401	3,419	3,437	3,454	3,471
6-8	1,917	1,882	1,790	1,761	1,719	1,724	1,752	1,767	1,778	1,787
9-12	2,731	2,777	2,865	2,879	2,897	2,811	2,686	2,671	2,628	2,639

Comparison of District-Level Projection Models

Figures 7-11 and accompanying Tables 12-16 compare the four enrollment projection models by total PK-12th grades and broken down by current grade groupings.

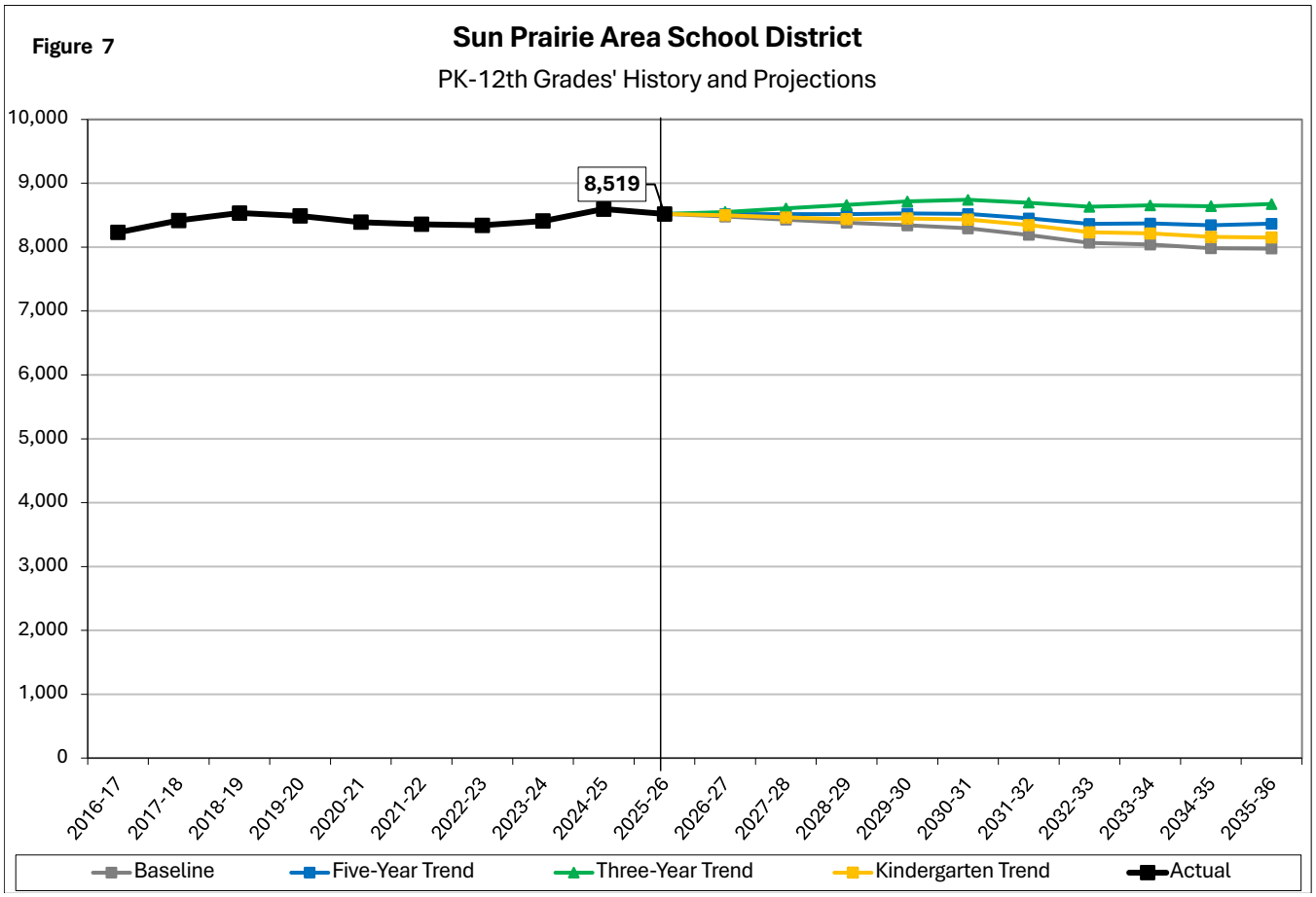


TABLE 12
Summary of PK-12 Projections
Sun Prairie Area School District

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36
Baseline	8,474	8,404	8,339	8,295	8,245	8,137	8,011	7,978	7,915	7,904
Five-Year Trend	8,522	8,503	8,488	8,488	8,480	8,408	8,318	8,328	8,300	8,326
Three-Year Trend	8,557	8,577	8,600	8,632	8,640	8,579	8,496	8,506	8,472	8,496
Kindergarten Trend	8,487	8,447	8,442	8,479	8,487	8,427	8,349	8,369	8,355	8,393

From the 2025-26 enrollment of 8,519, all models show varying enrollment change. The Baseline model projects decline, while the Three-Year Trend projections increase. The Five-Year and Kindergarten Trend models project stable enrollment. The models predict a range of PK-12th students in five years from 8,245 to 8,640. Beyond 2030-31, all models except the Three-Year Trend project some decline.

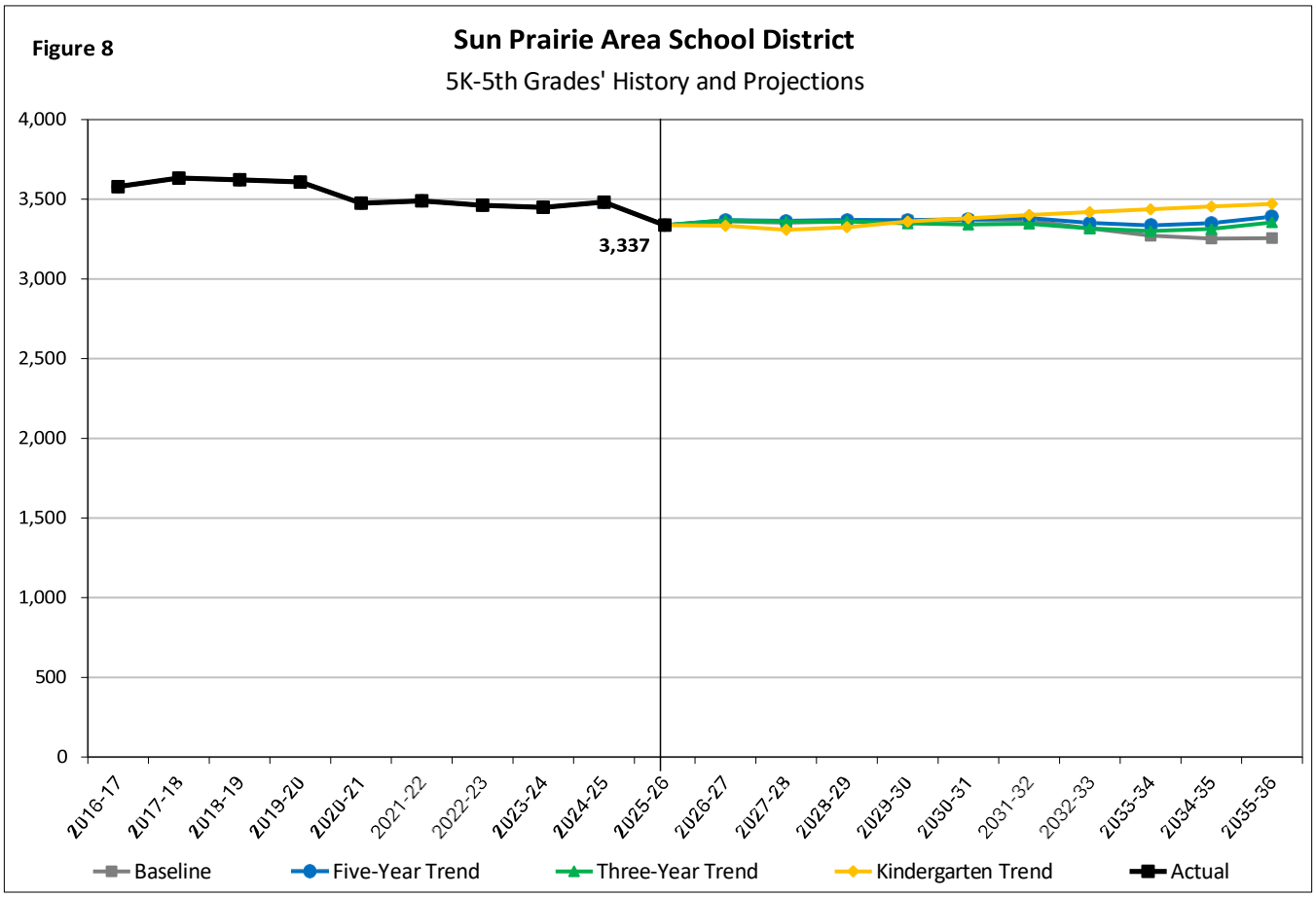


TABLE 13
Summary of 5K-5 Projections
Sun Prairie Area School District

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36
Baseline	3,361	3,353	3,360	3,366	3,369	3,366	3,316	3,271	3,253	3,256
Five-Year Trend	3,369	3,364	3,370	3,369	3,374	3,382	3,351	3,335	3,350	3,390
Three-Year Trend	3,368	3,360	3,360	3,348	3,341	3,346	3,316	3,300	3,313	3,355
Kindergarten Trend	3,334	3,308	3,324	3,360	3,381	3,401	3,419	3,437	3,454	3,471

From the 5K-5th grades' 2025-26 enrollment of 3,337, all models show slightly increasing enrollment in five years suggesting that elementary school enrollment will range from 3,341 to 3,381 in five years. Beyond 2030-31, the projection models show increases except the Baseline model which shows declining enrollment.

Figure 9

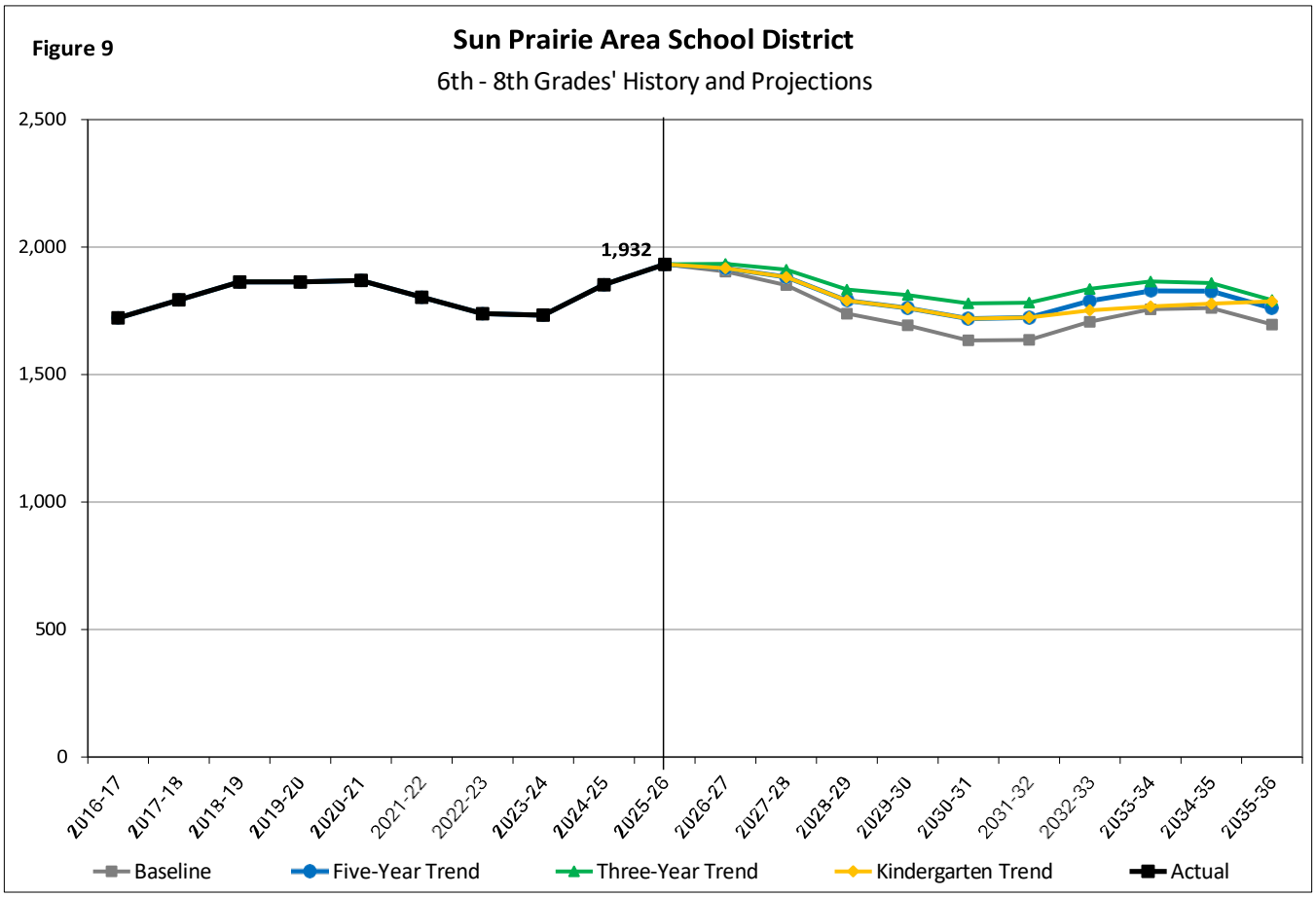


TABLE 14
Summary of 6-8 Projections
Sun Prairie Area School District

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36
Baseline	1,904	1,851	1,739	1,693	1,634	1,636	1,707	1,756	1,761	1,696
Five-Year Trend	1,917	1,882	1,790	1,761	1,719	1,724	1,789	1,828	1,827	1,760
Three-Year Trend	1,934	1,911	1,833	1,812	1,779	1,782	1,836	1,865	1,859	1,792
Kindergarten Trend	1,917	1,882	1,790	1,761	1,719	1,724	1,752	1,767	1,778	1,787

From the 6th -8th grades' 2025-26 enrollment of 1,932, the projections indicate a decrease in enrollment. The projections suggest that middle school enrollment will range from 1,634 to 1,779 in five years. Beyond 2030-31, the models show continued enrollment decreases in the latter half of the decade.

Figure 10

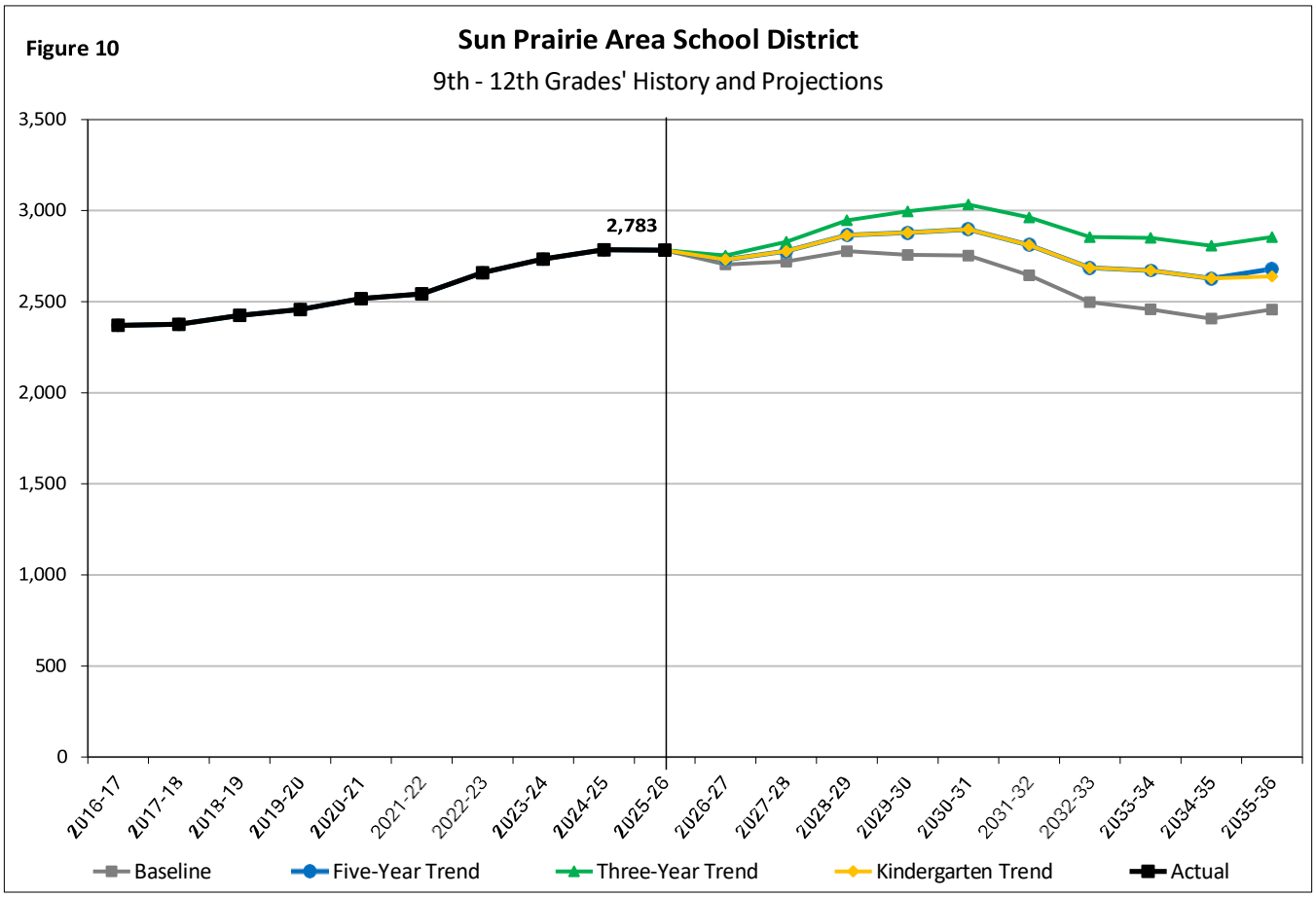


TABLE 15
Summary of 9-12 Projections
Sun Prairie Area School District

	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	2035-36
Baseline	2,704	2,720	2,777	2,757	2,753	2,645	2,497	2,458	2,407	2,457
Five-Year Trend	2,731	2,777	2,865	2,879	2,897	2,811	2,686	2,671	2,628	2,680
Three-Year Trend	2,753	2,829	2,947	2,996	3,033	2,963	2,855	2,850	2,807	2,855
Kindergarten Trend	2,731	2,777	2,865	2,879	2,897	2,811	2,686	2,671	2,628	2,639

From the 9th - 12th grades' 2025-26 enrollment of 2,783, the models (except the Baseline model) predict that the number of high school students will increase with the projections suggesting a range of 2,753 to 3,033 in five years. After 2030-31, all models (except the Three-Year Trend model) project enrollment decline.

Conclusions

These district enrollment projections are based on models that incorporate past and current demographic information and the district's own enrollment data. Because most students in the district's schools over the next few years have already been born or are already in school, and because their grade progression from one year to another is reasonably predictable, the total projections should be viewed as having high accuracy over the next few years. After a few years, and increasingly for the lower elementary grades, actual enrollment figures will likely deviate from these projections by ever-increasing amounts. The reason for this divergence is that birth trends and migration of pre-school children are more difficult to predict, making meaningful incorporation into enrollment projections a challenge. As with nearly all types of forecasts, accuracy in these enrollment projections decreases over time.

Because the projections found in this report incorporate the consequences of migration to and from the district, any significant and sustained change to current or recent migration patterns will erode these models' accuracy from the initiation point of the new pattern. Over the next five years, the enrollment projections point to the Sun Prairie Area School District experiencing enrollment growth or decline depending on which model is observed. In particular:

- Overall, PK -12th grade enrollment, at 8,519 in 2025-26, is projected to range from 8,245 to 8,640 in five years, a numeric change of -274 to +121 students and percentage change of -3% to +1.4%.

- The 5K – 5th grade elementary classes, currently 3,337 students, are projected to range from 3,341 to 3,381 in five years, a change of +4 to +44 students or +0.1% to +1.3%.

- The 6th – 8th middle school grades, at 1,932 students this school year, are projected to range from 1,634 to 1,779 in 2029-30, a change of -298 to -153 students or -15% to -8%.

- The 9th – 12th grade high school classes, with 2,783 students in 2025-26, are projected to range from 2,753 to 3,033 in five years, a change of -30 to +250 students or -1% to +9%.