

BEST PRACTICES BRIEFING

Enrollment Forecasting, Capacity, and Utilization Analysis

Best Practices and an Assessment of Current Models

Demographic Analytics Advisors

April 28, 2026



PREPARED FOR

Olathe Public Schools

Student Enrollment & Facility Alignment Task Force



Demographic
Analytics Advisors

About Demographic Analytics Advisors

A few words about who we are and why we are here today.

What We Do

Demographic Analytics Advisors is a small firm of demographers and data scientists. We work with public school districts on enrollment forecasting, capacity and utilization analysis, redistricting, and related demographic studies. Our role is to bring demographic method to questions where local expertise is the other half of the answer.



Christopher Dick

President and Founder

Former statistician and demographer at the U.S. Census Bureau. Works with public school districts and with local and state governments to help them understand the populations they serve.

Other Principals

Beth Jarosz. Senior Vice President of Forecasting and Demography.

Dr. Ronald Prevost. Senior Vice President for Demography.

What we'll cover today

A quick map of where we're going.

1

Context setting

What does Olathe look like today? Demographics, enrollment trends, housing, and the forces shaping the district's near-term trajectory.

2

Best practices

What goes into credible enrollment forecasting, capacity measurement, and utilization analysis — the data, the methods, and how to know whether you can rely on it.

3

Where Olathe stands

A first read on where the district's current forecasting and utilization work stands, and a few things we think are worth discussing.

01

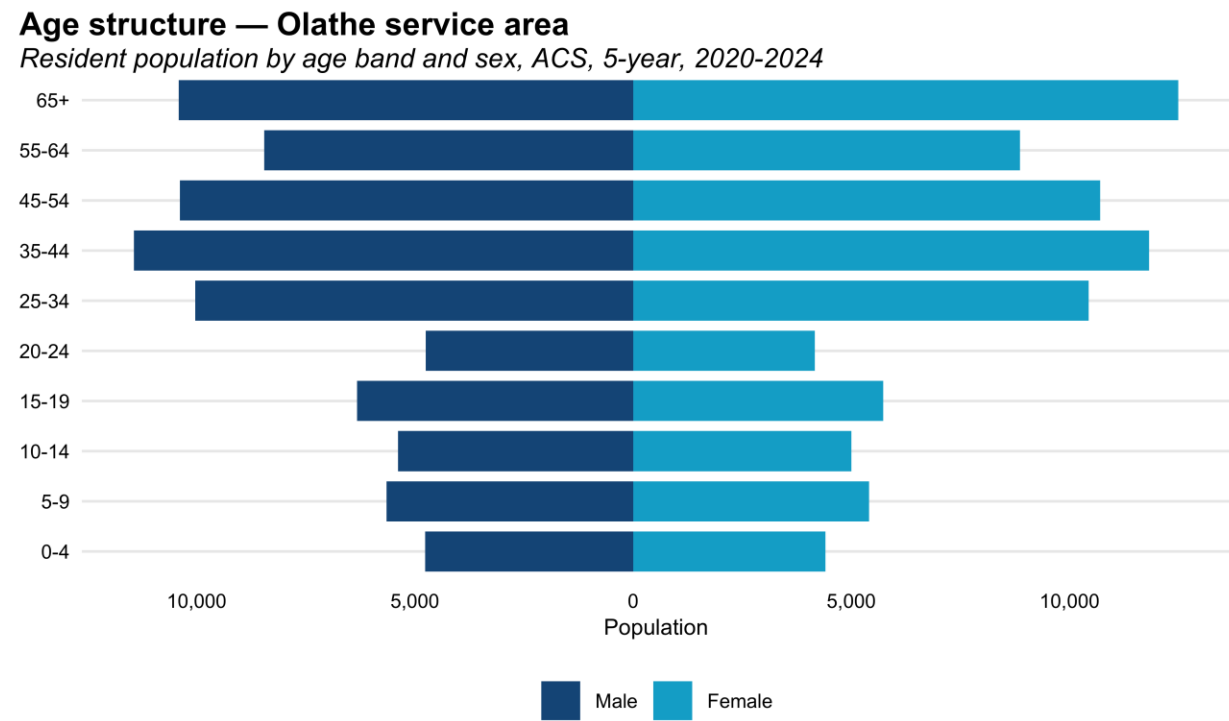
CONTEXT SETTING

What does Olathe look like today?

Demographics, enrollment trends, housing, and the forces shaping the district's near-term trajectory.

Age structure of the Olathe service area

Population by age and sex, ACS 5-year 2020–2024. The width of each bar shows the number of residents in that age band.

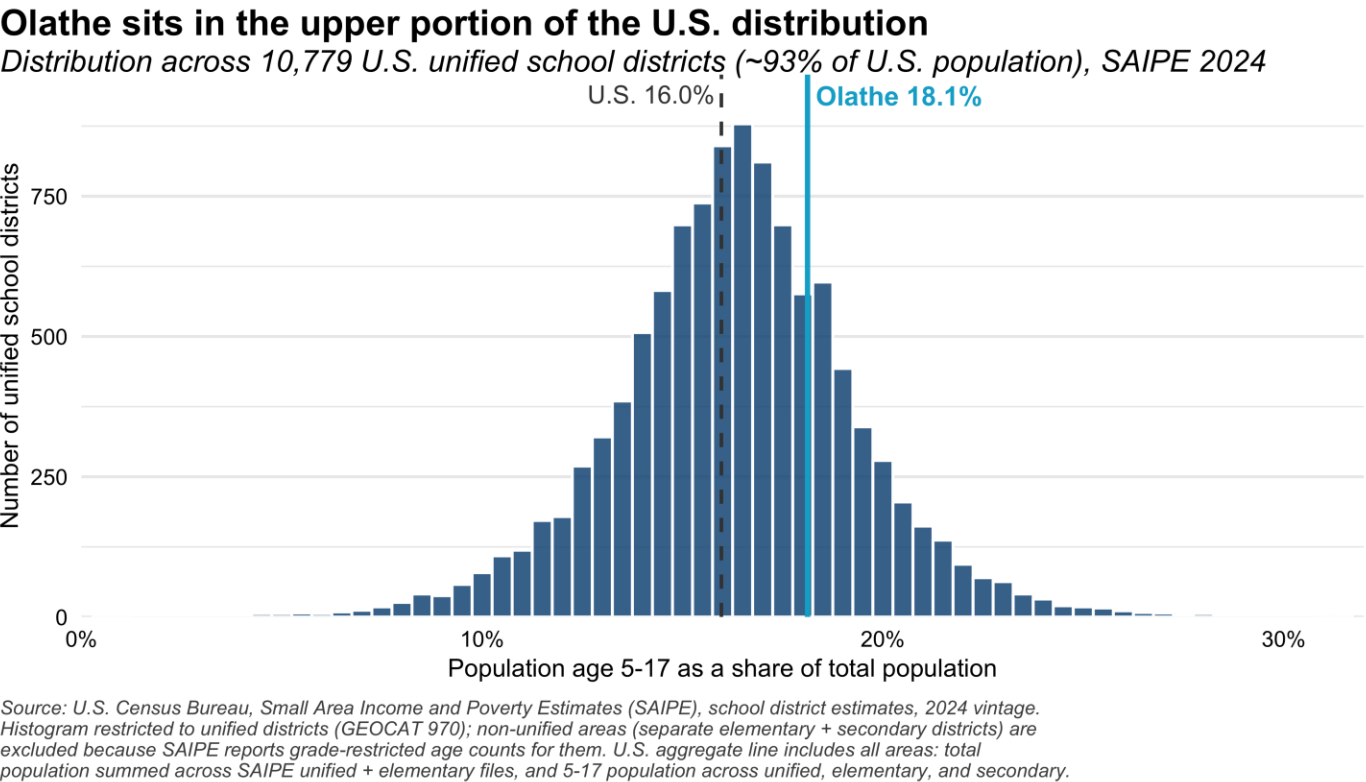


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year, 2020-2024.
Tract-to-service-area aggregation uses area weighting; population-weighting refinement is on the roadmap.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2020–2024. Tabulated to Olathe USD 233 service-area tracts.

Where Olathe sits among U.S. school districts

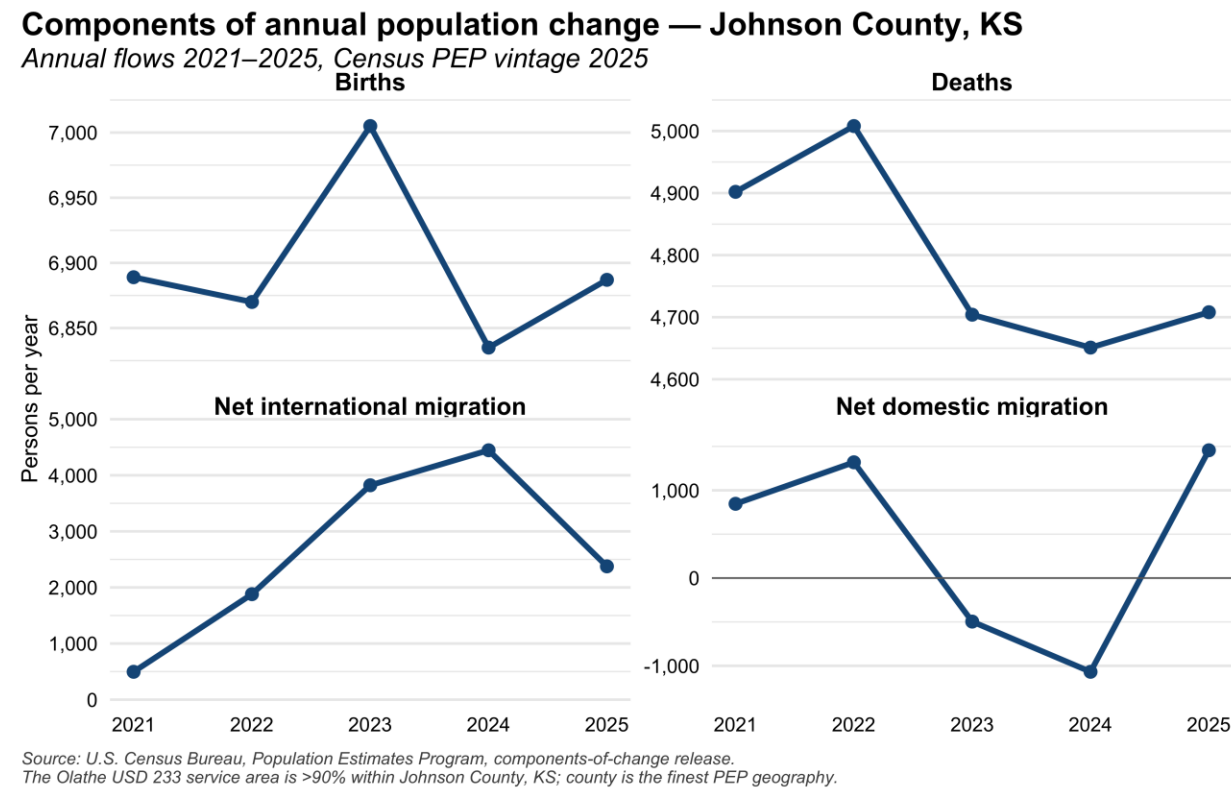
Distribution of the 5–17-to-total-population share across unified school districts (SAIPE 2024). Olathe’s share marked in teal.



Source: Census Bureau SAIPE, 2024. Olathe vertical line marks the district’s school-age population share.

Components of population change, Johnson County

Annual births, deaths, and net migration flows. Johnson County is used as a county-level approximation of the Olathe service area.

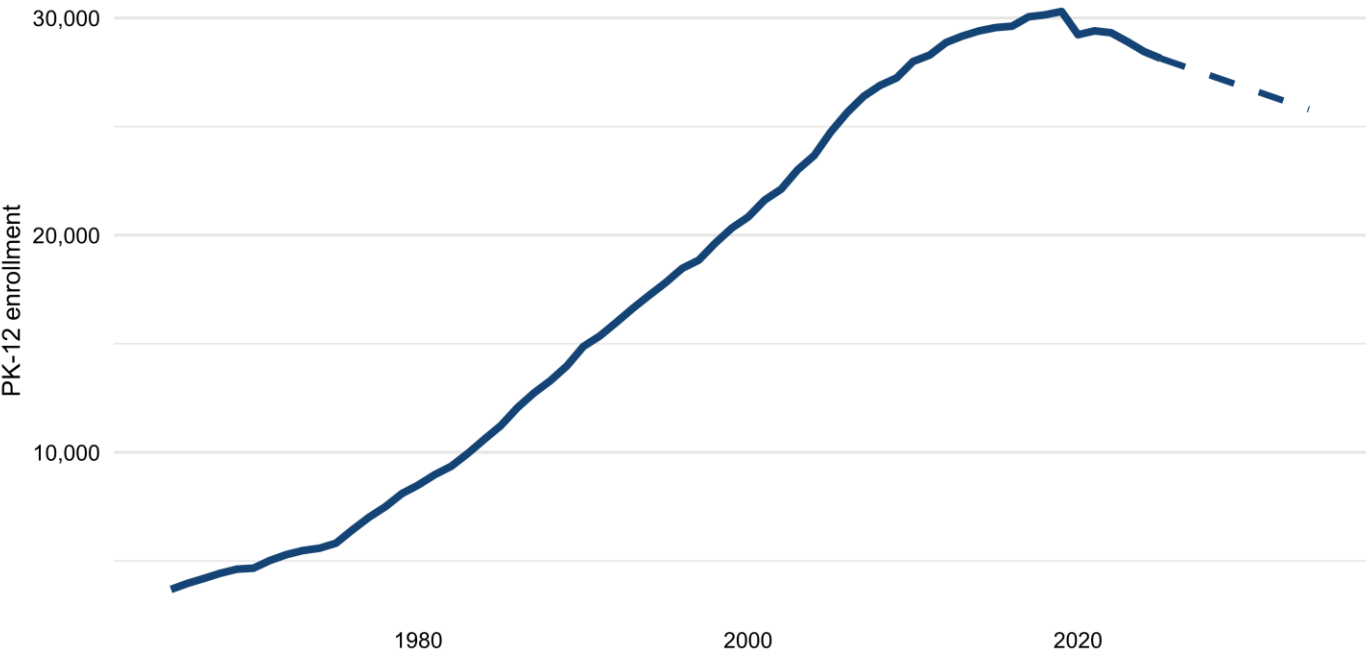


Source: Census Bureau Population Estimates Program (PEP), components of change, Johnson County, KS.

Total PK–12 enrollment, 1965 through 2035

Solid line is historical enrollment; dashed segment is the district’s nine-year projection.

Olathe Public Schools — total enrollment
Academic years 1965--66 through 2034--35



Source: Olathe Public Schools historical enrollment file and District Enrollment Update (Feb. 4, 2026).

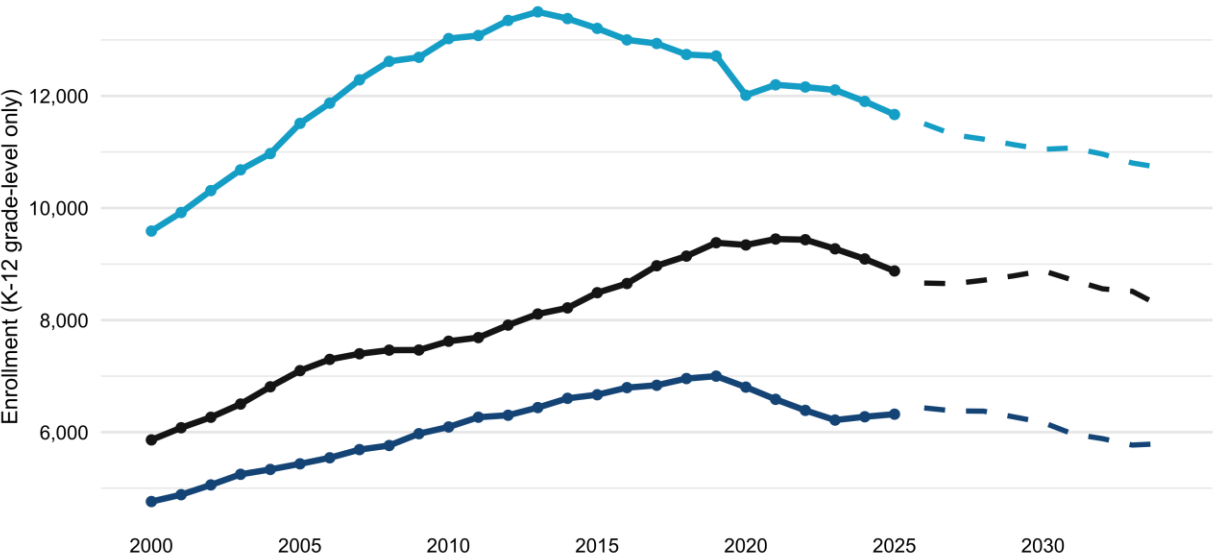
Source: Olathe Public Schools enrollment records and district enrollment projection model.

Enrollment by grade band, 2000 through 2035

Elementary (K–5), middle (6–8), and high (9–12). Dashed lines show district projections.

Olathe Public Schools — enrollment by level
Actual 2000-01 through 2025-26 with district projections through 2034-35

Elementary (K-5) Middle (6-8) High (9-12)



Source: Olathe Public Schools enrollment history; district projections.
Audited grade-level headcount; excludes PreK, SPED-only, and alternative program students counted outside K-12 grades.

Source: Olathe Public Schools enrollment records and district enrollment projection model.

Utilization by school level, 2025–26 through 2034–35

Aggregate utilization at each school level. Color bands: green (85–100%), yellow (75–85%), red (<75%), orange (>100%).

Utilization By School Level

Enrollment as a percent of functional capacity

Level	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
Elementary	60.1%	60.3%	59.5%	59.1%	58.7%	58.4%	58.5%	58.0%	57.2%	56.7%
Middle	69.2%	70.2%	70.0%	70.4%	69.4%	68.4%	66.1%	65.4%	64.2%	64.5%
High	82.3%	80.3%	80.9%	81.5%	82.5%	83.5%	82.3%	81.2%	80.9%	78.2%

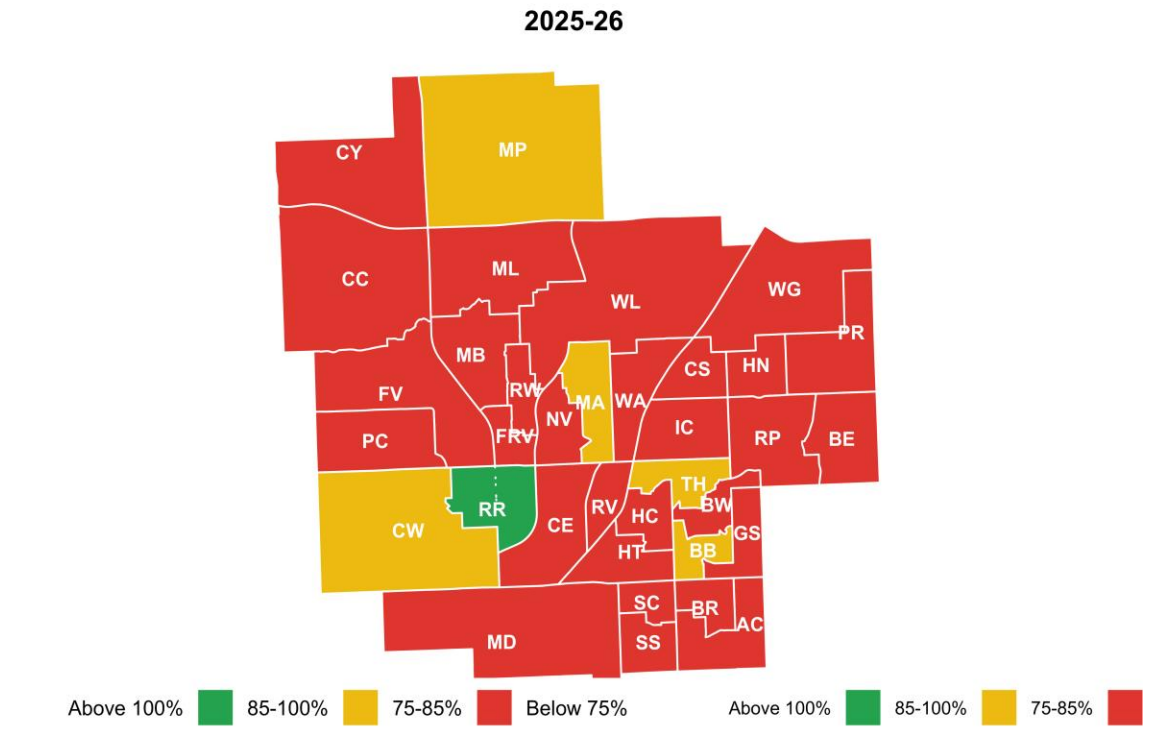
Data from: Demographic Analytics Advsiors;

Source: Olathe Public Schools enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Functional capacity basis. Source: DAA analysis of district enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Elementary utilization by attendance area, 2025–26

Current-year utilization. Each attendance area is colored by its utilization tier. Codes match the table on the following slides

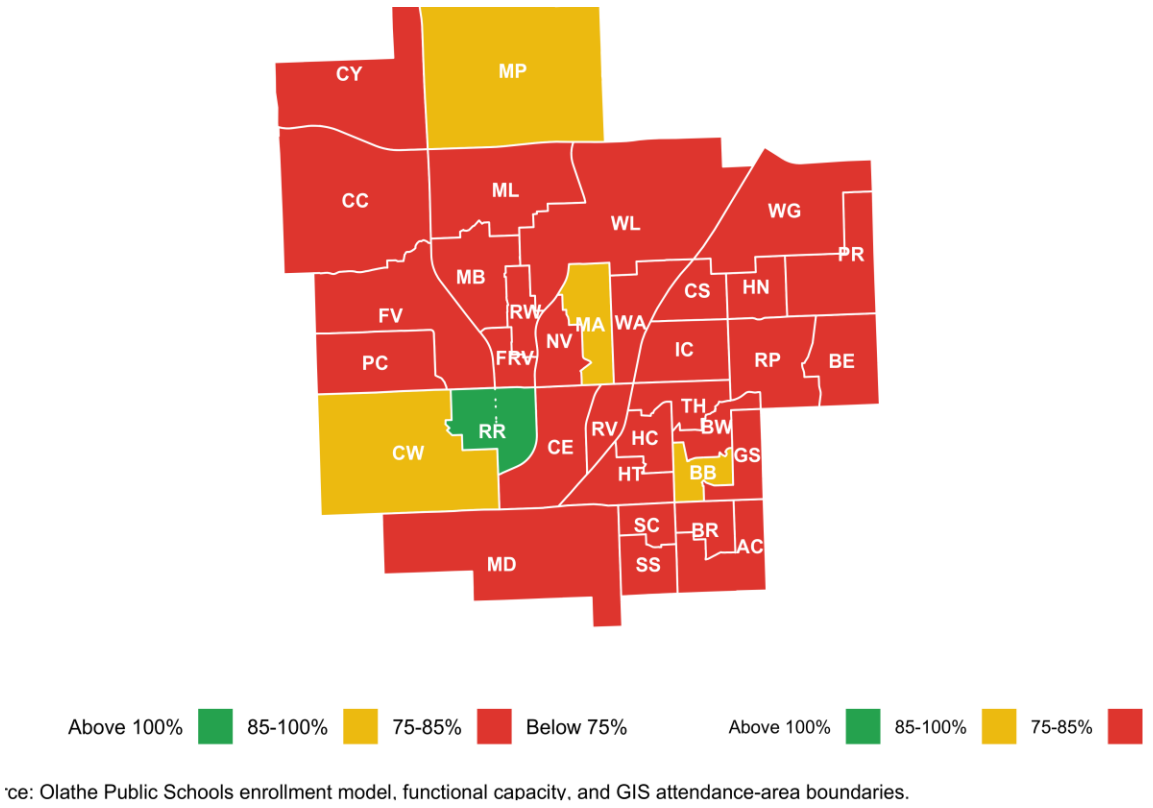


Source: Olathe Public Schools enrollment model, functional capacity, and GIS attendance-area boundaries.

Functional capacity basis. Source: DAA analysis of district enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Elementary utilization by attendance area, 2034–35

Projected utilization nine years out. Compare with the 2025–26 map on the previous slide to see which areas are shifting.



Functional capacity basis. Source: DAA analysis of district enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Elementary school utilization detail (1 of 2)

Schools A through M. Ten-year utilization trajectory for each elementary school, functional capacity basis.

Elementary Utilization By School And Year

Code matches the map labels; cell color follows the four-tier threshold.

Code	School	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
AC	Arbor Creek	52%	52%	53%	54%	54%	54%	54%	54%	52%	51%
BE	Bentwood	61%	62%	63%	65%	65%	67%	68%	67%	64%	63%
BB	Black Bob	76%	74%	75%	76%	77%	77%	76%	77%	77%	77%
BW	Briarwood	54%	51%	52%	49%	53%	51%	53%	53%	52%	54%
BR	Brougham	65%	63%	60%	61%	58%	57%	55%	57%	57%	57%
CY	Canyon Creek	75%	73%	74%	72%	76%	78%	77%	76%	73%	70%
CC	Cedar Creek	56%	54%	52%	54%	54%	54%	53%	53%	51%	49%
CE	Central	51%	50%	51%	51%	49%	48%	48%	48%	47%	48%
CW	Clearwater Creek	75%	78%	79%	82%	85%	89%	89%	88%	86%	84%
CS	Countryside	54%	52%	49%	49%	45%	44%	44%	43%	43%	42%
FRV	Fairview	56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	54%	52%	52%	51%	52%
FV	Forest View	57%	56%	57%	53%	51%	49%	51%	50%	49%	47%
GS	Green Springs	42%	42%	40%	39%	39%	38%	39%	39%	38%	39%
HC	Havencroft	54%	54%	53%	52%	53%	54%	55%	55%	55%	56%
HN	Heatherstone	48%	46%	44%	42%	42%	41%	41%	40%	41%	41%
HT	Heritage	61%	60%	62%	63%	62%	63%	62%	62%	61%	61%
IC	Indian Creek	70%	70%	72%	72%	66%	63%	62%	62%	59%	60%

Functional capacity basis. Source: DAA analysis of district enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Elementary school utilization detail (2 of 2)

Schools M through W. Continued from previous slide.

MD	Madison Place	58%	59%	58%	61%	58%	56%	53%	53%	50%	50%
MA	Mahaffie	77%	80%	78%	79%	78%	79%	77%	78%	77%	77%
MP	Manchester Park	78%	79%	77%	78%	78%	79%	80%	79%	79%	77%
ML	Meadow Lane	50%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	48%	49%	48%	46%
MB	Millbrooke	57%	55%	53%	51%	51%	49%	51%	50%	50%	50%
NV	Northview	43%	39%	38%	39%	39%	40%	40%	39%	39%	37%
PR	Pleasant Ridge	53%	53%	51%	49%	50%	51%	52%	50%	51%	51%
PC	Prairie Center	66%	61%	59%	59%	56%	53%	52%	49%	50%	48%
RW	Ravenwood	65%	64%	64%	61%	57%	56%	56%	56%	57%	55%
RP	Regency Place	68%	66%	64%	65%	65%	67%	67%	66%	64%	63%
RV	Ridgeview	57%	57%	54%	52%	51%	49%	45%	45%	45%	44%
RR	Rolling Ridge	89%	87%	84%	84%	82%	84%	86%	86%	87%	87%
SC	Scarborough	57%	54%	52%	52%	50%	48%	48%	47%	45%	44%
SS	Sunnyside	41%	43%	42%	40%	40%	38%	39%	38%	37%	38%
TH	Tomahawk	77%	80%	78%	75%	74%	74%	73%	72%	71%	72%
WG	Walnut Grove	71%	70%	67%	65%	64%	63%	62%	62%	60%	60%
WA	Washington	60%	62%	59%	59%	59%	56%	59%	59%	60%	59%
WL	Woodland	52%	55%	59%	61%	64%	64%	66%	67%	67%	67%

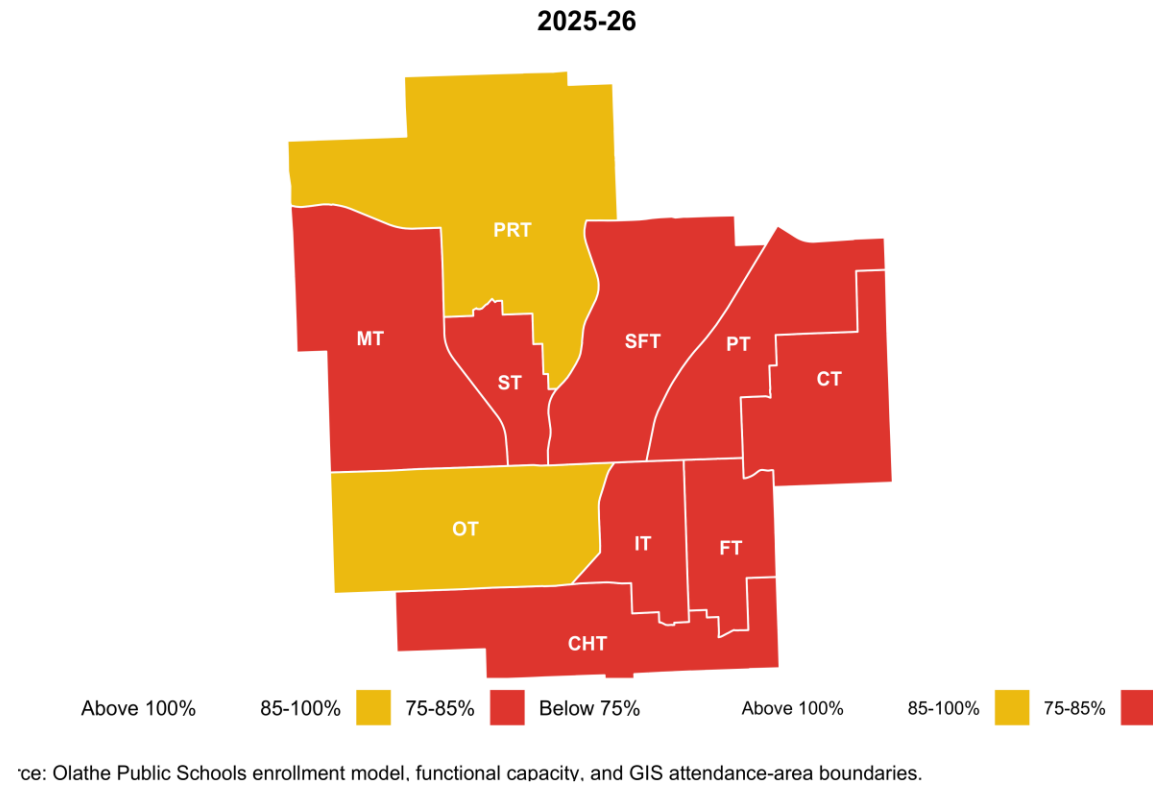
Data from: Demographic Analytics Advisors;

Source: Olathe Public Schools enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet. Rolling Ridge's attendance area includes the former Westview Elementary boundary; Westview closed at the end of 2025-26 and its students were redistricted to Rolling Ridge.

Functional capacity basis. Source: DAA analysis of district enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Middle school utilization by attendance area, 2025–26

Ten middle schools. Current-year utilization by attendance area.



Functional capacity basis. Source: DAA analysis of district enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Middle school utilization detail, 2025–26 through 2034–35

Ten-year utilization trajectory for each middle school. Color bands match the map on the previous slide.

Middle Utilization By School And Year

Code matches the map labels; cell color follows the four-tier threshold.

Code	School	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
CT	California Trail	62%	65%	67%	67%	65%	65%	64%	68%	72%	76%
CHT	Chisholm Trail	61%	59%	56%	58%	56%	54%	50%	50%	50%	52%
FT	Frontier Trail	68%	71%	66%	66%	64%	64%	60%	62%	64%	68%
IT	Indian Trail	69%	72%	75%	77%	75%	73%	72%	65%	59%	55%
MT	Mission Trail	71%	69%	66%	65%	63%	63%	58%	58%	56%	55%
OT	Oregon Trail	76%	76%	78%	77%	77%	74%	76%	78%	79%	79%
PT	Pioneer Trail	73%	77%	78%	79%	80%	76%	75%	67%	62%	57%
PRT	Prairie Trail	77%	82%	83%	82%	81%	84%	84%	86%	82%	82%
SFT	Santa Fe Trail	73%	70%	73%	73%	74%	74%	69%	70%	69%	73%
ST	Summit Trail	65%	63%	60%	61%	60%	59%	55%	52%	50%	50%

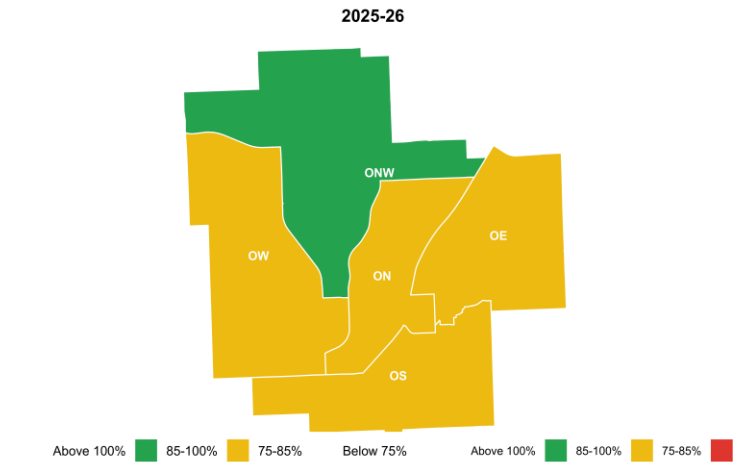
Data from: Demographic Analytics Advsiors;

Source: Olathe Public Schools enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Functional capacity basis. Source: DAA analysis of district enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

High school utilization, 2025–26

Five high schools. Current utilization map (top) and ten-year projection table (bottom).



ce: Olathe Public Schools enrollment model, functional capacity, and GIS attendance-area boundaries.

High Utilization By School And Year

Code matches the map labels; cell color follows the four-tier threshold.

Code	School	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
OE	Olathe East	78%	74%	76%	78%	81%	83%	83%	81%	78%	76%
ON	Olathe North	84%	81%	80%	79%	82%	84%	84%	85%	84%	81%
ONW	Olathe Northwest	96%	97%	98%	98%	99%	102%	100%	100%	100%	95%
OS	Olathe South	78%	79%	76%	78%	76%	74%	72%	70%	70%	68%
OW	Olathe West	75%	73%	74%	75%	75%	76%	74%	71%	73%	71%

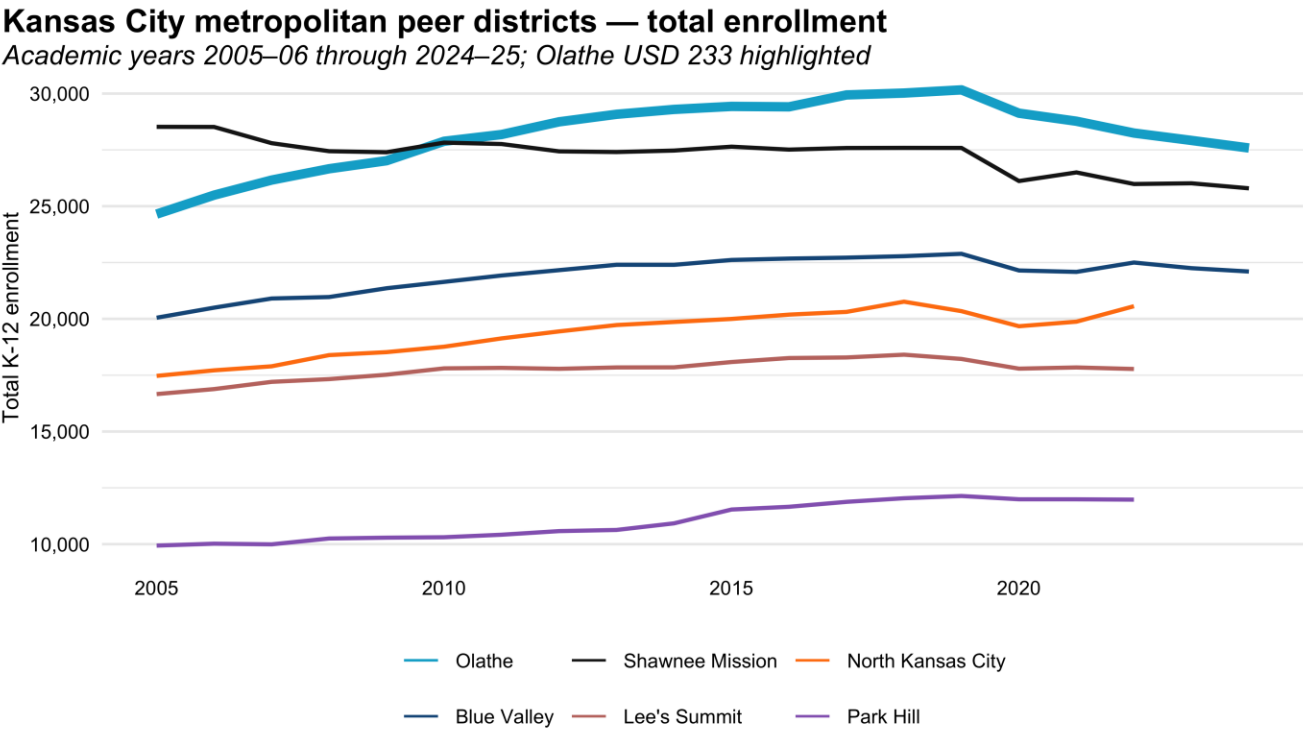
Data from: Demographic Analytics Advisors;

Source: Olathe Public Schools enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Functional capacity basis. Source: DAA analysis of district enrollment model and Alternative Capacity Worksheet.

Olathe and its Kansas City metropolitan peer districts

Total K–12 enrollment for Olathe (bold) and five KC-metro peers. Olathe is the largest district in the peer set.



Sources: KSDE (Kansas districts), MO DESE (Missouri districts), NCES CCD (earlier years and fallback).

Source: Kansas Department of Education and NCES enrollment files. Olathe (USD 233) shown bold.

02

BEST PRACTICES

Best practices in enrollment forecasting, capacity, and utilization

The data, the methods, and how to know whether you can rely on the numbers.

A forecast is really a set of “if-then” statements.

THE CORE IDEA

if.then.

A forecast worth relying on says: “If today's patterns hold, here's what enrollment looks like — and here's which patterns would have to break to make it wrong.”

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR THE TASK FORCE

Not a crystal ball. A tool for your decisions.

Your work is about buildings, boundaries, and programs — decisions that have to hold up even if things come in a little higher or a little lower than expected. A forecast that writes down what it assumed gives you something to push back on. One that doesn't, doesn't.

FORECAST FACE-OFF

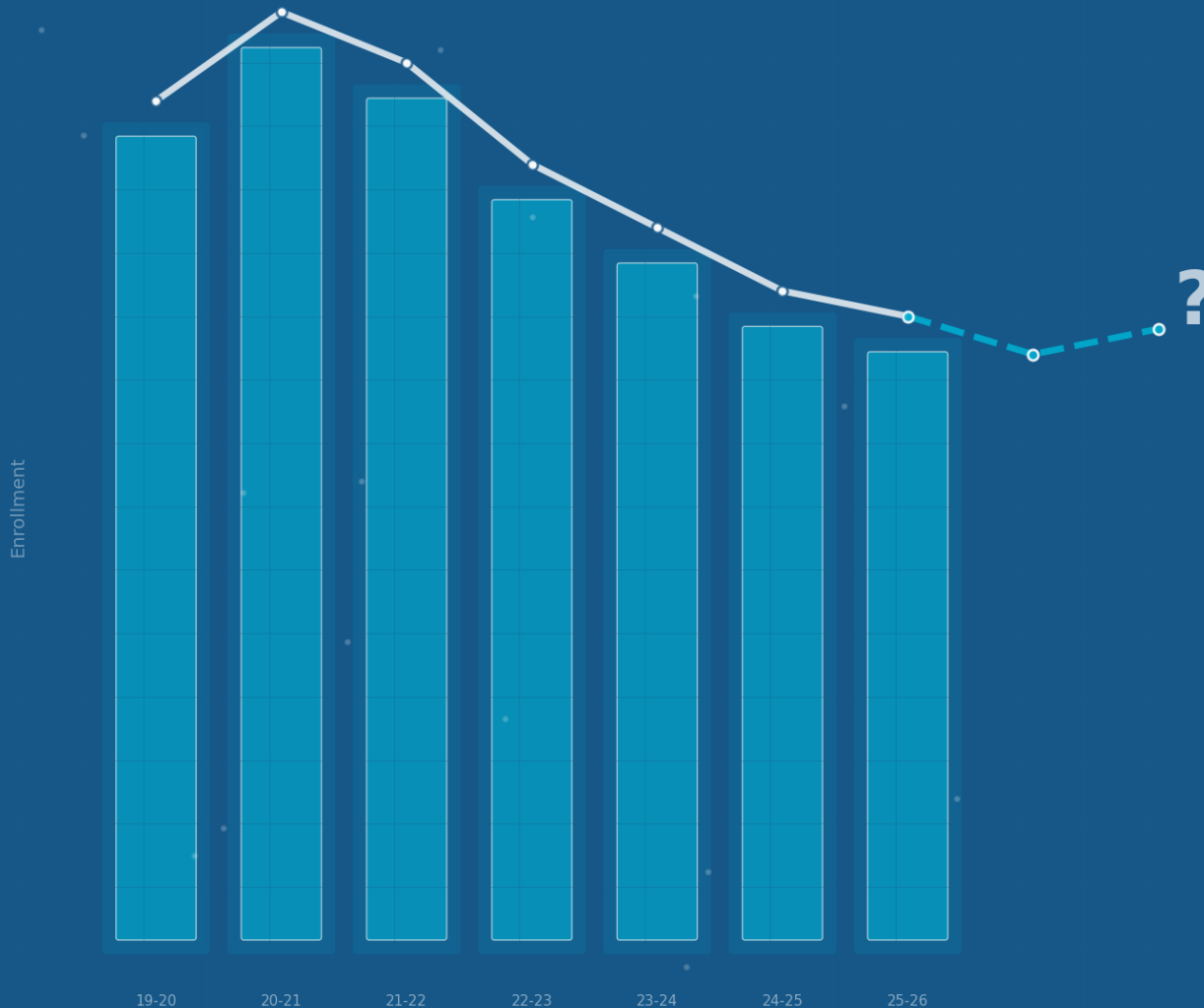


TABLE EXERCISE

Forecast Face-Off

Your table has five years of enrollment data for a fictional school and a set of contextual clues — new housing, a competing private school, declining births, and more.

Your mission: Produce a five-year enrollment forecast and identify the three key assumptions driving your projection.

15 minutes • Use the packet at your table

There are no wrong answers — the goal is to surface how assumptions shape forecasts.

When time is called, write your group's 2030–31 forecast number in large text on your table card. Hold it up!

Every forecast rests on two pillars

Get either pillar wrong and the whole structure wobbles. Good practice invests equally in both — and makes both inspectable.

PILLAR 1

Data

Official sources

Census Bureau, state vital-stats registry, state education agency, county assessor.

Historical depth

At least ten years of enrollment by grade and school. Shorter horizons can't separate structural trends from one-year blips.

Geographic granularity

Tract, attendance-area, subdivision — not just district totals. Growth never hits every school equally.

Key streams

Resident births, Census population by age, enrollment by grade, housing permits and occupancy, boundary and program history.

PILLAR 2

Assumptions

Demographic

Grade-progression ratios and stability. Birth cohort translation to kindergarten.

Migration by age, tenure, and school-age status. Aging-in-place and housing-turnover yield.

Structural

Attendance boundaries locked, pending, or likely to change. Residential pipeline: permitted, under-construction, planned. Single-family vs. multifamily yield factors.

Program and choice

Charter, private, and homeschool shares. Program-driven enrollment (magnet, SPED, language). Planned openings, closures, or grade reconfigurations.

Assumptions should be grounded in local context and written down.

Different methods for forecasting. Each with their own strengths and weaknesses.

01

Cohort-Component

Track each birth cohort from birth through grade 12. The demographic workhorse.

02

Student Yield

Housing units × students per unit. The facilities planner's tool.

03

Hybrid

Cohort-component blended with student-yield at the attendance-area level.

04

Trend Extrapolation

Fit the history, project forward. Fast and cheap, but blind to structural change.

05

Regression

Regress enrollment on demographic and housing predictors. Good sanity check. Often not a great

06

Micro-sim and Machine Learning /AI

Very powerful, mostly in academia right now. Test well for certain problems. Will likely begin seeing these in production. Can be opaque.

Measuring all demographic processes in one model

METHOD 01

Cohort-Component

The demographic workhorse. If you can only use one method, this is probably the one.

Start with births in year Y. Apply survival rates to age them forward. Apply a kindergarten-capture ratio five years later. Then roll each cohort grade-by-grade using grade-progression ratios. Repeat for every cohort. Sum to enrollment.

INPUTS

Resident births by year and tract. Historical enrollment by grade. Mortality and migration rates.

OUTPUTS

Enrollment by grade, year, and (with tract detail) attendance area. Ten- to fifteen-year horizon.

STRENGTHS

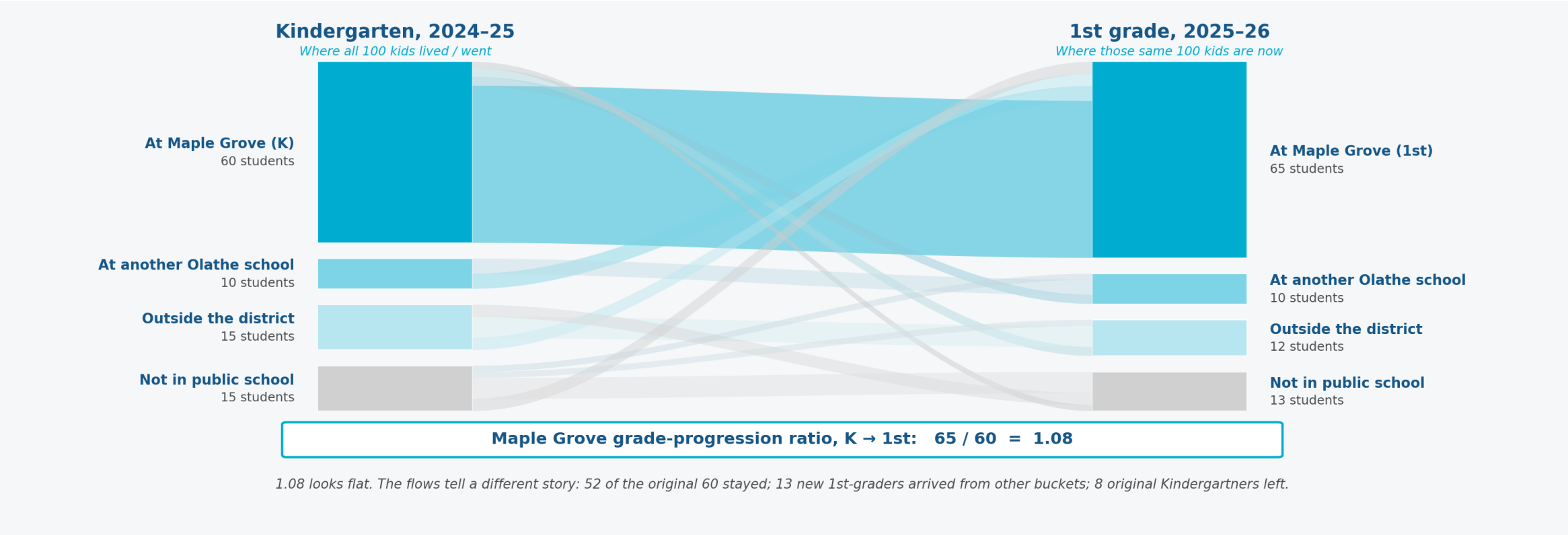
Demographically honest. Traces mechanisms you can audit. Handles aging cohorts naturally.

WATCH-OUTS

Assumes grade-progression is stable. Misses housing-driven growth at the subdivision level. Needs 10+ years of data.

What a grade-progression ratio actually captures

One school, one year pair. The same 100 kids tracked from Kindergarten into 1st grade — staying, leaving, arriving. Every cohort-component forecast is a stack of pictures like this.



Illustrative example. Bucket sizes and flows are made up for easy arithmetic; real attendance areas are larger and noisier. The teaching point, not the numbers, is the point.

Forecasting enrollment from the housing stock

METHOD 02

Student Yield

The facilities planner's tool. Forecast enrollment from the housing stock, not from demographic rates.

Inventory the housing units in each attendance area by type and age. Multiply each group by a yield factor — students per unit. Add pipeline units as they deliver. Sum to enrollment by school.

THE IDEA

Different housing generates different numbers of students. A new single-family subdivision yields more school-age children per unit than an aging neighborhood or a multifamily complex. Yield factors capture that relationship and turn a housing inventory into an enrollment forecast.

INPUTS

Housing inventory by type (single-family, multifamily, townhome) and age. Building permits and development pipeline. Yield factors calibrated from enrollment-to-housing cross-tabs at the attendance-area level.

STRENGTHS

Spatially precise — allocates enrollment to attendance areas naturally. Captures housing-pipeline effects that cohort methods miss. Directly useful for facilities planning because it links enrollment to where homes are being built.

WATCH-OUTS

Yield factors are not fixed. As neighborhoods age, original families' children graduate and next buyers may be smaller households or empty-nesters. Treating yield as constant overstates enrollment in maturing areas. Also blind to non-housing demographic shifts — migration, birth-rate changes, or charter-school competition.

Use both. Let each method do what it's best at.

METHOD 03

Cohort-Component + Student Yield

The method we recommend for most districts. Gets the demographic honesty of cohort-component and the spatial precision of student-yield.

Run cohort-component at the district level to get the total-enrollment envelope. Run student-yield at the attendance-area level to allocate the total across schools. Reconcile: the areas must sum to the district total.

INPUTS

Everything cohort-component needs, plus the housing and pipeline data student-yield needs. The union, not the intersection.

OUTPUTS

Enrollment by grade by attendance area. Scenario-ready.

STRENGTHS

Best of both methods. Detectable when either one is drifting. Gives planners the right tool at the right level.

WATCH-OUTS

More expensive. Needs a reconciliation step. Demands staff who understand both methodologies.

Three disciplines every forecast needs

Quantify uncertainty. Measure accuracy. Cross-check the numbers.

QUANTIFY UNCERTAINTY

Present the forecast as a range, not a point. Low / base / high scenarios from explicit assumption changes show which levers move enrollment. Statistical prediction intervals show what the data alone implies. Named risks — a major employer closing, a charter expansion — flag what could break the assumption set entirely.

BACK-TEST ACCURACY

Compare each cycle's forecast against what actually happened — at 1, 3, and 5 years out, by grade band, and by attendance area. The hit/miss record shows where to invest more data, which assumptions to revisit, how wide the scenario bands should be, and whether the method itself needs to change.

CROSS-CHECK BEFORE SHIPPING

Grade totals sum to district total. Attendance areas sum to district. A demographer reads the numbers for plausibility — does the age pyramid make sense? Are grade-progression shifts within historical range? And a peer comparison: does the trajectory look reasonable against similar districts?

Four ways to measure capacity

Conflating them is the single most common source of facility-planning confusion.

Design Capacity

Maximum headcount under the as-built layout. Classrooms times target class size, without regard to actual use. Rarely the right number for decisions.

Functional Capacity

Students a building can educate under current program, staffing, and class-size policies. Subtracts specialty rooms. Almost always below design capacity. The primary planning number.

Program Capacity

Seats in a specific program (dual-language, self-contained gifted, CTE pathway). Used for program-placement decisions, not total-building sizing.

Statutory Capacity

Seats by grade per building under state law. In Kansas (HB 2553), driven by teacher count times class-size guidelines. The most visible number a district publishes.

Utilization: the basic ratio

Students assigned to a building divided by that building's functional capacity. The arithmetic is simple. The judgments around it are not.

Trajectory

Utilization over the past five years and projected over the next five. A school at 92% today but headed to 50% is a very different planning problem than one stable at 92%.

Distribution

Utilization by grade or program within the building. A school at 92% overall can have one grade severely over-enrolled and three under-enrolled. The single number hides this.

Planning-area comparison

Utilization relative to nearby schools. Low utilization reads differently when a neighboring school is over-enrolled versus when the whole region is declining together.

The feedback loop

Capacity and utilization feed back into forecasting. Without the loop, institutional knowledge stays on the table.

When a school is over-utilized, the district responds: boundary change, portable classroom, program move, or new school. Each of these changes the conditions the next forecast must account for. A capacity-utilization workflow that does not loop back to the forecasting analyst is leaving institutional knowledge on the table.

Forecast

Enrollment projection by school, grade, and year. Drives the utilization calculation that identifies pressure points.

Capacity Action

Boundary change, portable, new school, consolidation. Each action changes the enrollment distribution the next cycle must forecast.

Next Cycle

The forecasting analyst needs to know: what happened, what changed, and what the new baseline looks like before the next estimate.

Different districts, different stories — different methods fit

There's no one-size-fits-all method. The right tool depends on what's actually driving enrollment change in a given district. Two archetypes to illustrate.

WHEN HOUSING IS THE STORY

Rapid-growth districts

- Student-yield carries the attendance-area detail
- Cohort-component anchors the district total
- Close tracking of the permit pipeline
- Scenario bands widen with pipeline uncertainty
- (Olathe sits closer to this profile)

WHEN DEMOGRAPHICS IS THE STORY

Stable or declining districts

- Cohort-component does most of the work
- Birth-cohort tracking gets more weight
- Yield plays a supporting role on pocket growth
- Named risks focus on charter/private share
- Housing pipeline matters less than turnover

What a reasonable forecast error looks like

A USEFUL BENCHMARK

~1-5%

With hybrid cohort-component + student-yield methods, and ten or more years of local history, a 5-year-out forecast of district-total enrollment will typically land within about 1-5% of actual. That's the rough bar for good practice — not a ceiling, not a floor.

WHAT MATTERS MORE THAN THE NUMBER

The habit of measuring it.

Whatever a given district's error rate turns out to be, the important discipline is the measurement itself — every cycle, for every new forecast, against what actually happened. That's how trust is built in a forecast, and how improvements accumulate over time.

Three questions worth asking of any enrollment forecast

These aren't gotcha questions. They're the same ones a careful forecaster would want you to ask. Useful to keep in mind whenever a new enrollment number lands on the table.

“What are the assumptions?”

A good forecast comes with a short, readable list of its major assumptions. Not fine print — a page you can actually read. If that page doesn't exist, the forecast is harder to interpret.

“How did the last one do?”

Every forecast should be easy to compare against what actually happened the last time. The comparison doesn't need to be flattering — it just needs to exist.

“What could make this wrong?”

A single number implies more certainty than any forecast has. A range — with named drivers — invites the real conversation about risk.

03

WHERE OLATHE STANDS

How does Olathe's practice compare?

A friendly read across five dimensions. The short version: a lot is already working, and the opportunities are specific and addressable.

How Olathe forecasts enrollment

99.2%

district-total accuracy, 2024-25
28,454 actual vs. 28,695 estimated

A hybrid subdivision-based cohort-progression method with a housing-pipeline overlay.

The Method

A cohort-survival backbone rolls current enrollment forward using three-year averaged grade-progression ratios at the attendance-area / subdivision level. A grid-level housing-pipeline component adds students from subdivisions under construction using observed student-yield rates. Kindergarten entry uses a K-entry ratio applied to lagged births mapped to the service area.

What Makes It Strong

Subdivision-level granularity is substantially stronger than a district-wide cohort-survival approach. The three-year averaged GPRs are a sensible smoothing choice. The geocoded-permit-to-attendance-area linkage makes the housing overlay spatially precise. The 2024-25 accuracy of 99.2% at the district total (28,454 actual vs. 28,695 estimated) is unusually strong.

Three capacity measures at Olathe

Each answers a different question. Together they give a complete picture of the district's facilities.

1

Functional Capacity

The primary internal planning number. Loads general classrooms at district target class size, with Title 1 / Non-Title 1 loading distinction. Room taxonomy distinguishes classroom, K-primary, specialty, and athletics spaces. Self-contained SpEd rooms tracked separately.

2

Room Utilization

A finer-grained rate measure. Accounts for the variety of spaces (full classrooms, half-classrooms, quarter-classrooms) and how many periods each is used at secondary level. Complementary to functional capacity: a school can have low functional utilization but high room utilization.

3

Staffing Capacity

Developed for Kansas HB 2553 compliance. Driven by teacher count times class-size guidelines (K-2: 22, Gr 3: 24, Gr 4-5: 26, Gr 6-12: 28). The most visible number published. 2026-27 total: 29,593 seats against 27,852 enrolled.

How we looked at Olathe's current forecasting practice

Not an audit. Not a critique. A structured way of walking through five dimensions that, in our experience, matter most for the kind of evidence-based facility planning the Task Force is working toward.

What we looked at

The district's internal forecasting workbook, the March 2026 open-enrollment narrative and staffing-capacity calculations, the room-by-room capacity inventory, the school rubric, the Boundary Study Group's historical materials, and the 2026 bond program documentation.

How we describe each one

Two marks only: STRONG (already in line with good practice) or DEVELOPING (room to build further). No letter grades, no rank, no scorecard competition.

What this isn't

Not a judgment about the staff doing the work today — they're doing good work. Not a comparison to any specific district. Just a structured read, offered in good faith.

Documentation and methodology

Two dimensions where Olathe’s practice is already strong.

DIMENSION 01

Documentation Maturity

The forecasting workbook and capacity inventory are preserved year over year in the same structure, making it possible to compare assumptions and outputs across vintages directly. The school rubric is documented with explicit indicators and weights. This meets the standard most peer districts lack.

STRONG

DIMENSION 02

Methodological Rigor

The hybrid subdivision-based cohort-progression method with housing-pipeline overlay is the right method for Olathe’s size and growth profile. Three-year averaged GPRs are a sensible smoothing choice. The geocoded-permit-to-attendance-area linkage gives spatial granularity few peers achieve in-house. District-total accuracy of 99.2% in 2024-25.

STRONG

Decision linkage and subgroup visibility

One strength, one natural place to build.

DIMENSION 03

Decision Linkage

Utilization is reported at both the current year and end of forecast horizon. The Planning Area structure ties analytical outputs to the geographic units governance discussions actually use. The rubric gives facility decisions an explicit, written frame. The standing Boundary Study Group adds governance depth few peers match.

STRONG

DIMENSION 04

Subgroup Visibility

The district tracks subgroup enrollment at the district level — special-education enrollment grew ~27% over a recent ten-year window, and multilingual learners reached 6,295 in 2025-26. These data are not yet integrated into building-level forecast and utilization outputs. Adding a subgroup-by-grade view would give the Task Force visibility into program-requirement implications at specific buildings.

DEVELOPING

UNCOMMON PRACTICES

Two things Olathe does that most districts don't

Both are institutional strengths worth protecting.

PUBLISHED FORECAST ACCURACY

99.2% district-total accuracy, 2024-25

Olathe publishes its prior-year forecast residual at each annual presentation. Most peer districts of comparable size do not present forecast accuracy publicly. This binds the analytical work to a feedback loop and makes the district's track record visible.

STANDING BOUNDARY STUDY GROUP

20+ years of continuous operation

The Boundary Study Group has met for over twenty years, maintaining institutional memory of boundary configurations across decades. The multi-option community process gives boundary decisions legitimacy that ad hoc committees cannot match.

The scorecard at a glance

Strong across the board on the paper's four organizing themes, with one natural place to build. The foundation is solid.



Recommendations: near-term process improvements

Three optional process refinements the Task Force might consider. Each produces benefits within a single forecast cycle, and none require changing the core methodology that is already working well.

1. Cell-integrity audit

Add an automated cell-integrity check to each cycle of the forecasting workbook. A lightweight preventive step. A R or VBA audit would take a half-day to write and can be re-run each cycle.

2. Capacity inventory standardization

Standardize the last-updated column in the capacity inventory on a single date format and add an entry-time validation rule. The underlying information is correct; the column just needs consistent formatting to be scan-ready for external readers.

3. Scenario display clarity

Add a scenario banner at the top of each workbook sheet and use a consistent color convention (one color family for baseline, one for alternative). Reduces cognitive load for a reader consuming a single sheet.

Recommendations: building the evidence base

Three ways to make the district's already-strong analytical work more visible to the community and to decision-makers.

4. Public methods document

Publish a short, public-facing description (2-4 pages) of the forecast's inputs, method, scenarios, and limitations. Include a one-page mapping of the three capacity measures, explaining which decisions each informs. A written record is easier to track and version than PowerPoint.

5. Annual back-test

Run an annual back-test of the prior cycle's forecast against realized enrollment. Publish the residual summary in the same workbook so the method's performance is documented over time. Olathe already reports accuracy at each annual presentation -- an uncommon practice among peer districts. Formalizing it in the workbook would make that strength permanent.

6. Subgroup-by-grade view

Add a short subgroup-by-grade view to the utilization and forecasting outputs (at minimum, multilingual learners and students with IEPs). Building-level planning decisions should be taken with visibility into whether the subgroup composition is changing in ways that affect program requirements.

Longer-term investments

Two longer-horizon investments worth considering once the near-term practices are in place. Both are about the engineering layer beneath a method that is already the right method.

7. Probabilistic uncertainty band

Add a probabilistic uncertainty band to the ten-year forecast using the time-series-on-GPRs variant of cohort-survival. The payoff: a forecast communicated to the Board and community as a range alongside the central line, matching the uncertainty-treatment practice described in the best-practices framework. This is frontier-level practice -- very few districts of any size do it today, which speaks to the strength of the starting point.

8. Spreadsheet-to-script migration

Migrate the forecasting workbook from Excel to a scripted pipeline (R, Python, or a dedicated tool) that automates the end-to-end forecast, exposes each step to testing, and re-runs on a new data vintage with a single command. The workbook has served the district well. This is about the engineering layer beneath the model, not about changing the model.

What to take away from today

The data and analytical infrastructure Olathe has already built is what the Task Force needs to do its work.

THE FORECASTING METHOD WORKS

A hybrid cohort-progression method with a housing-pipeline overlay, operating at the subdivision level. 99.2% district-total accuracy in 2024-25. The core method is sound — it does not need to be replaced.

THE CAPACITY DATA IS DETAILED

Three complementary capacity measures — functional, room utilization, and staffing — with room-level detail preserved across vintages. The utilization picture is already available by school and by planning area.

THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE SPECIFIC

Subgroup-by-grade visibility at the building level. A public-facing methods document. Formalized back-testing. These build on what already exists — none require starting from scratch.

Thank you for the work you're doing

Serving on a Task Force like this is real work. We're grateful for your time — and for the care you're bringing to decisions that will shape Olathe kids' experience for the next decade.

For the district

Olathe staff have been unusually responsive and substantive in our conversations. It's visible in the quality of the work product.

For the Task Force

The questions this group is asking are the right ones. That's half the battle. Most districts never get this far.

For the kids

The point of all of this is that capacity shows up where students actually live. That's what good forecasting protects — students' school experience.

Closing

Questions?

Christopher Dick, President & Founder

chris@demoadvisors.com · demoadvisors.com