Future Ready SLPS: Community Feedback Overview

July 28, 2026

SAINT LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SLPS Strategic Values:
Pathway to Portrait of a Graduate

- College & Career Ready
- Change Agent
- Critical Thinker
- Communicator
- Competent
- Culturally Aware
- Collaborator

St. Louis Public Schools District Priority Areas

CORE FOUR

Attendance

Students Must be Present to Succeed

Why It Matters: Students cannot benefit from instruction if they are not consistently in school. Attendance is one of the strongest predictors of academic success and graduation.

Focus:

- Increasing daily attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism.
- Strengthening engagement and school connection
- Monitoring and improving attendance practices districtwide.

Action:

- Districtwide attendance campaign: *Every Student, Every Day – Together, Like Never Before*

Literacy

The Foundation of All Learning

Why It Matters: Literacy proficiency builds success.

Focus:

- Strengthening early and ongoing literacy instruction
- Ensuring students read on grade level
- Supporting teachers with proven instructional practices

Action:

- Literacy for the Lou
- 95 Percent Group (phonics)
- LETRS-trained educators
- Tiered literacy supports and targeted interventions.
- Family and community engagement through reading initiatives.

Finance

Protecting Classrooms & Restoring Trust

Why it Matters: Sound finances allows planned sustainability, avoids disruption, and invests in long-term improvement.

Focus:

- Transparent budgeting and financial oversight
- Restoring fiscal accountability and systems
- Ensuring long-term sustainability

Action:

- Internal audits and clear financial recovery timelines
- Balanced budget plan by December 2026
- Strengthening financial policies and grants management systems
- Expert financial support

Operations

Creating Conditions for Learning

Why it Matters: Students learn best in safe, well-maintained and fully operational schools.

Focus:

- Improving facilities and school environments
- Aligning resources with student and community needs.
- Strengthening operational systems across the district

Action:

- Facility improvements and school readiness
- Partnerships with the City of St. Louis, SLDC, Neighborhood and Urban Planning Committee, and community stakeholders
- Long-term planning to ensure efficient school utilization

Future Ready SLPS: Feedback Sessions

Saint Louis Public Schools gathered feedback on the preliminary Future Ready SLPS portfolio models through multiple engagement opportunities.

The purpose of this analysis is to:

- Summarize an overview of how information was distributed.
- Identify recurring strengths, concerns, tradeoffs, and implementation questions.
- Compare patterns across community members and school leaders.
- Highlight areas requiring additional analysis, communication, or planning.

Important context:
These findings reflect feedback from participants who chose to attend a meeting, post on Padlet, or complete a feedback form. **The data and feedback provide valuable stakeholder perspectives but should not be interpreted as a statistically representative survey of the entire SLPS community.**

Purpose

- The purpose of the meeting were to gather thoughtful, structured feedback on the preliminary Future Ready SLPS portfolio planning models.

- Participants were asked to help SLPS pressure-test the models by identifying:
  - What was strong or promising
  - What raised concerns
  - What was missing
  - What assumptions need to be tested
  - What data or analysis is still needed
  - What school-level implications require additional review
  - How can we best engage with the greater community

Why Portfolio Planning, Why Now?

- Portfolio planning allows the district to intentionally examine every school, program, building, and investment to determine how resources can be aligned to student success, neighborhood access, and operational sustainability.
- A long-term portfolio strategy also allows the district to move away from year-to-year program and financial decision-making and toward a more intentional roadmap for the future, including periodic strategic reviews of the district portfolio.

Level Setting

- Approach the process with an open mind.
- Focus on the overall portfolio models.
- Engage with the information to assist with thought process.
- Use the structured opportunities for dialogue and feedback.
- Share perspectives in a way that allows others to participate.
- Remember this is an engagement session and an opportunity to capture community feedback on the portfolio planning models, not a final decision point.
- We Are Family!

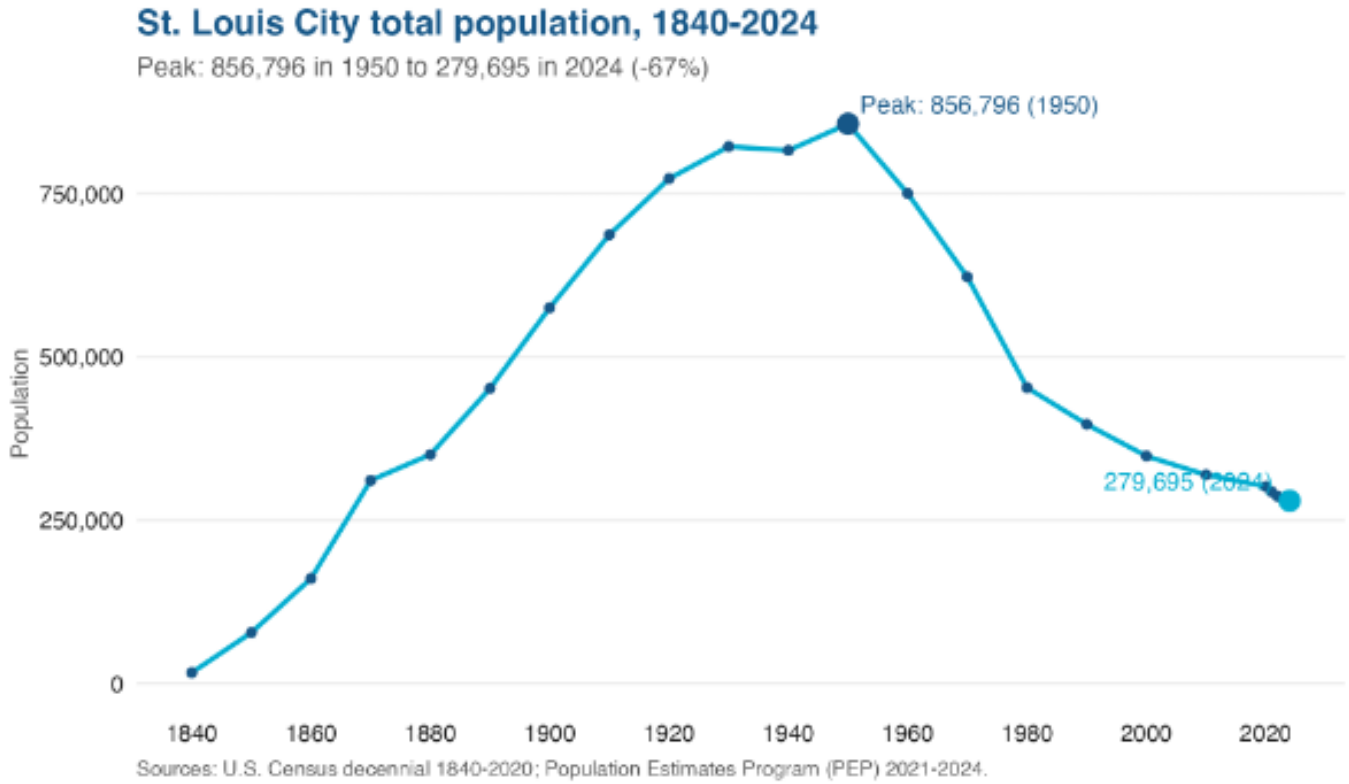
Historical PK–12 enrollment data show that Saint Louis Public Schools' enrollment declined from 43,284 students in 1991 to 17,981 students in 2025, a decrease of 25,303 students, or approximately 58.5%.

St. Louis City Population Demographics:

Our demographers have tested multiple demographic models from a variety of data sources to provide forecasted trend data for the next 10years. Below are key data trends researched for Saint Louis Public Schools' demographics analysis:

- **St. Louis City Population Data**
- **St. Louis City Birth Trend Data**
- **Saint Louis Public Schools Enrollment Trends**
- **"By School" Demographic Data**

The City of St. Louis was the **fourth-largest U.S. city in 1900** with 575,238 residents. It grew through the early 20th century to a peak in **1950 at 856,796**, then began a sustained decline that has not stopped. The 1950s–1970s were the steepest stretch — 47% of the population left the city in three decades. The decline has slowed but not reversed: the most recent annual estimates (Population Estimates Program, vintage 2024) show the city continuing to lose population through **2024 (279,695)**.

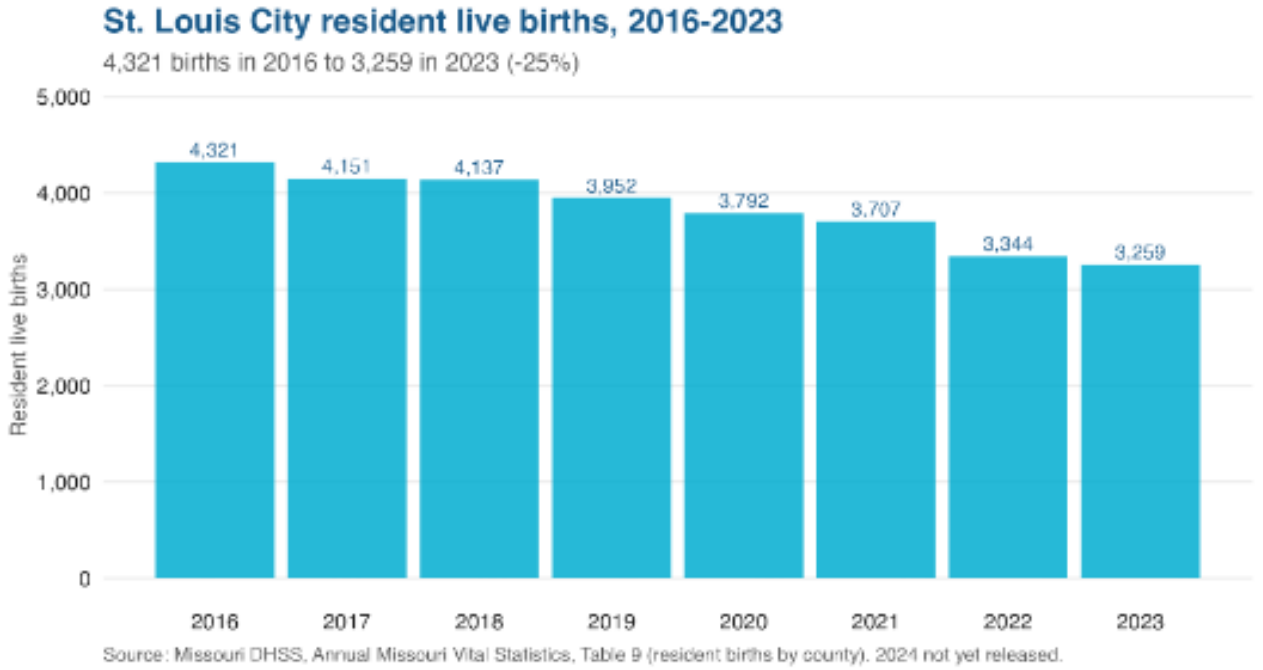


SLPS, charter schools, daycares, family services, and any city-serving institution that scales with population is operating in a household environment that is roughly **a third of its peak size**. The post-2020 PEP estimates show the city has not yet found a floor.

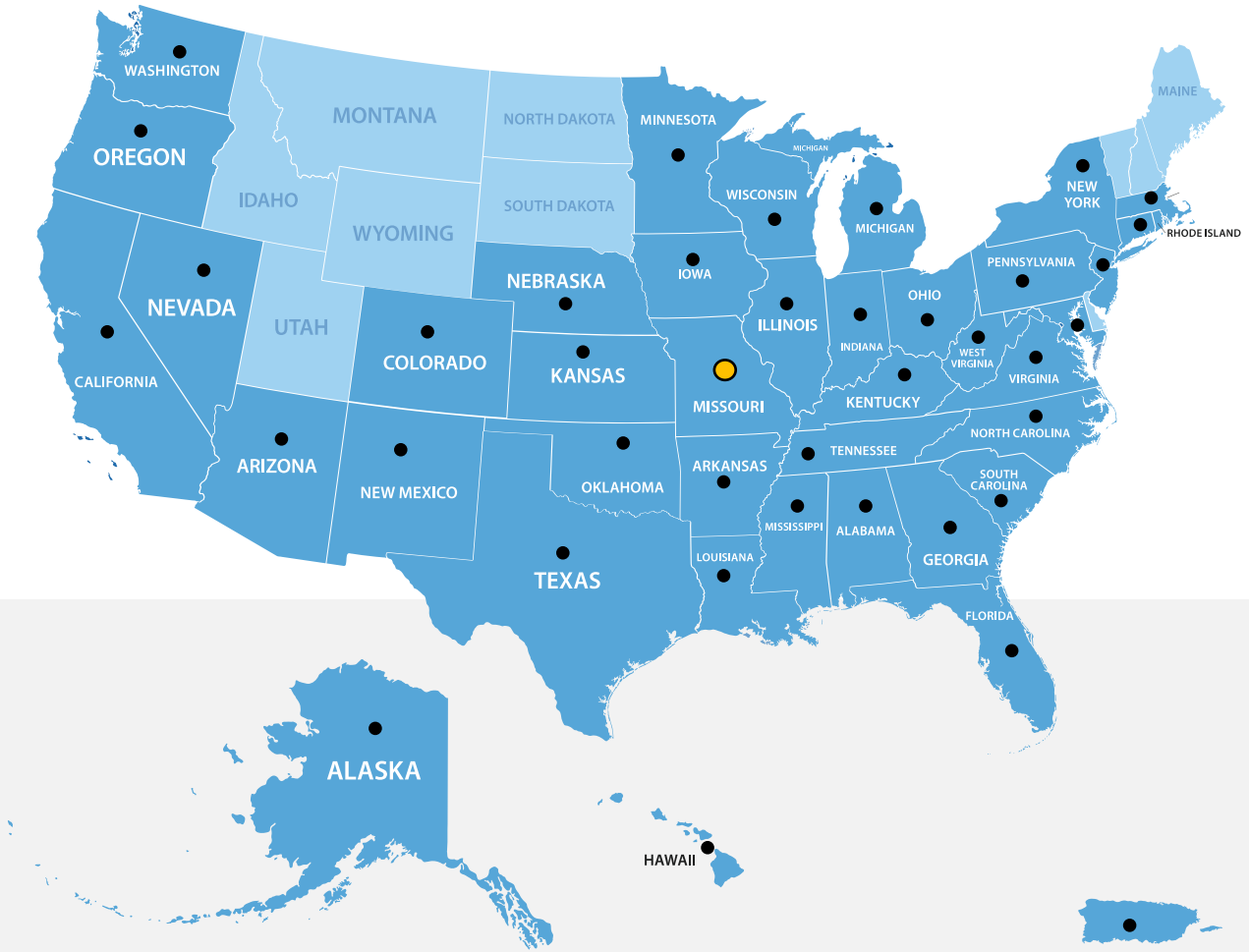
Today's birth cohort is next year's pre-K class, fifth-graders in five years, high-school graduates in eighteen. Births show where school-age population is headed before school-age population does.

STL City resident births fell from 4,321 in 2016 to 3,259 in 2023 — a 25% decline in eight years. The decline shows up two ways:

- **Crude birth rate** (births per 1,000 city residents) fell from 13.9 to 11.6. Some of the decline is the population denominator falling, but the rate is also falling.
- **General fertility rate** (births per 1,000 women aged 15–44) fell from 59.7 to 49.1. Even controlling for the women-of-reproductive-age population, STL City women are having fewer children today than eight years ago.

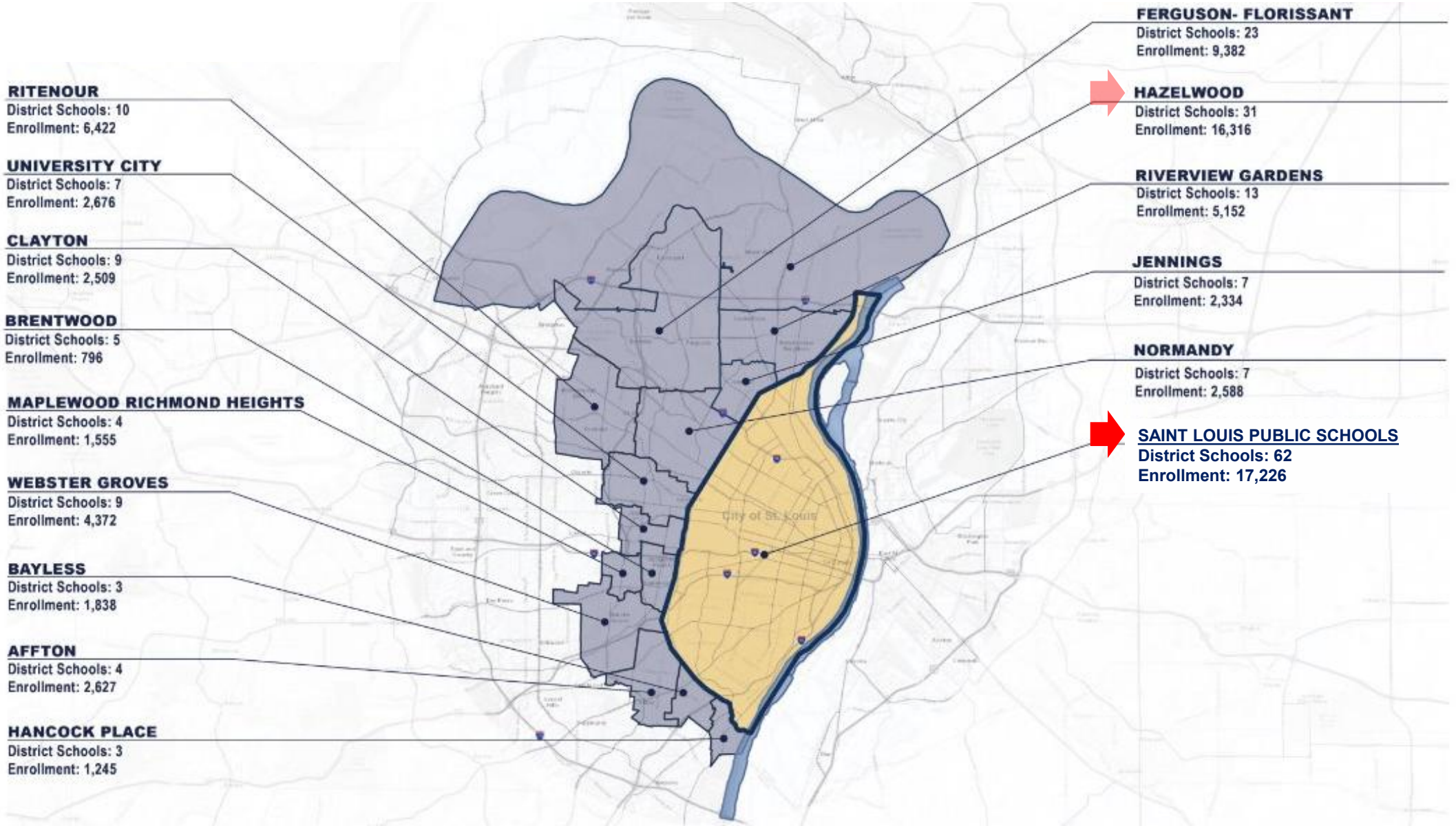


COUNCIL OF GREATER CITY SCHOOLS – 82 URBAN PEER DISTRICTS



CGCS District Name	State	#Student	#Schools
New York City Public Schools	NY	900,000	1,800
Los Angeles Unified School District	CA	420,000	1,000
Miami-Dade County Public Schools	FL	334,000	510
Chicago Public Schools	IL	316,224	630
Clark County School District	NV	304,579	388
Broward County Public Schools	FL	251,408	325
Puerto Rico Department of Education	PR	250,000	856
Hillsborough County Public Schools	FL	231,000	314
Orange County Public Schools	FL	205,000	300
The School District of Palm Beach County	FL	195,000	242
Houston Independent School District	TX	189,000	276
Hawaii State Department of Education	HI	170,000	294
Wake County Public School System	NC	162,000	198
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	NC	144,116	184
Cincinnati Public Schools	OH	34,858	66
Oakland Unified School District	CA	34,000	86
St. Paul Public Schools	MN	34,000	80
Cleveland Metropolitan School District	OH	33,745	94
Des Moines Public Schools	IA	33,000	64
Tulsa Public Schools	OK	33,000	77
Durham Public Schools	NC	32,000	55
Jersey City Public Schools	NJ	30,000	41
Minneapolis Public Schools	MN	30,000	100
Norfolk Public Schools	VA	30,000	55
Buffalo Public Schools	NY	29,200	61
Madison Metropolitan School District	WI	27,000	52
Phoenix Union High School District	AZ	27,000	22
Indianapolis Public Schools	IN	24,000	71
Richmond Public Schools	VA	24,000	44
Providence Public School District	RI	23,000	41
Rochester City School District	NY	23,000	51
Toledo Public Schools	OH	22,000	55
Little Rock School District	AR	21,000	49
Birmingham City Schools	AL	20,884	49
Jackson Public Schools	MS	20,000	56
Pittsburgh Public Schools	PA	20,000	54
Bridgeport Public Schools	CT	19,591	36
St. Louis Public Schools	MO	17,226	68
Kansas City Public Schools	MO	14,000	35
Dayton Public Schools	OH	12,000	30

DISTRICT SCHOOLS – STUDENT RATIO



RITENOUR
District Schools: 10
Enrollment: 6,422

UNIVERSITY CITY
District Schools: 7
Enrollment: 2,676

CLAYTON
District Schools: 9
Enrollment: 2,509

BRENTWOOD
District Schools: 5
Enrollment: 796

MAPLEWOOD RICHMOND HEIGHTS
District Schools: 4
Enrollment: 1,555

WEBSTER GROVES
District Schools: 9
Enrollment: 4,372

BAYLESS
District Schools: 3
Enrollment: 1,838

AFFTON
District Schools: 4
Enrollment: 2,627

HANCOCK PLACE
District Schools: 3
Enrollment: 1,245

FERGUSON- FLORISSANT
District Schools: 23
Enrollment: 9,382

HAZELWOOD
District Schools: 31
Enrollment: 16,316

RIVERVIEW GARDENS
District Schools: 13
Enrollment: 5,152

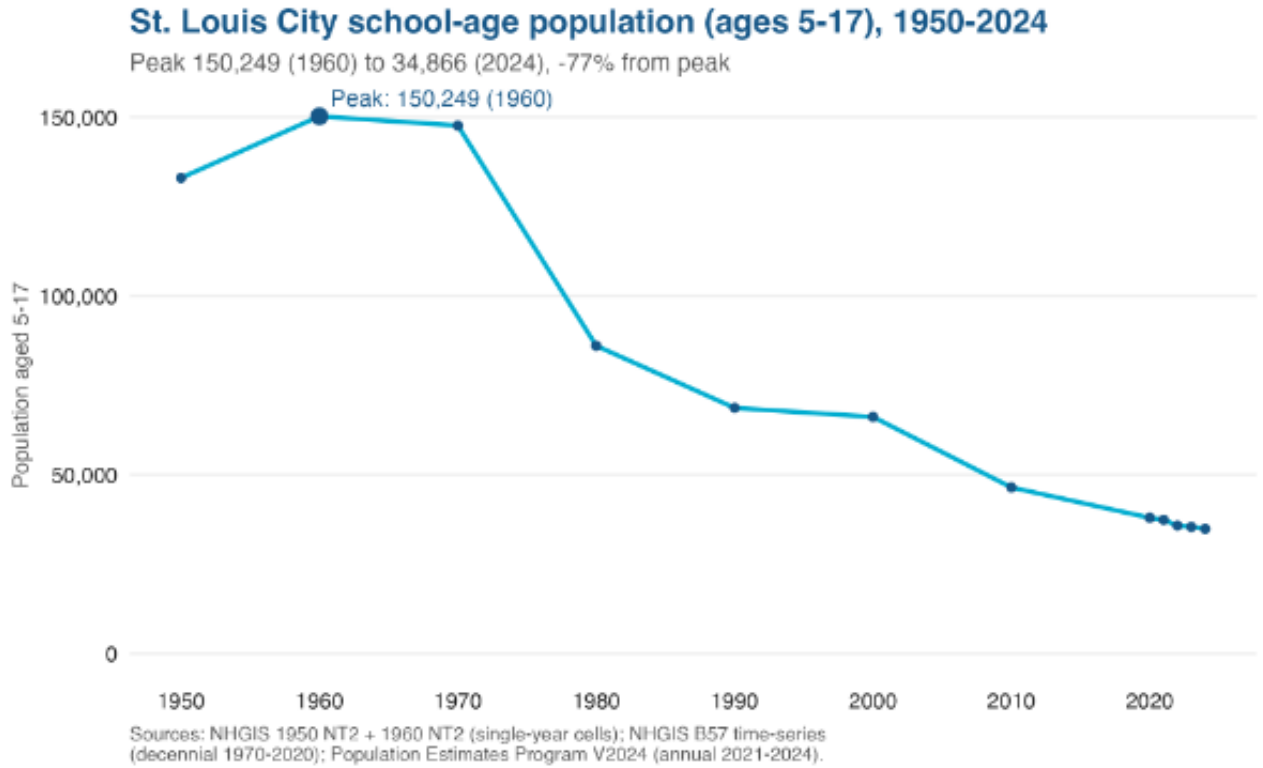
JENNINGS
District Schools: 7
Enrollment: 2,334

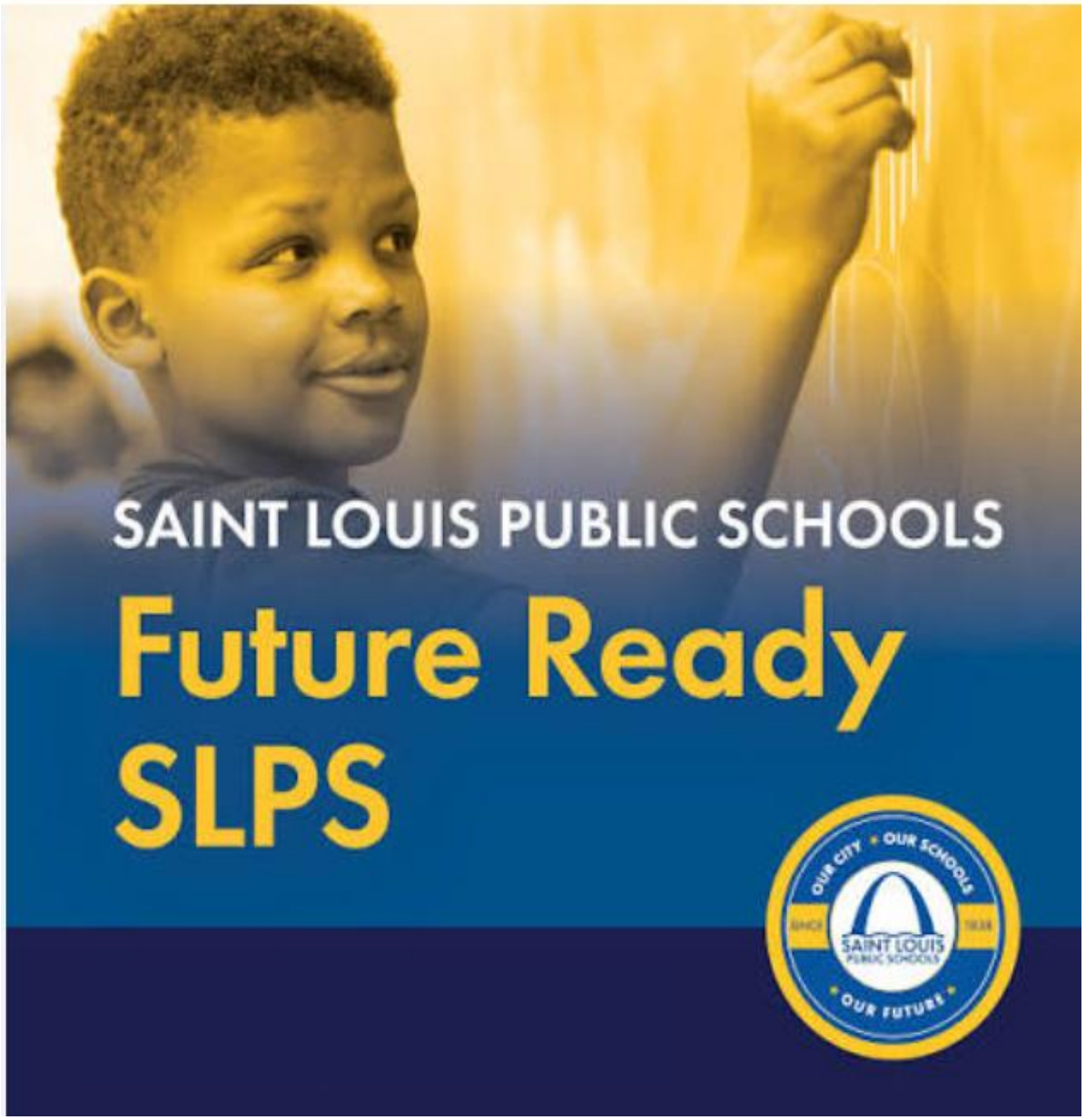
NORMANDY
District Schools: 7
Enrollment: 2,588

SAINT LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
District Schools: 62
Enrollment: 17,226

By **2024 that population was 34,866 — a 77% decline from the 1960 peak**. Three observations:

1. **The decline tracks ahead of the total-population decline.** Total population is down 67% from peak; school-age is down 77%. The city has become disproportionately less family-with-kids than it once was.
2. **The pace was sharpest in the 1970s.** From 147,661 in 1970 to 86,075 in 1980 is a 42% decade-on-decade drop — a structural shock that the school district is still working through.
3. **The decline has continued, but at a slower pace, into the 2020s.** 2021–2024 PEP annual estimates show another ~2,543 children lost in three years.





Magnet School Concept

Historical Significance

- For more than 40 years, magnet schools were a central component of St. Louis' voluntary desegregation strategy.

Today

- RIGHT NOW, the district has the opportunity to evaluate all schools--including former magnet schools--through the lens of educational quality, enrollment, equity, operational sustainability, and the evolving needs of students and families.

Understanding the Data

- HISTORICAL PK–12 ENROLLMENT DATA, 1991–2025
- CURRENT ENROLLMENT COMPARISONS AND 2026–2027 PROJECTIONS
- ZIP CODE ANALYSIS
- DEMOGRAPHIC AND FACILITY CONDITION DASHBOARD
- SLPS DEMOGRAPHIC AND SCHOOL PROXIMITY PLANNING TOOL
- BLUEPRINT 2023
- BOND / CAPITAL PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS
- COMMUNITY FEEDBACK
- LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- SCHOOL DISTRICTS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Feedback Sources Included in This Analysis

Feedback was collected through three complementary methods:

Data Source	Responses/Posts	Type of Feedback
Community Meeting Padlets	289 posts	Open-ended comments, questions, concerns, and group observations
Community Reflection Forms	93 responses	Model selection plus individual written reflections
Website Community Reflection Form	17 responses	Model selection plus individual written reflections
School Leader Reflection Form	57 responses	Model selection plus school-leader reflections

How the Data Items were Analyzed

- Quantitative questions were summarized using response counts and percentages.
- Written responses were reviewed and coded for recurring themes.
- A single written response could reflect more than one theme.
- Padlet post totals represent posts, not unique participants.
- Form responses represent individual submissions, although the public website form may include repeat respondents

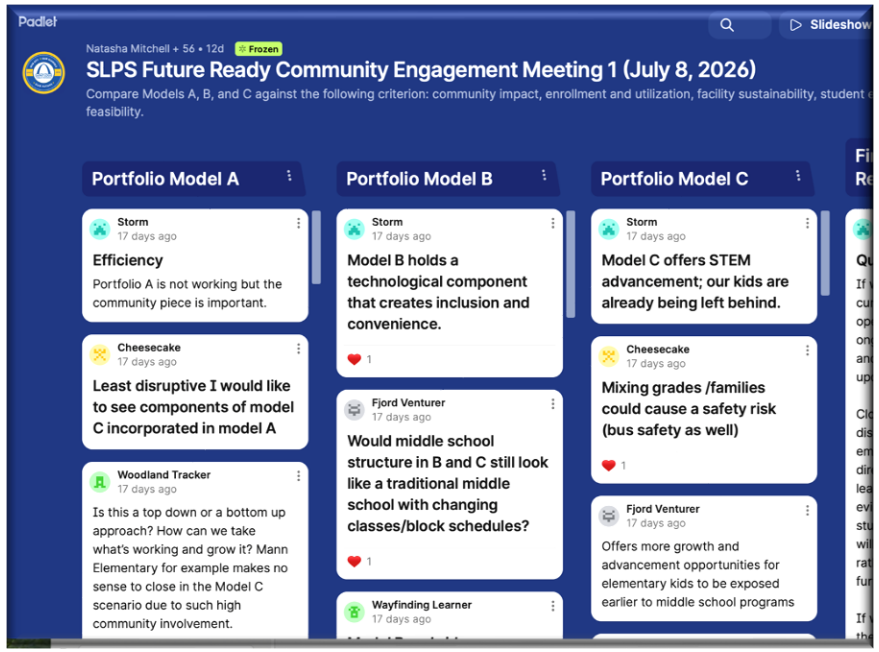
Community Meeting Padlet Feedback

During each of the three community engagement meetings, participants were invited to post comments either individually or as a group following the portfolio model discussion.

The Padlet included separate areas for:

- Portfolio Model A
- Portfolio Model B
- Portfolio Model C
- Overall recommendations, concerns, and additional questions

Participants could also react to the comments of others.



What this data represents

- The Padlet captured immediate, open-ended feedback during and shortly after the meetings. It provides a strong view of the issues generating the most discussion and emotion, but it should not be interpreted as a vote or a count of unique participants.

Padlet Participation Across Community Meetings

Community Meeting	Date	Number of Posts
Meeting 1	July 8, 2026	101
Meeting 2	July 15, 2026	128
Meeting 3	July 22, 2026	*60
Total		**289**

Key observation

Meeting 2 generated the largest volume of Padlet activity, accounting for approximately **44% of all posts**.

Methodology note: Posts are not equivalent to participants. Individuals could submit multiple posts, and some posts reflected the views of a group.

Where Participants Directed Their Feedback

Padlet Section	Number of Posts	Percent of Posts
Model A	49	17%
Model B	27	9%
Model C	59	20%
Final Portfolio Recommendations	129	45%
Closures, Demographics, and Equity	25	9%
Total	**289**	**100%**

Community Reflection Form Feedback

At the conclusion of the community engagement meetings, participants were asked to independently complete a final reflection and feedback form.

The form collected:

- The participant's SLPS affiliation
- The portfolio model they believed should receive continued planning and analysis
- Perceived strengths and opportunities
- Concerns, blind spots, or unintended consequences
- Requests for additional information
- Additional comments and questions

A separate version of the form was also made available through the SLPS website for individuals who did not complete the form during a meeting.

Major Themes Across Sessions

School closures and neighborhood stability

- Participants frequently raised concerns about family displacement, neighborhood identity, vacant buildings, community blight, and the possibility that families could leave SLPS for charter, private, or county schools.

Academic programming and student experience

- Participants wanted clearer assurance that consolidation would result in stronger programming, certified staffing, student supports, arts, electives, advanced academics, CTE, special education, and robust middle-grade experiences.

PK–8 safety and developmental fit

- Questions repeatedly focused on whether buildings, buses, cafeterias, restrooms, schedules, staffing, and programming could appropriately serve children from early childhood through eighth grade.

Facilities and implementation readiness

- Participants questioned building capacity, renovation requirements, deferred maintenance, classroom size, and plans for vacant or repurposed facilities.

Process, timeline, and trust

- Participants asked for more time, clearer explanations, direct engagement with affected schools, student input, and greater transparency regarding how models and school lists were developed.

Key Takeaways for Continued Planning

The engagement process did not produce a single, universal community position—and it was not intended to serve as a final vote.

It did produce clear direction regarding the questions Saint Louis Public Schools must answer before moving forward:

- What student benefits will result from the change?
- How will schools be staffed, programmed, and supported differently?
- How will students, families, and employees be supported through transition?
- How will equity, facilities, and closed buildings be addressed?
- What evidence and readiness measures will guide implementation?

The central message was clear: stakeholders are evaluating not only which model SLPS selects, but whether it can be implemented in a way that creates stronger schools and earns community trust.

Future Ready- Next Steps

July 28 – Board of Education Meeting

- Present an overview of the information shared with the community during the Future Ready community engagement sessions, including the presentation format, key discussion topics, and engagement process.

August 11 – Board of Education Meeting

- Present a comprehensive summary of feedback collected from:
  - All three community engagement sessions and any additional community feedback
  - Future Ready website submissions
  - School leader feedback sessions
  - Local & State Representatives*

August 24 – Survey Students

- Microsoft Live, Pre-recorded Video, YouTube Steam
  - Capture student feedback through a Microsoft Form

August 25 – Board of Education Meeting

- Present the final Future Ready proposal, including recommended school configurations, implementation strategies, and rationale informed by stakeholder feedback.

September – Board Action

- Request Board approval of the Future Ready Plan to begin implementation for the 2027–2028 school year.

Questions?

SLPS.org