

Demographic Study And Enrollment Projections

St. Joseph School District · Enrollment Forecast, Facilities, And Demographic Context

Demographic Analytics Advisors

October 12, 2026

About Demographic Analytics Advisors

WHAT WE DO

Demographic Analytics Advisors is a demographic consulting firm specializing in **K-12 enrollment forecasting, demographic studies, and building-level capacity and utilization analysis** for public school districts. The Missouri Comprehensive Data System, the foundation formula, and the state's legislative activity on student transfers are part of our routine work.

HOW WE WORK

Primary sources

State and district enrollment counts, the Census Bureau, county parcel records, the city's development pipeline, and the District's own geocoded student records.

Reproducible code

Every number in this deck comes from code we can re-run and a source we can show you.

We measure, you decide

We do not decide what the District values. We measure the trade-offs so the Board can.

MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICT WORK

St. Louis Public Schools · Riverview Gardens · Francis Howell

YOUR PROJECT LEAD

Christopher Dick

President and Founder

Former branch chief for population estimates and projections at the U.S. Census Bureau. Engagement lead.

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Senior Vice President, Forecasting and Demography

Dr. Ronald Prevost

Senior Vice President for Demography

THIS ENGAGEMENT

2026-27 to 2036-37

A ten-year enrollment forecast by grade and facility, the demographic and housing analysis behind it, utilization against the District's October 2026 capacity analysis, staffing, and the enrollment and revenue effects of transfer policy.

Agenda

The district first, then what drives it, then the forecast and what it means for buildings and staffing.

1 Executive Summary

The headline forecast and the findings behind it.

2 The District And Its Schools

Fifteen years of closures and realignment, the Option 4BR reorganization, and the new attendance zones.

3 What Drives Enrollment

Births, students entering and leaving, who the District serves, comparable districts, and housing and development.

4 The Forecast

How we project enrollment, the district total and its band, grade bands, and every building.

5 Facilities, Staffing, And Transfers

Enrollment against maximum capacity, teacher positions, and what an open-enrollment law would mean.

6 Recommendations

What follows from the forecast, and what to watch in next fall's count.

Executive Summary

9,312

K-12 students, 2026-27 September count

8,560

projected for 2036-37 (mid), -8.1%

7,273–9,139

80% forecast band, 2036-37

Enrollment declines **gradually, about 75 students a year**, slowing in the later years as smaller birth cohorts finish working through the elementary grades. The decline is broad-based rather than the product of one event, new housing does not change it, and it falls unevenly on buildings: **middle schools hold about 1,837 unused seats, and no building exceeds its maximum capacity.**

2026-27 is the first year of the Option 4BR reorganization and the base of the forecast.

Key Findings

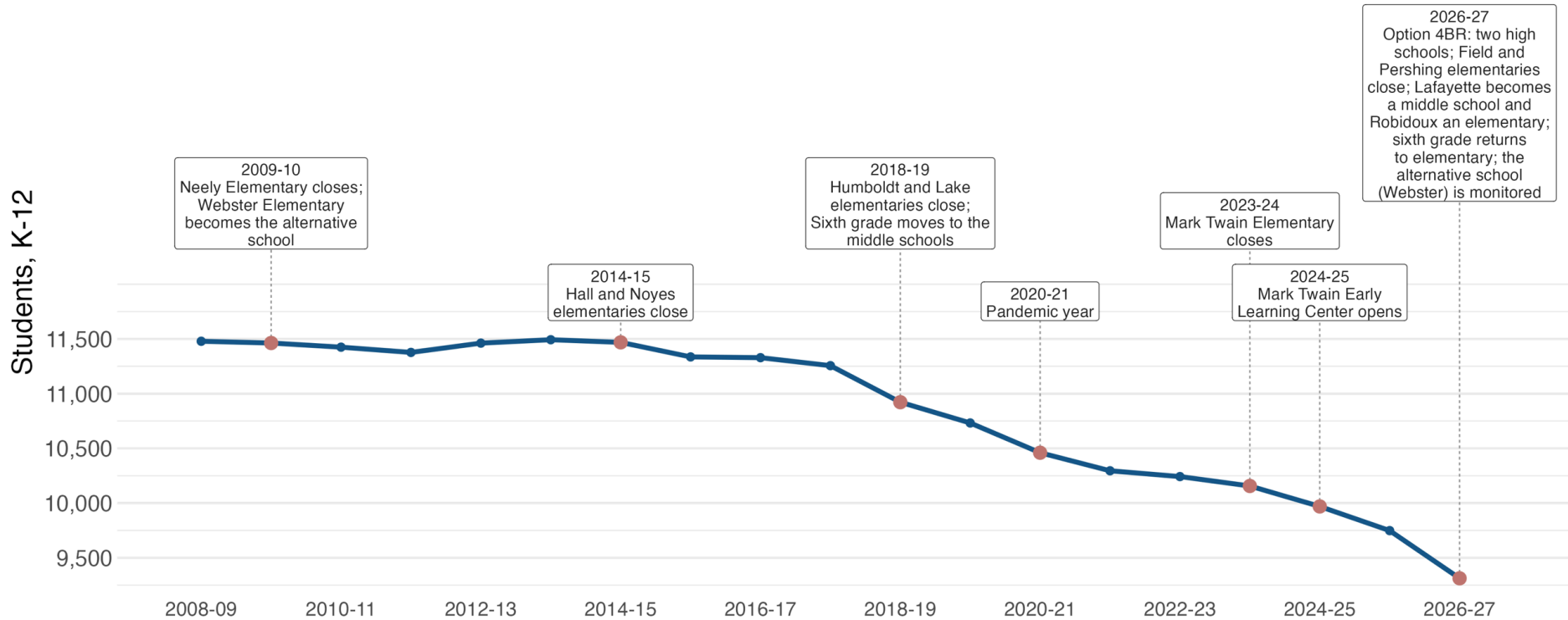
- **Broad-based, not one event.** Resident school-age population fell 6.9% in 2014–2024; dropping any single year from the history moves 2036-37 by at most 147 students
- **The reorganization's first-year cost is measured:** 277 more students left than in a usual year
- **New housing does not change the outlook:** the known pipeline adds about 30 students by 2036-37
- **Space is unevenly used:** high schools at 95% of maximum capacity, middle schools at 43%
- **Staffing can follow enrollment at the pace of attrition:** about 42 fewer teacher positions by 2036-37
- **English learners are a growing share:** 6.3% to 11.9% since 2016-17

The District And Its Schools

A new configuration in 2026-27: every building's history was recorded under an arrangement that no longer exists.

Fifteen Years Of Change

K-12 enrollment on the September count day, with each change marked in the first school year it took effect



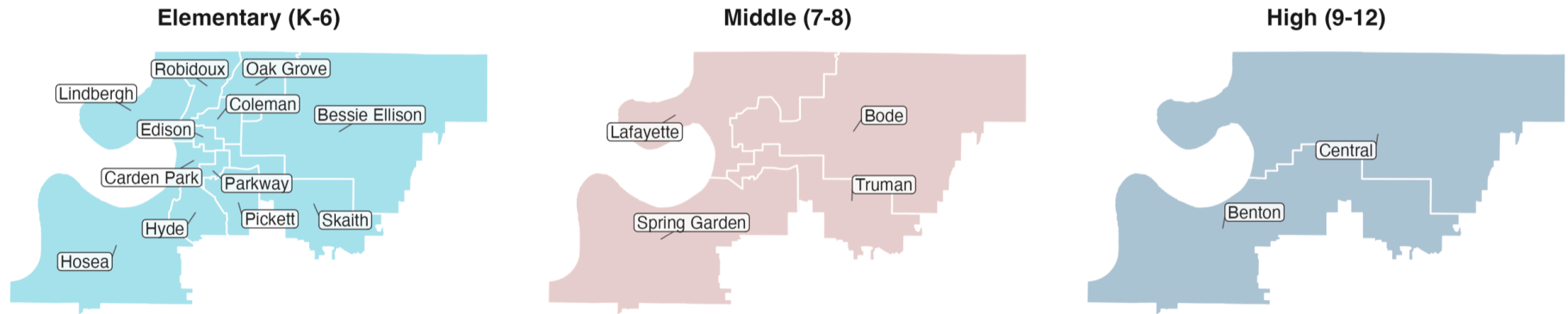
6 elementary schools closed in 4 waves since 2009-10 and Webster Elementary became the alternative school, sixth grade moved to the middle schools and now moves back, and K-12 enrollment went from 11,479 in 2008-09 to 9,312 in 2026-27. District enrollment workbook (September count).

The Option 4BR Reorganization

- Adopted November 25, 2025, effective in 2026-27
- **Three high schools become two;** Lafayette High converts to a middle school
- **Middle schools move from grades 6-8 to 7-8;** sixth grade returns to the elementary schools
- **Two schools close:** Field and Pershing elementaries; the District continues to monitor the alternative school (Webster)
- Every building's enrollment history is on a different basis than its future. The forecast is built on district-wide grade totals and allocated to the new buildings as a separate step

Attendance Zones, 2026-27

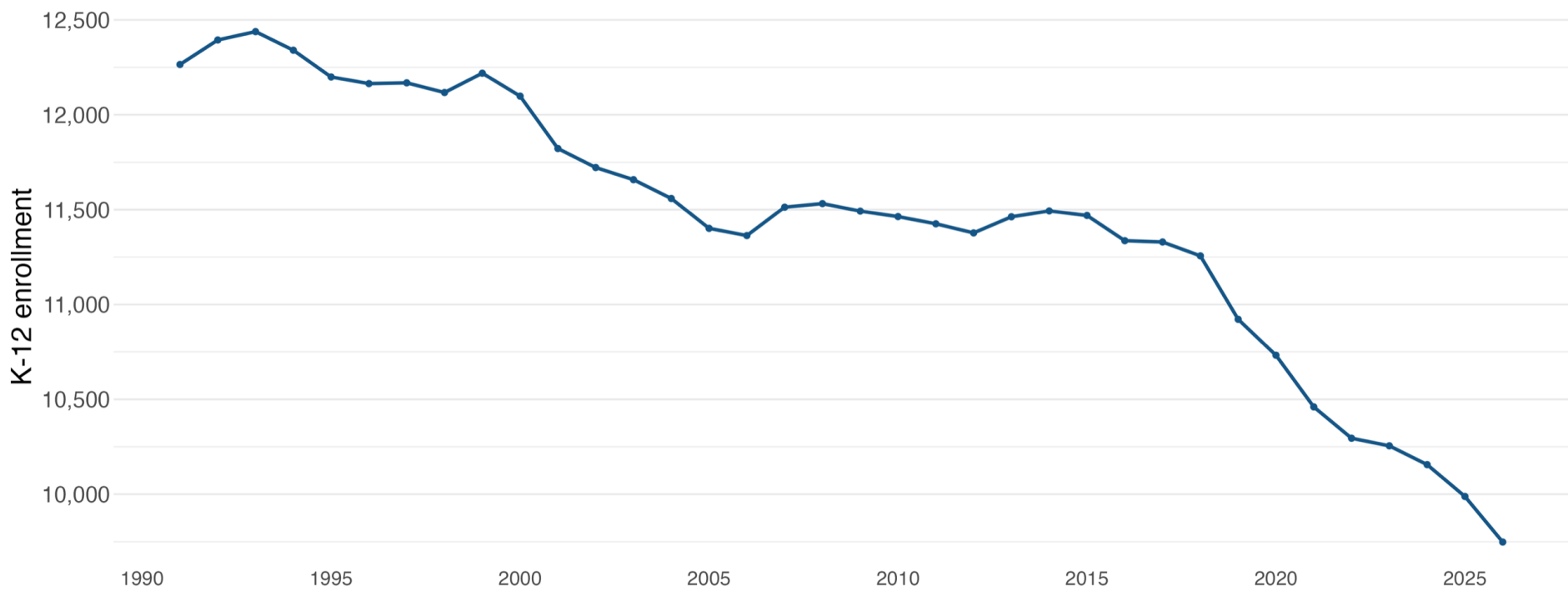
District attendance boundary files; one zone per building



12 elementary, 4 middle, and 2 high school zones, one per building, from the District's boundary files.

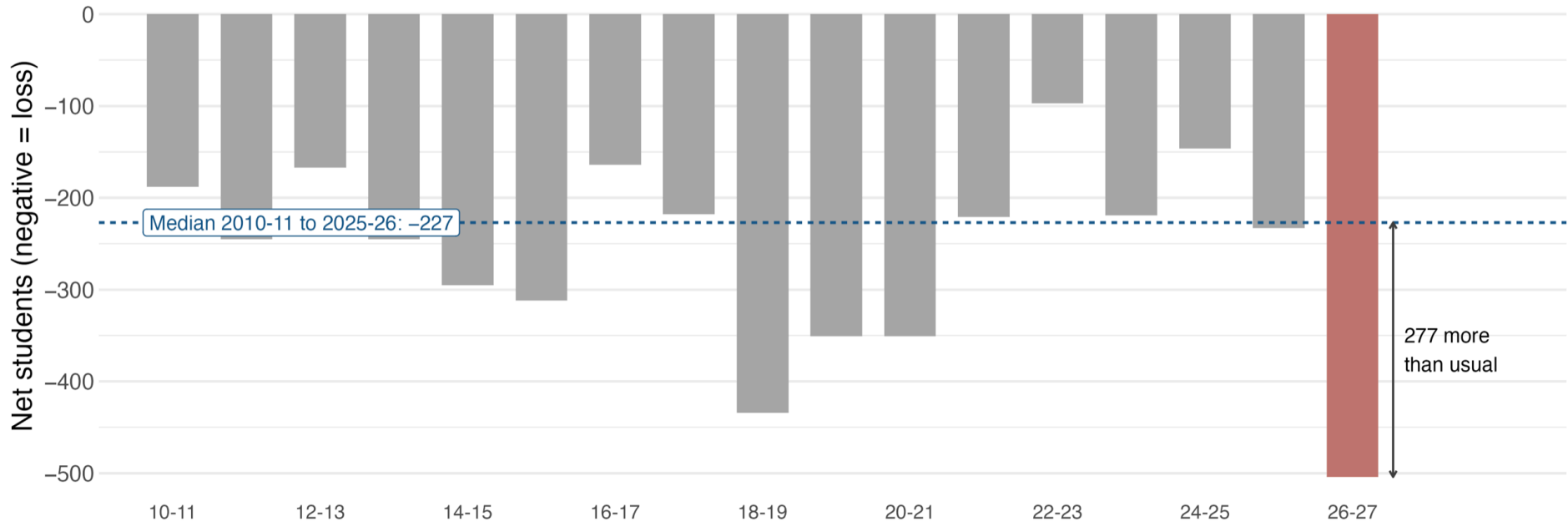
Thirty-Five Years Of History

K-12 enrollment by building, summed to district, 1991-2026



The Reorganization's First Year

Each grade's count-day enrollment minus the grade below it a year earlier, summed. District enrollment workbook



Every year the District loses some students between one fall and the next: each grade compared with the grade below it a year earlier. In 2026-27 it lost 504, against a typical (median) 227 in 2010-11 to 2025-26: 277 more than usual, or 153 to 321 depending on which past years count as usual. The loss fell mostly in grades 5-7 and 10-11: it is measured district-wide, not by tracing individual students. If a second year follows the 2018 closures, enrollment runs about 118 below the mid forecast in 2027-28, narrowing to 60 by 2031-32.

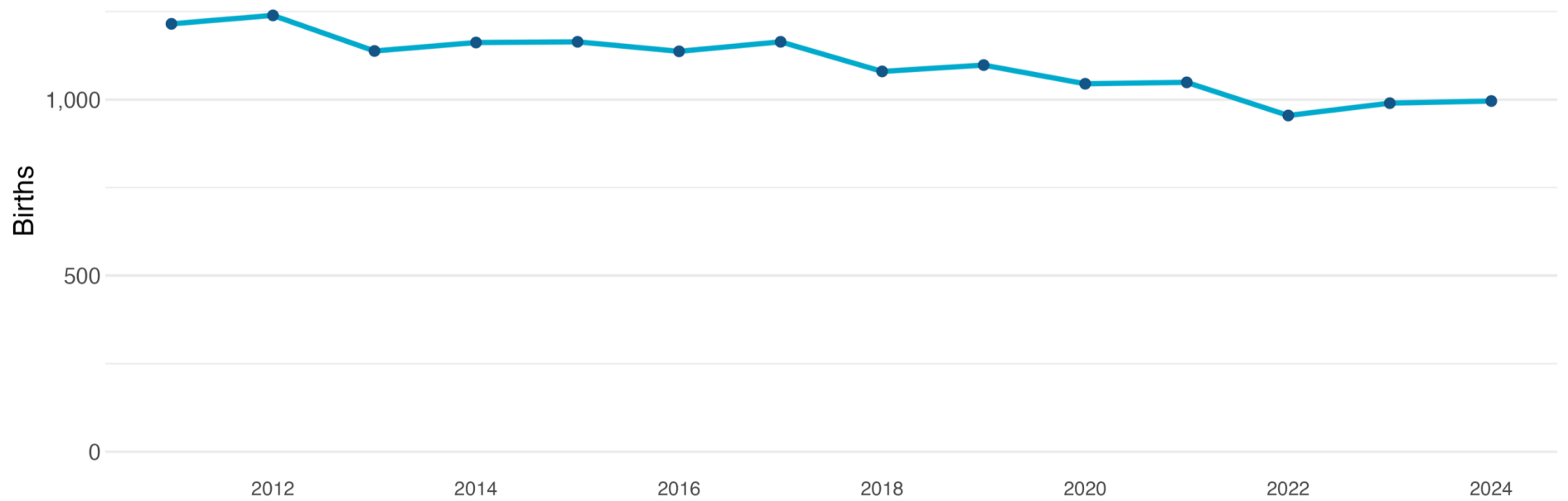
What Drives Enrollment

Births set the entering class; moves in and out, and housing, shape each class as it advances.

Births Set The Entering Class

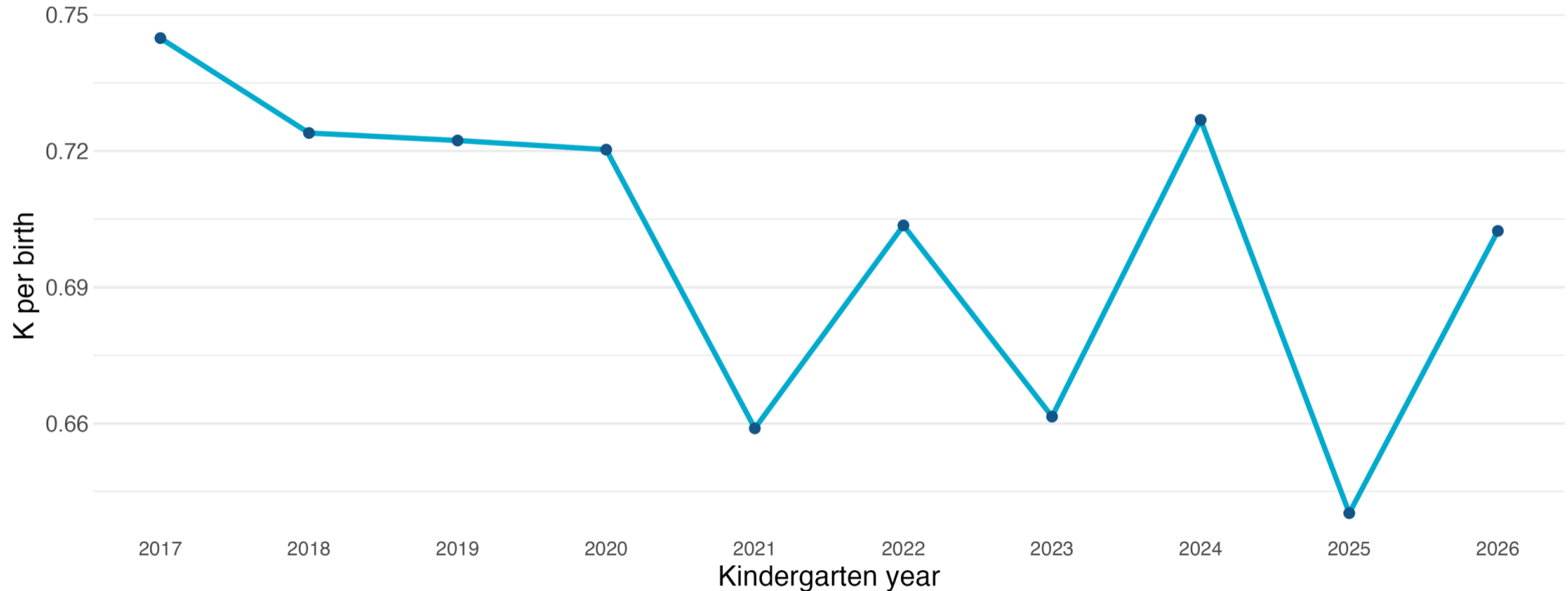
Buchanan County births went from **1,215** in 2011 to **996** in 2024. Every kindergarten class through 2029-30 has already been born.

2011-2024. Census population estimates, components of change.



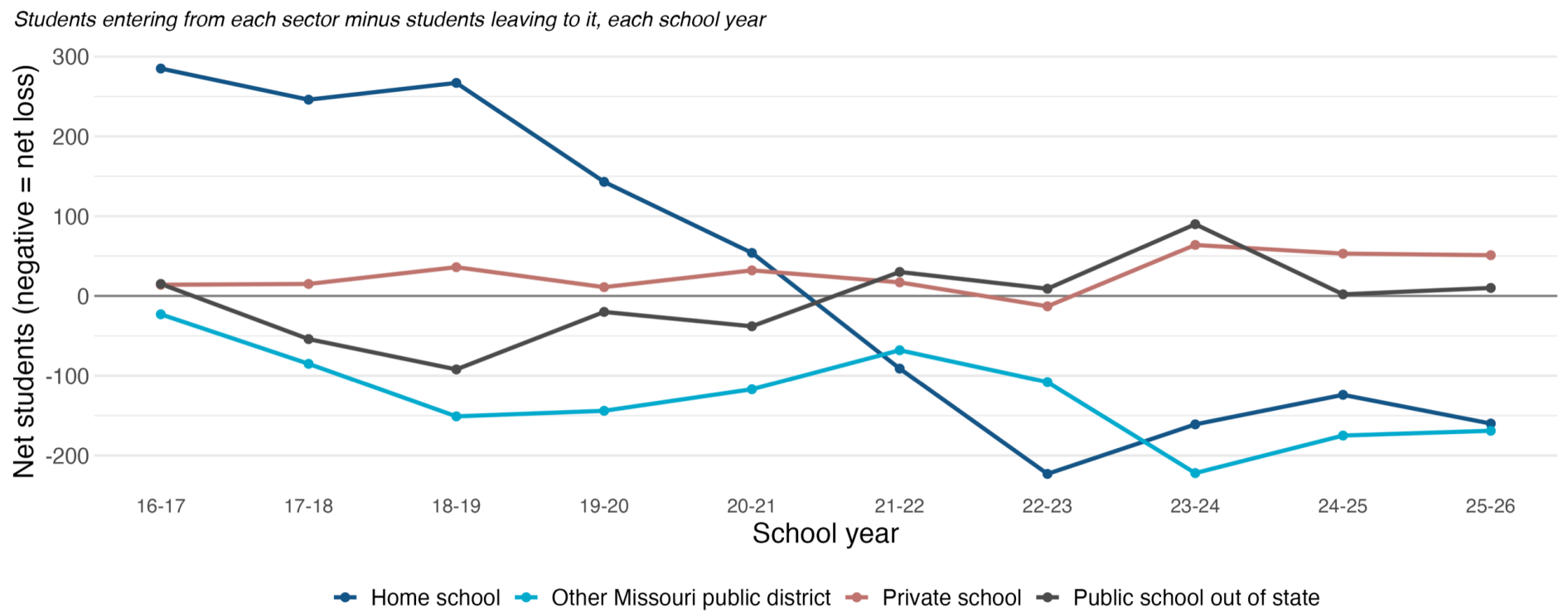
Kindergarten Per Birth

District kindergarten over Buchanan County births. The district holds about 89% of the county's population, so a ratio below 1.0 is expected.



The forecast enrolls 70 kindergartners per 100 county births. Since 2016-17 the ratio has ranged from 64 to 74. The ratio is one of the levers tested under What Would Change The Forecast.

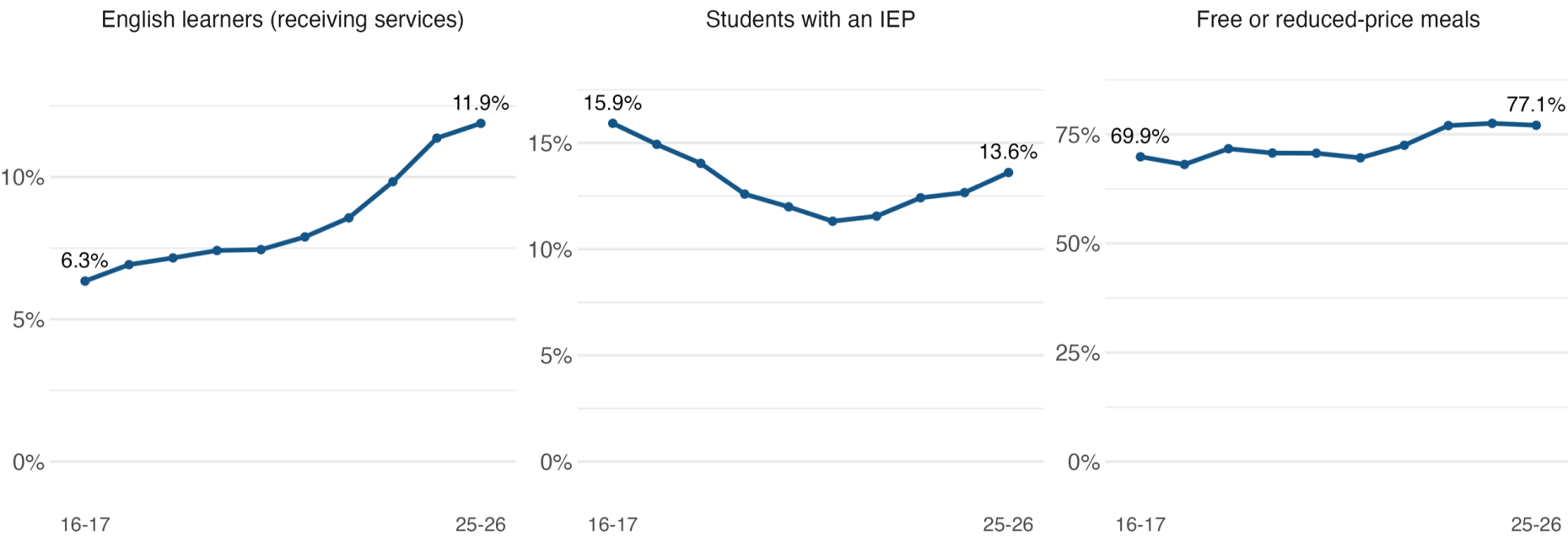
Students Entering And Leaving



Net losses to other Missouri public districts averaged about 148 a year in 2021-22 through 2025-26, up from 86 a year before the pandemic.

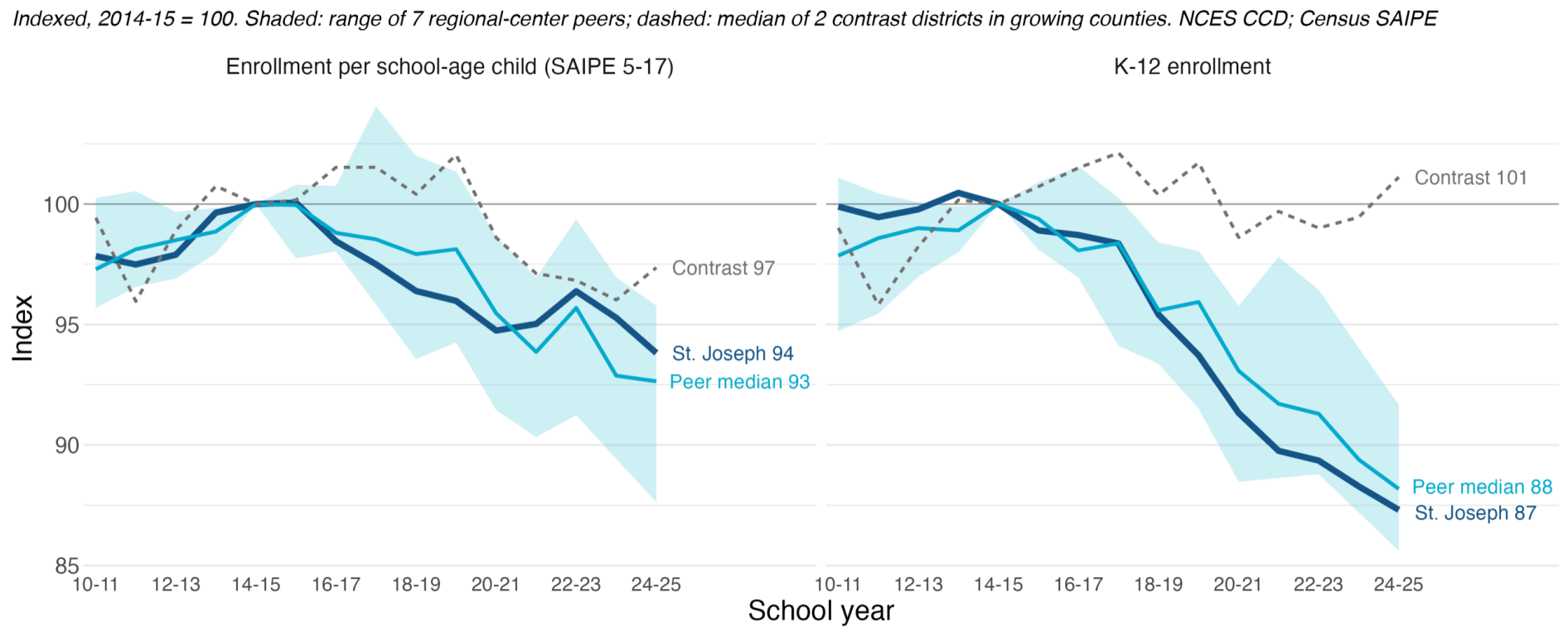
Who The District Serves

Share of K-12 students on each fall count day; each panel starts at zero. District student records



Since 2016-17, English learners receiving services rose from 6.3% to 11.9% of students; students with an IEP were 13.6% and students eligible for free or reduced-price meals 77.1% in 2025-26. District student records.

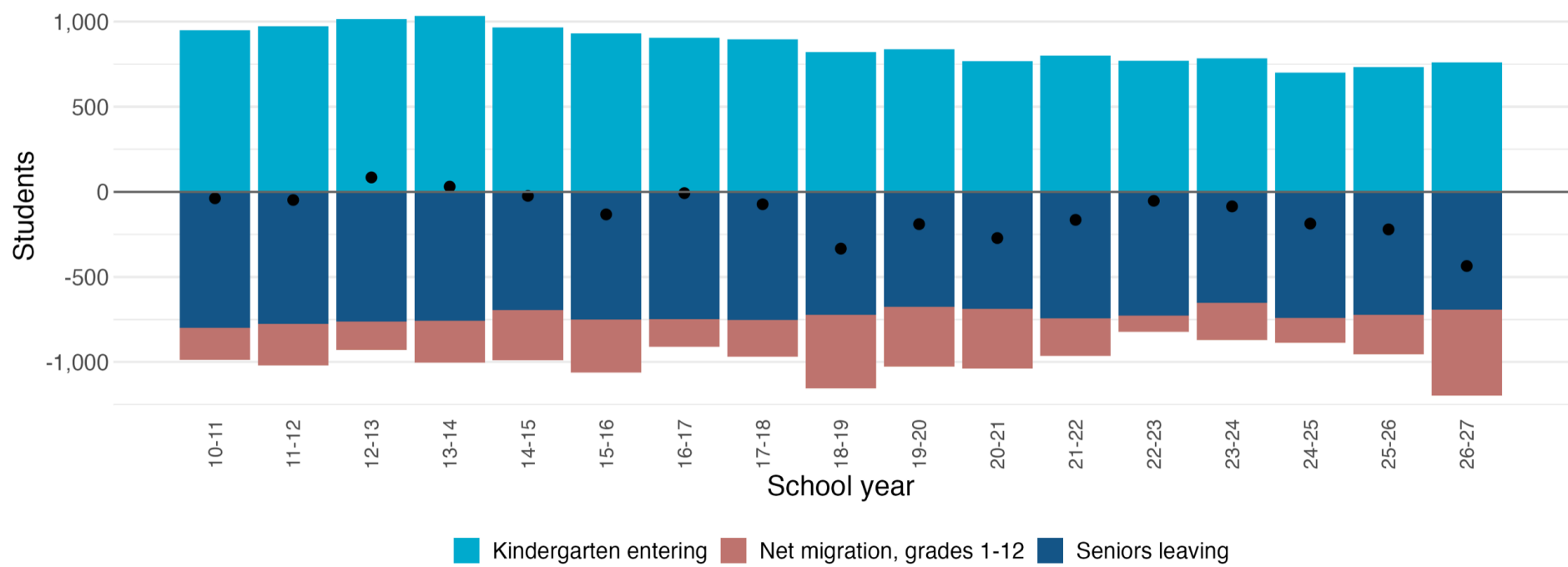
Comparable Districts



Enrollment per school-age child fell 6.2%, close to the middle of regional-center districts in Missouri, Kansas, and Iowa.

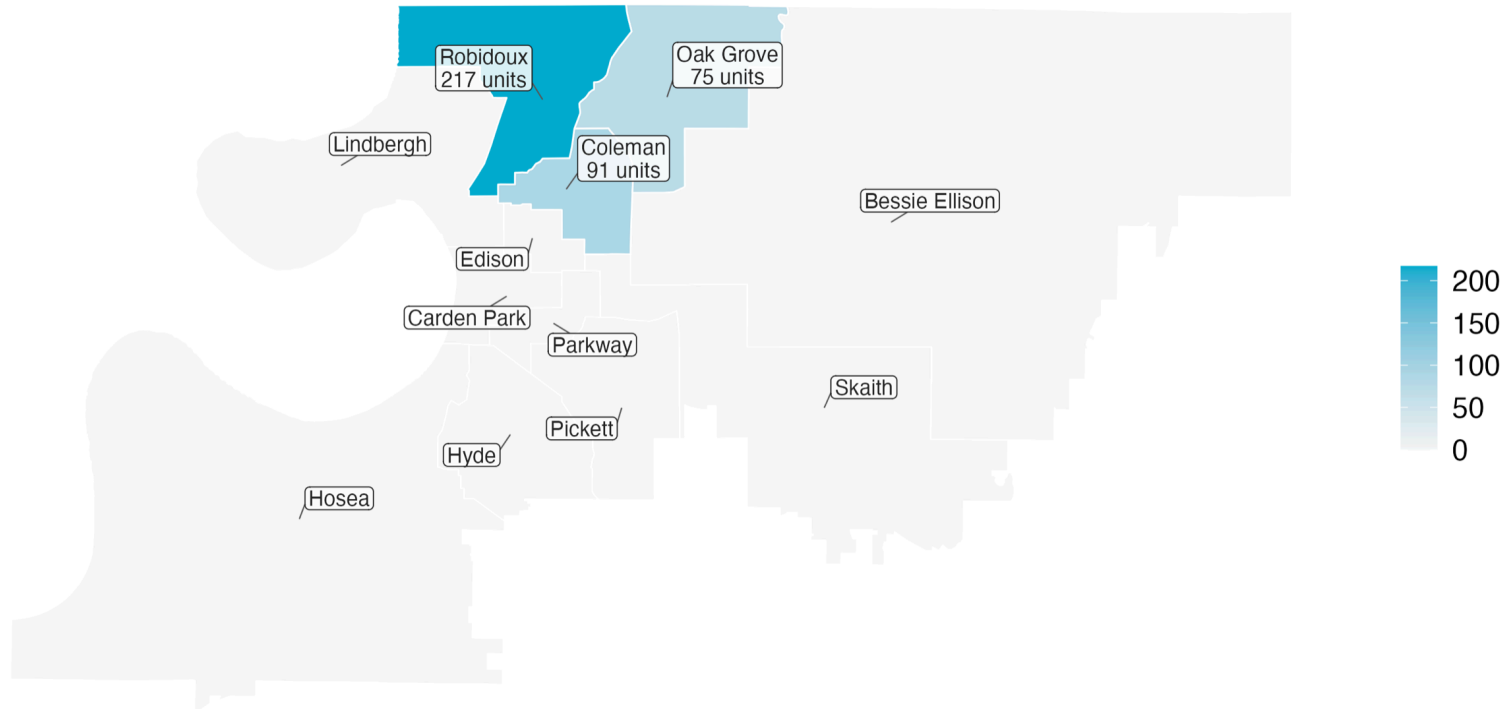
Not The Product Of One Event

Bars: components; points: net K-12 change. District-wide grade totals, MCDS



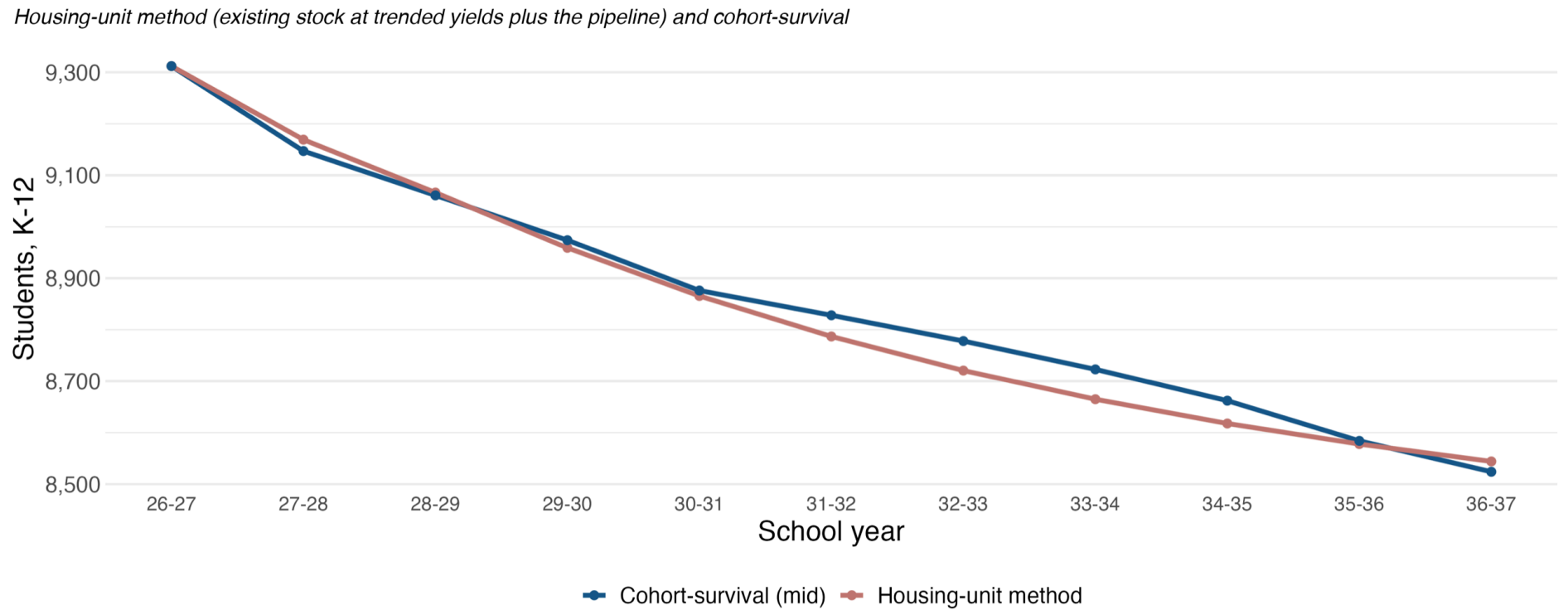
Where The Development Pipeline Sits

Mid forecast: 5 projects, 383 net new units



Greystone, 61 units (Oak Grove), North Pointe Rd apartments, 210 units (Robidoux), The Woodson, 91 units (Coleman), Country Lane Estates, 14 units (Oak Grove) and Mahaffy Valley, 7 units (Robidoux).

Housing: Consistent With The Cohort Forecast



A forecast built from the housing stock agrees with the cohort forecast within 0.7% in every year. The pipeline above the usual pace of construction adds about 30 students, almost all from two apartment projects.

The Forecast

A ten-year projection by grade, carried to every building, with a band built from the method's own past misses.

How We Project Enrollment

The projection ages each grade forward, following students as they move through school.

1 Start With Today

Enrollment in every grade, K–12, from the 2026-27 September count, the first year of the reorganization.

2 Advance By Ratio

Move each grade to the next at the average rate of the most recent 6 years. The pandemic year and the reorganization year are left out of the averages, so one-time losses are not repeated.

3 Seed K From Births

Buchanan County births five falls earlier, times the share that enroll in district kindergarten, set each entering class.

4 Measure The Miss

The method is re-run from every past starting year and scored against what happened. The 80% band is the range of those errors, shocks included.

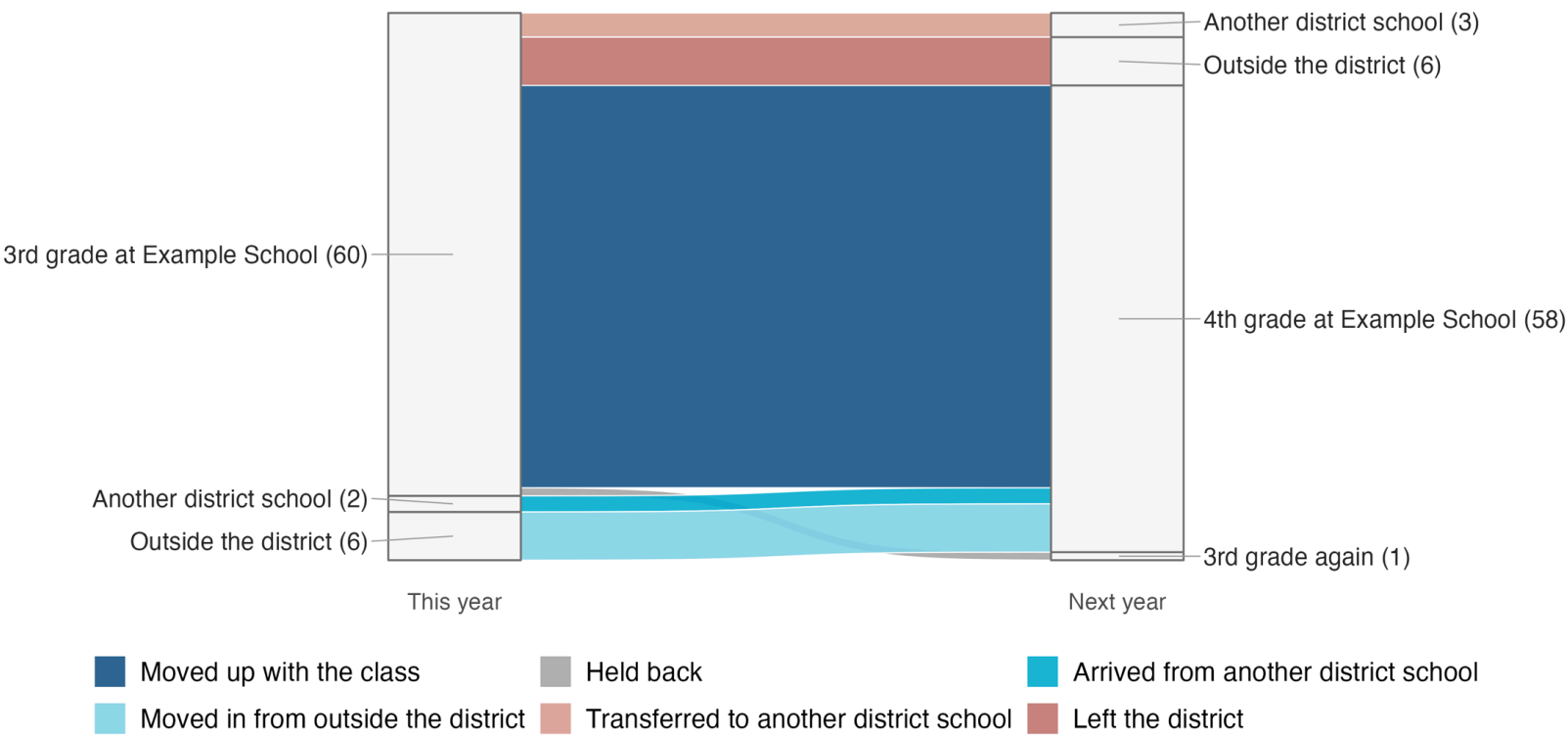
5 Test The Assumptions

Scenarios change births and kindergarten enrollment; a sensitivity test moves one assumption at a time. Scenarios answer “what if”; the band answers “how sure”.

The averaging window, 6 years, is the one of three to six that would have forecast this district most accurately in the past.

What A Grade-Progression Ratio Captures

ILLUSTRATIVE: one example school, made-up numbers, not St. Joseph data. The ratio nets every movement into one number



Illustrative numbers for one example school, not St. Joseph data. A class moves up, a few students are held back, some leave, others arrive; the progression ratio nets all of it, and the forecast applies each grade's recent average ratio district-wide.

Adding Housing And Development

New housing does not add a student per home. Four steps take the housing stock to what it changes.

1 Count Every Home

Dwelling units by type for every parcel, from the county assessor's records and land-use codes, with tax-credit apartments from HUD.

2 Measure Yield, Don't Assume It

Geocoded student addresses matched to their parcels give the students per home actually living in each housing type.

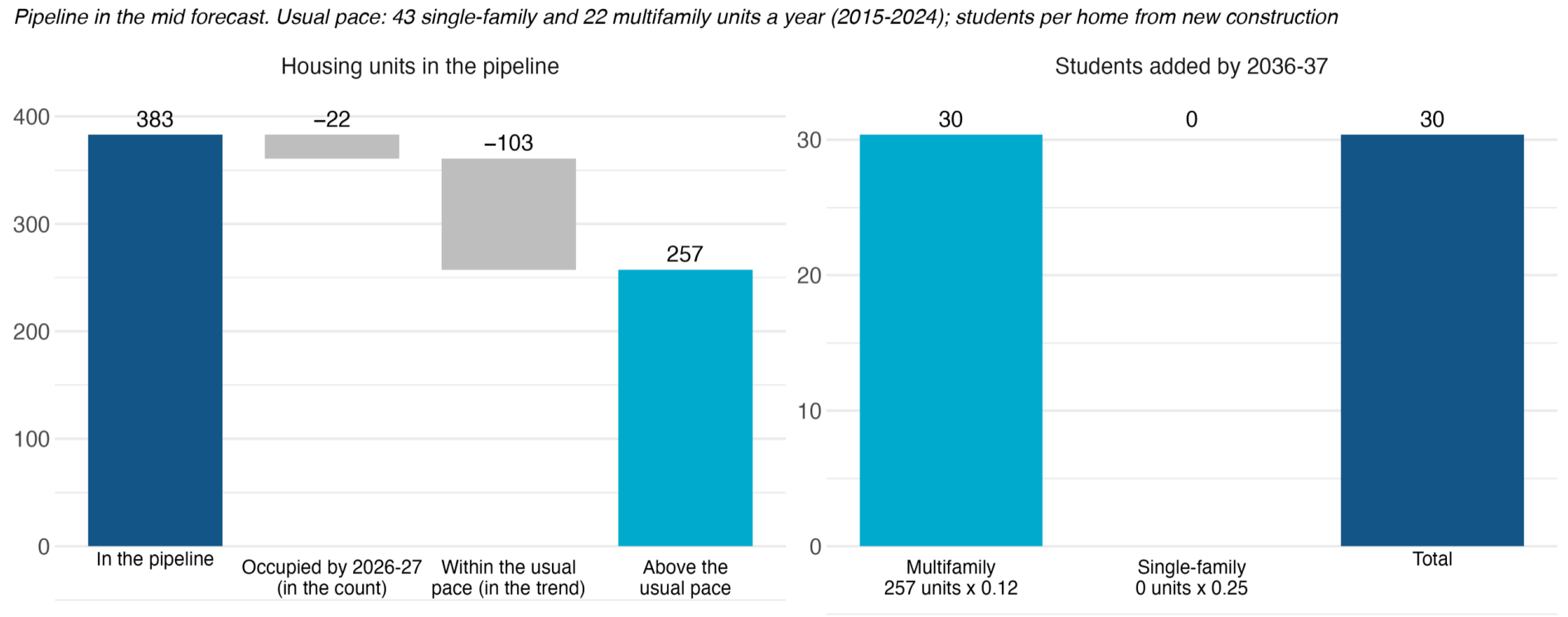
3 Forecast A Second Way

The housing stock times those yields gives an independent forecast. It agrees with the cohort forecast within 0.7% in every year.

4 Add Only What Is New

The cohort trend already carries the usual pace of building. Only pipeline homes above that pace are added: about 30 students by 2036-37.

How Development Enters The Forecast



The cohort trend already includes the district’s usual pace of building. Only homes above that pace are added, at the students per home measured in new construction: about 30 students by 2036-37.

From The District To Every Building

1 Where Students Live

Resident students in every grade for each elementary attendance zone since 2020-21, from the District's geocoded addresses, scaled to each year's official count.

2 Each Zone Ages On Its Own

Each zone's own grade-to-grade ratios move its students forward; kindergarten is county births times the zone's own share of entering students.

3 From Home To School

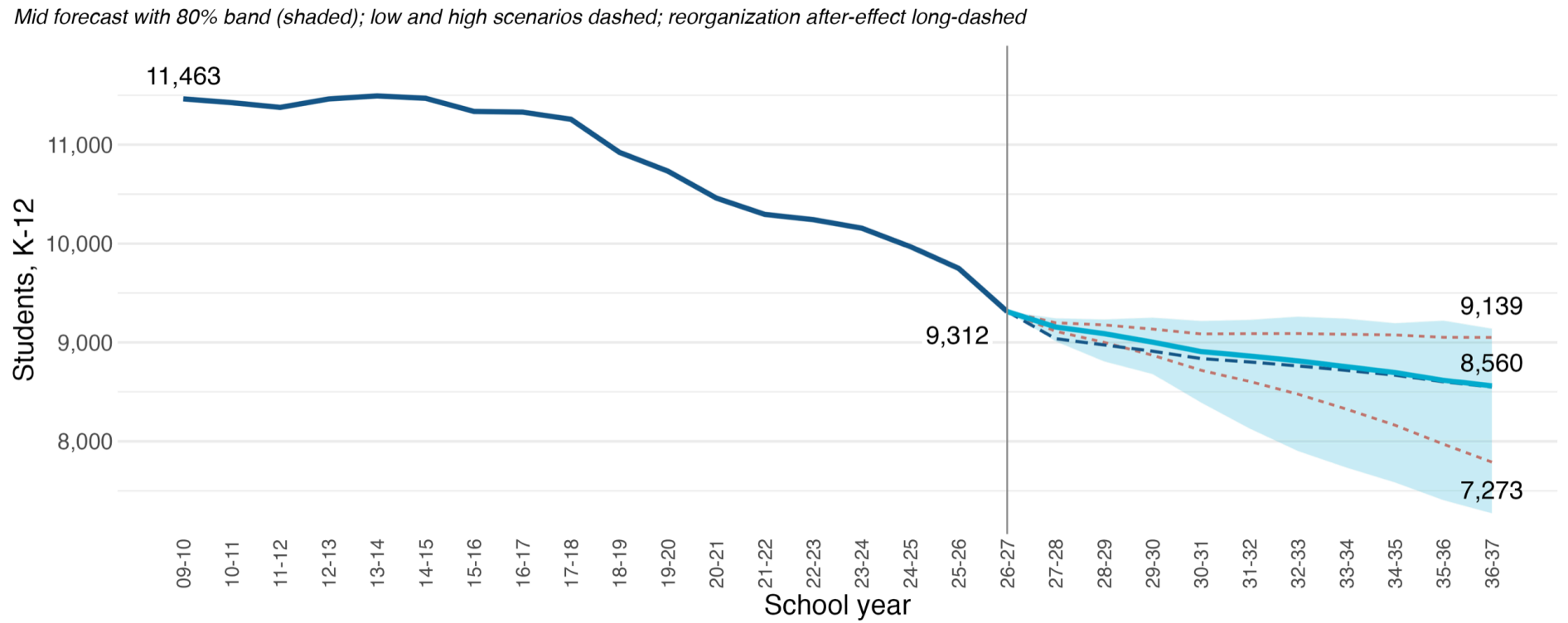
Each zone's students go to buildings by where that zone's students attended in 2026-27, including those who attend outside their zone.

4 Controlled And Rolled Up

Building shares are scaled so every grade sums to the district forecast, development is added by zone, and every building and grade is kept in whole students.

Summed to the district, the zone forecasts land within 1.0% of the district forecast in every year, inside its band: see [Checking The District From The Ground Up](#).

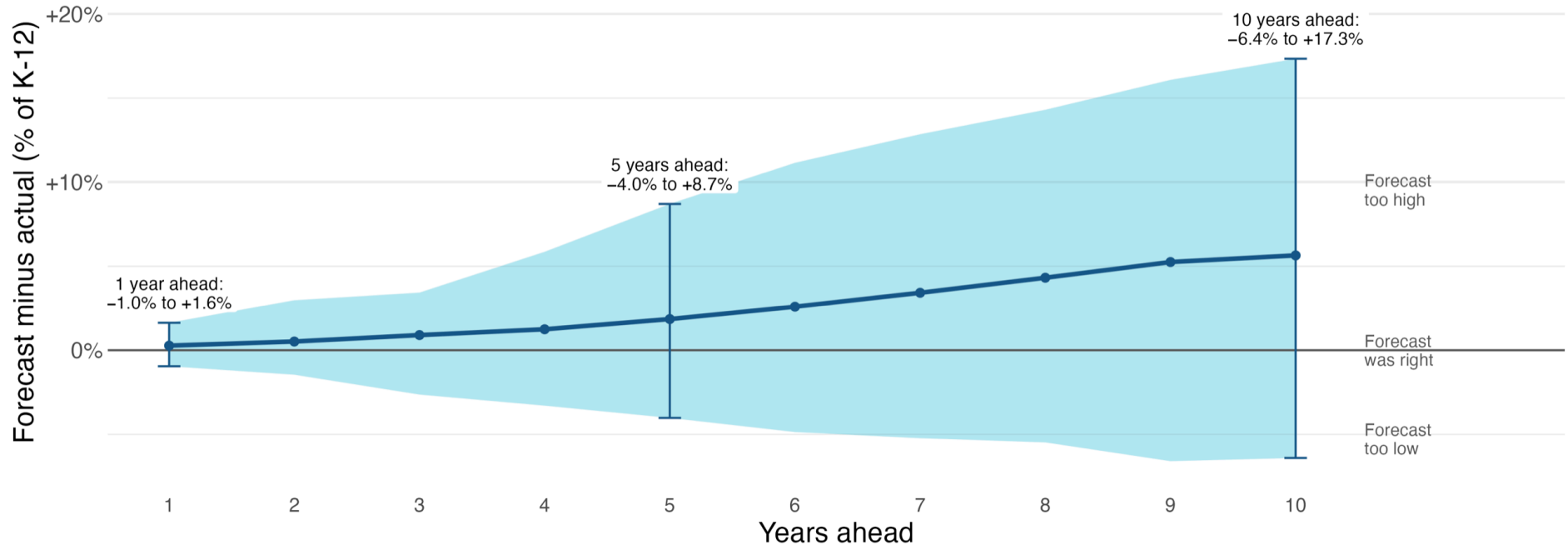
District Forecast, 2027 To 2037



Mid forecast 8,863 in 2031-32 and 8,560 in 2036-37. The 80% band for 2036-37 runs from 7,273 to 9,139.

How The Band Was Built

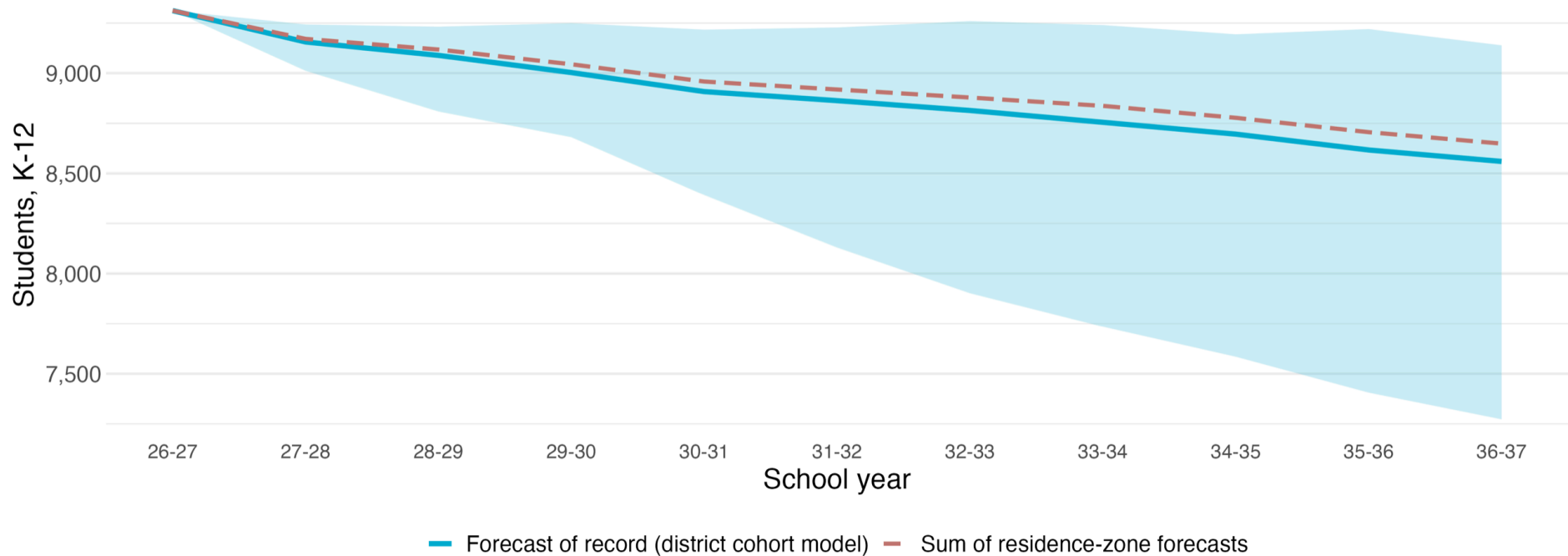
This method re-run from every past starting year, 6-year averaging window. Shaded: the middle 80% of misses; line: the average miss



Misses ran high more often than low, because closures, the pandemic, and the reorganization fell inside many past forecast periods, so the forecast band reaches further below the mid forecast than above it. The band comes from this method's own misses on past years. The district's 2018-19 study came in above the count every year since; its low projection was above the count in 7 of 8 years.

Checking The District From The Ground Up

Shaded: 80% band of the forecast of record. Both include the same pipeline increment



Each residence zone projected on its own and summed: 8,649 in 2036-37 against the forecast of record's 8,560 (+1.0%), inside the 80% band in every year. Built separately from the same counts and births, the two models agree on the district; the zone model sets the building allocation.

What Would Change The Forecast

Three assumptions matter most. Each card is how far one could move 2036-37 enrollment on its own.

-430 to +428

students: share of births enrolling in
kindergarten

up to -426

students: open enrollment, if Missouri enacts
it

-366 to +196

students: future births

Everything else we tested moves it by 244 students or fewer: families moving in and out, yield of new housing, reorganization and averaging choices.

Measured one assumption at a time on the cohort model, before the housing pipeline is added. The full set of tests is in the report.

By Grade Band

Mid forecast by grade band

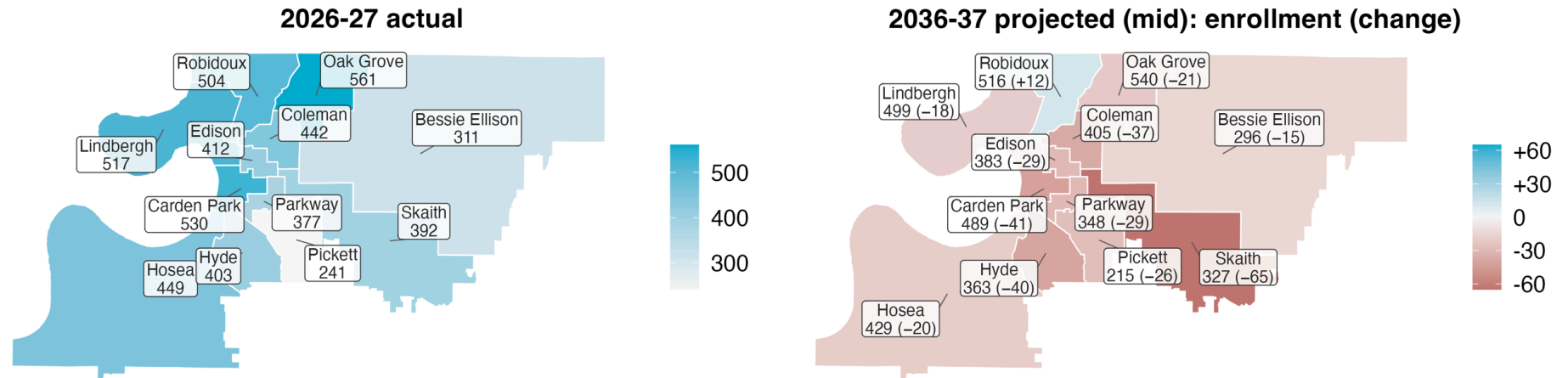
School year	K-6	7-8	9-12
2026-27	5,140	1,393	2,779
2027-28	5,063	1,396	2,697
2029-30	4,911	1,449	2,643
2031-32	4,852	1,365	2,646
2034-35	4,802	1,329	2,565
2036-37	4,810	1,296	2,454

2026-27 is the September count, the first year of the K-6 / 7-8 / 9-12 configuration.

The middle grades hold near today's level for five years; elementary and high school enrollment fall from the start.

Elementary Enrollment By Building

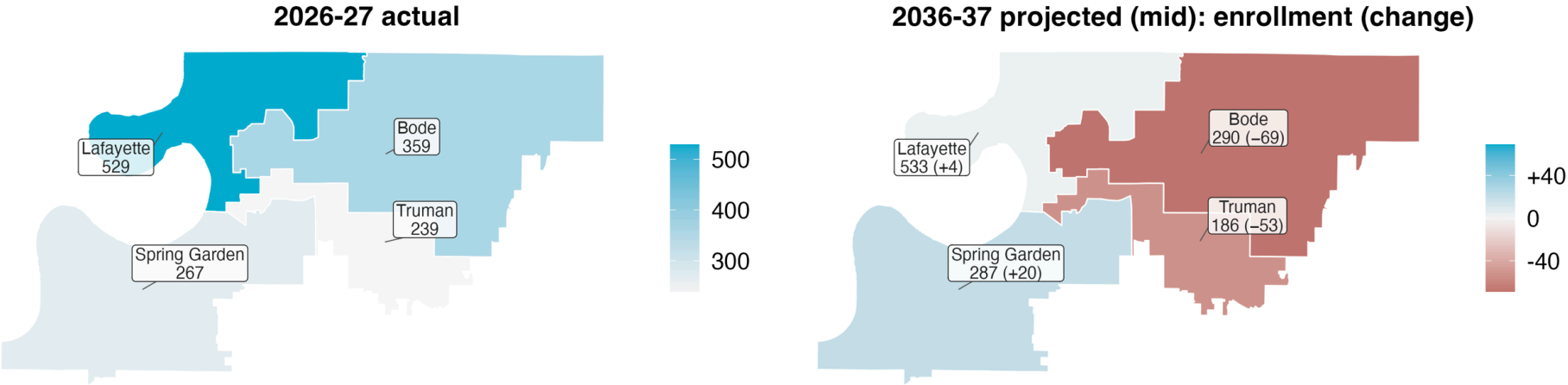
Mid projection. Elementary enrollment 5,139 to 4,810 (-6.4%); building changes run -65 to +12



Robidoux (+12) gain; every other elementary school declines, by as many as 65 students.

Middle School Enrollment By Building

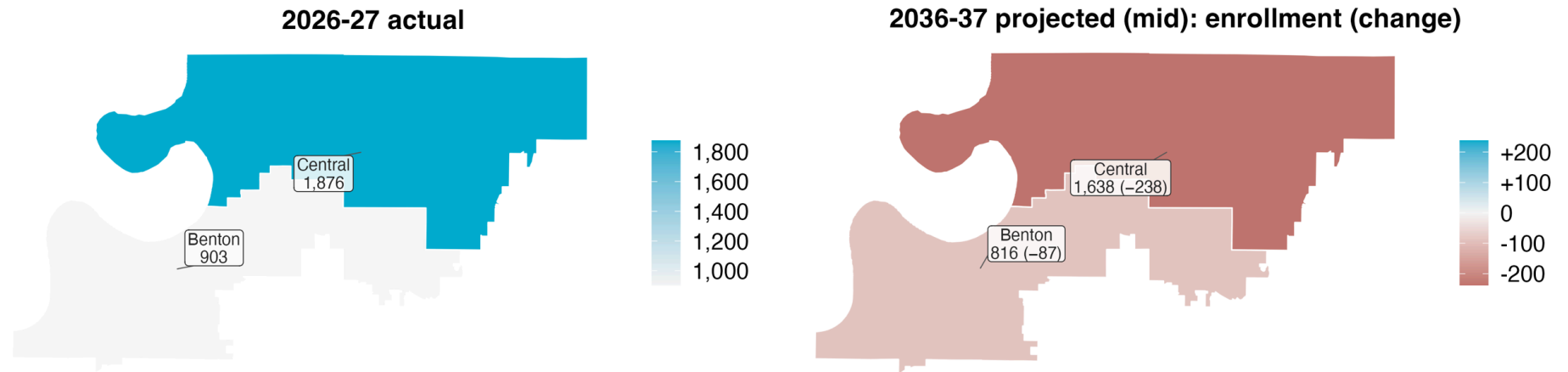
Mid projection. Middle enrollment 1,394 to 1,296 (-7.0%); building changes run -69 to +20



Middle-school enrollment moves from 1,394 to 1,296; building changes run from -69 to +20.

High School Enrollment By Building

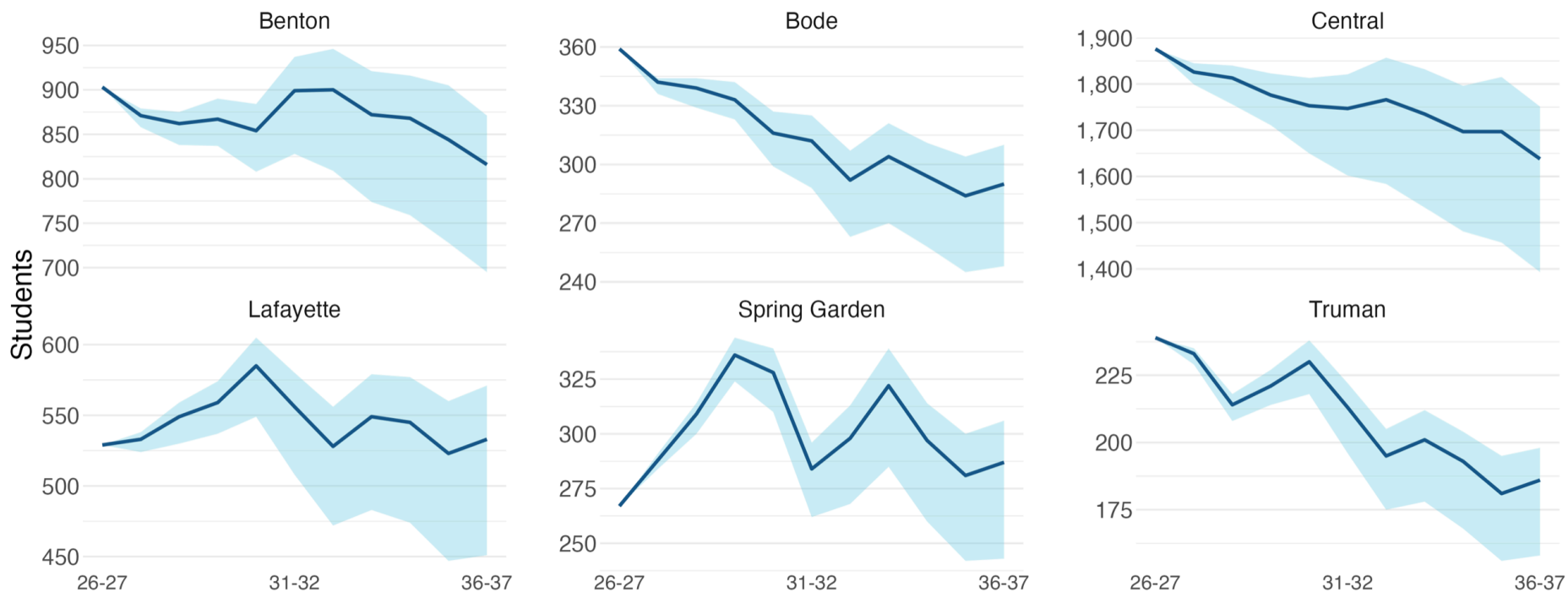
Mid projection. High enrollment 2,779 to 2,454 (-11.7%); building changes run -238 to -87



High-school enrollment moves from 2,779 to 2,454 as larger classes graduate: Central -238, Benton -87.

Low, Mid, And High By Building: High And Middle Schools

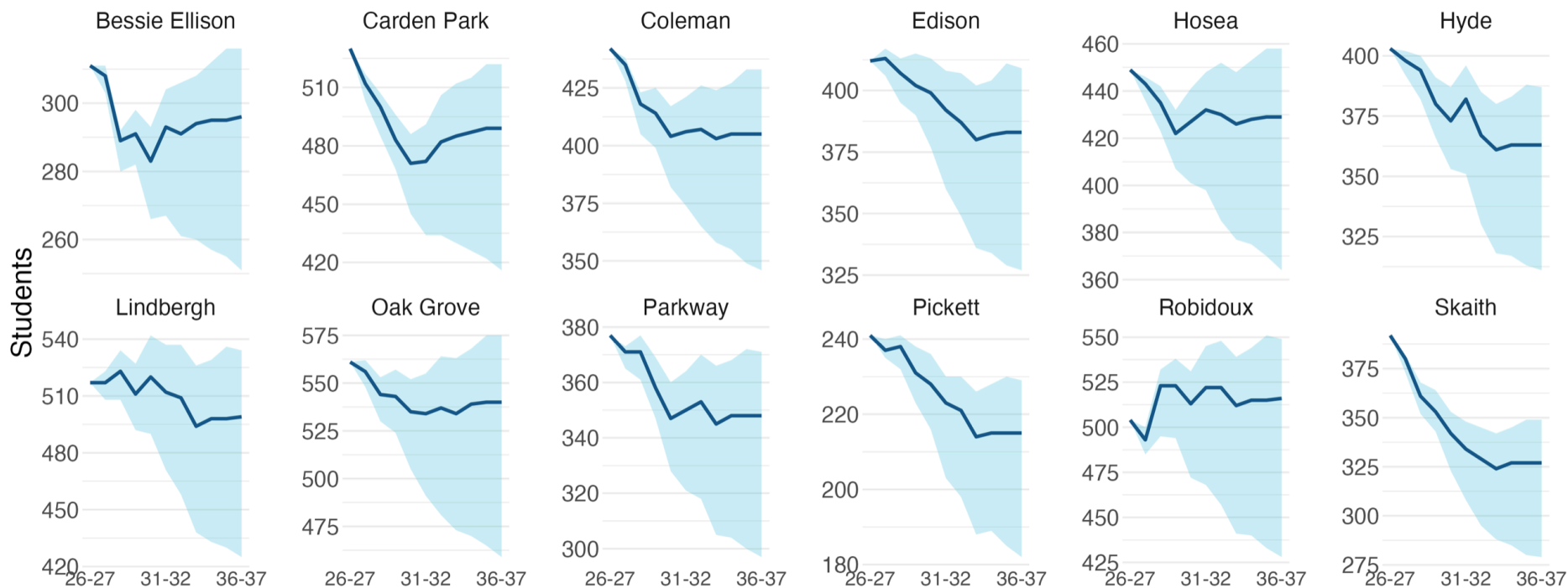
Mid projection with low-high range (80% band)



Each panel has its own scale. A middle school holds two grades, so it follows the classes coming up behind it: Spring Garden rises, dips in 2031-32, and recovers because the classes now in grades 4, 2-3, and K-1 where it draws its students number about 178, 139-145, and 159-163. Low, mid, and high tables for every facility are in the report and the Excel workbook.

Low, Mid, And High By Building: Elementary Schools

Mid projection with low-high range (80% band)



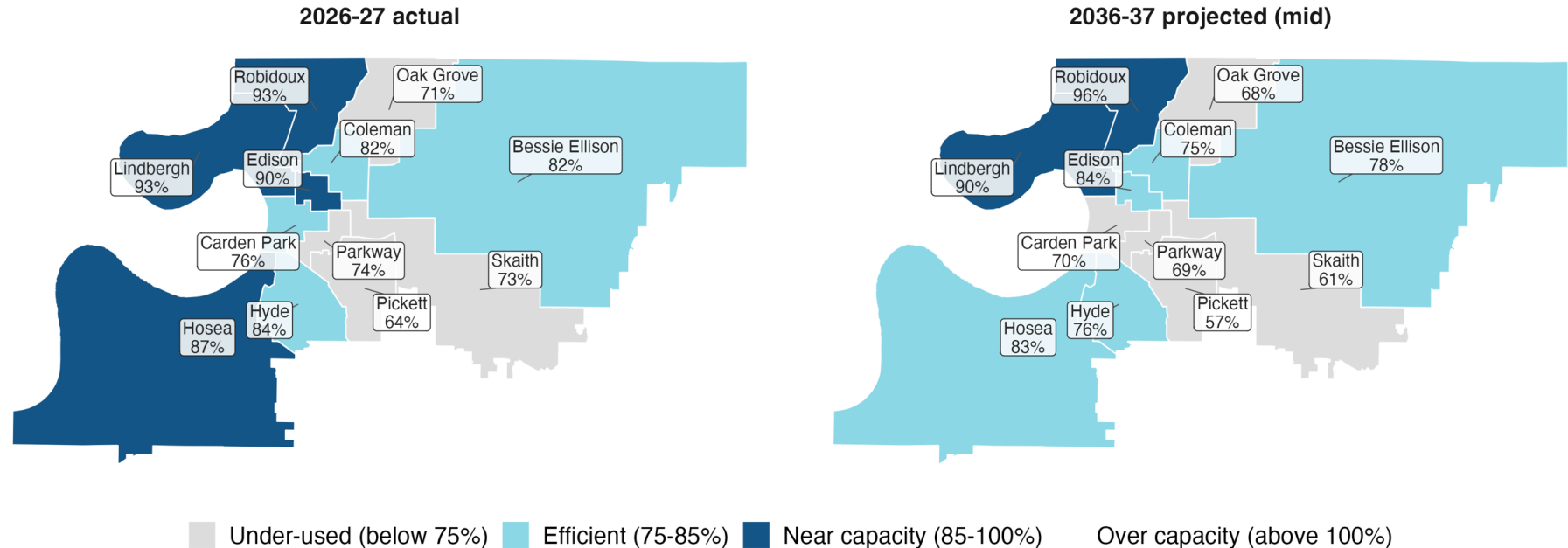
Each panel has its own scale. Robidoux has the largest projected change of any elementary school (+12 students by 2036-37).

Facilities, Staffing, And Transfers

Enrollment against maximum capacity in the District's October 2026 capacity analysis, every building, every year through 2036-37.

Elementary Utilization

Mid projection against maximum capacity in the District's Building Capacity Analysis (October 2026)

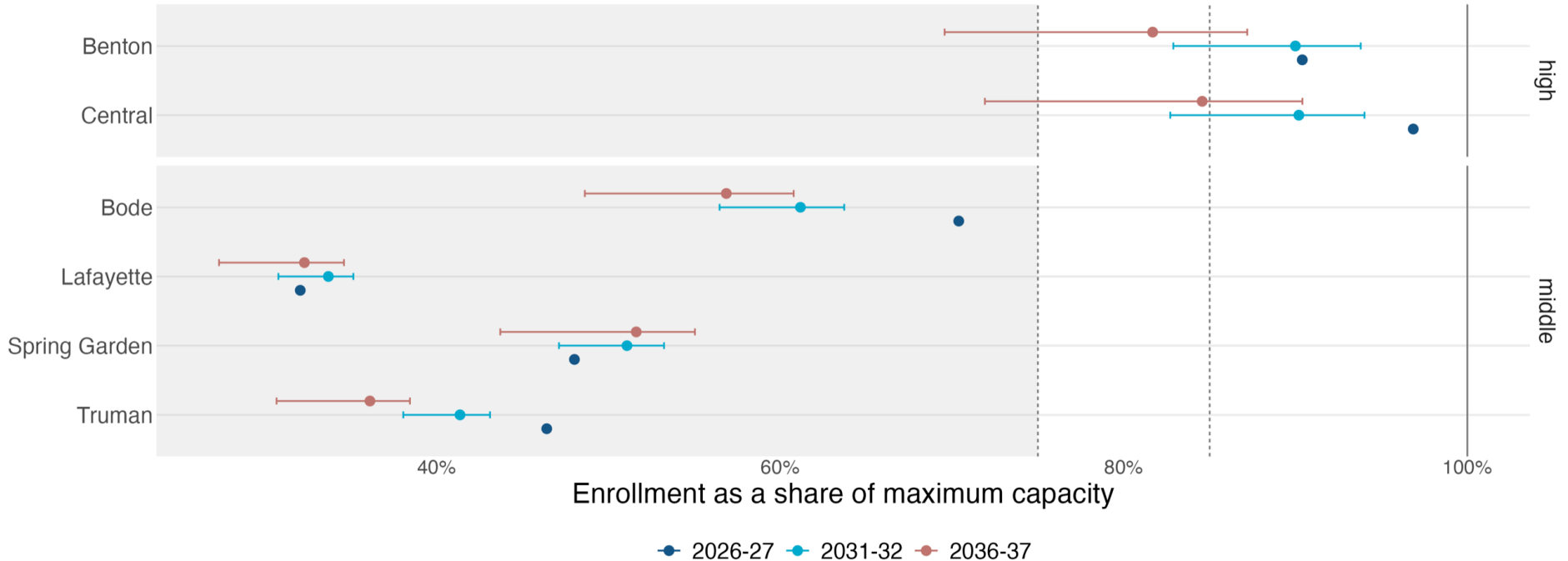


Enrollment at each building, drawn on its attendance zone. Capacity: St. Joseph School District, Building Capacity Analysis (Facilities & Operations, October 2, 2026).

Share of maximum capacity. In 2036-37 the fullest elementary schools are Robidoux (96%) and Lindbergh (90%); Pickett, Skaith, Oak Grove, Parkway and Carden Park fall below 75%. Capacity: St. Joseph School District, Building Capacity Analysis (Facilities & Operations, October 2, 2026).

Utilization: High And Middle Schools

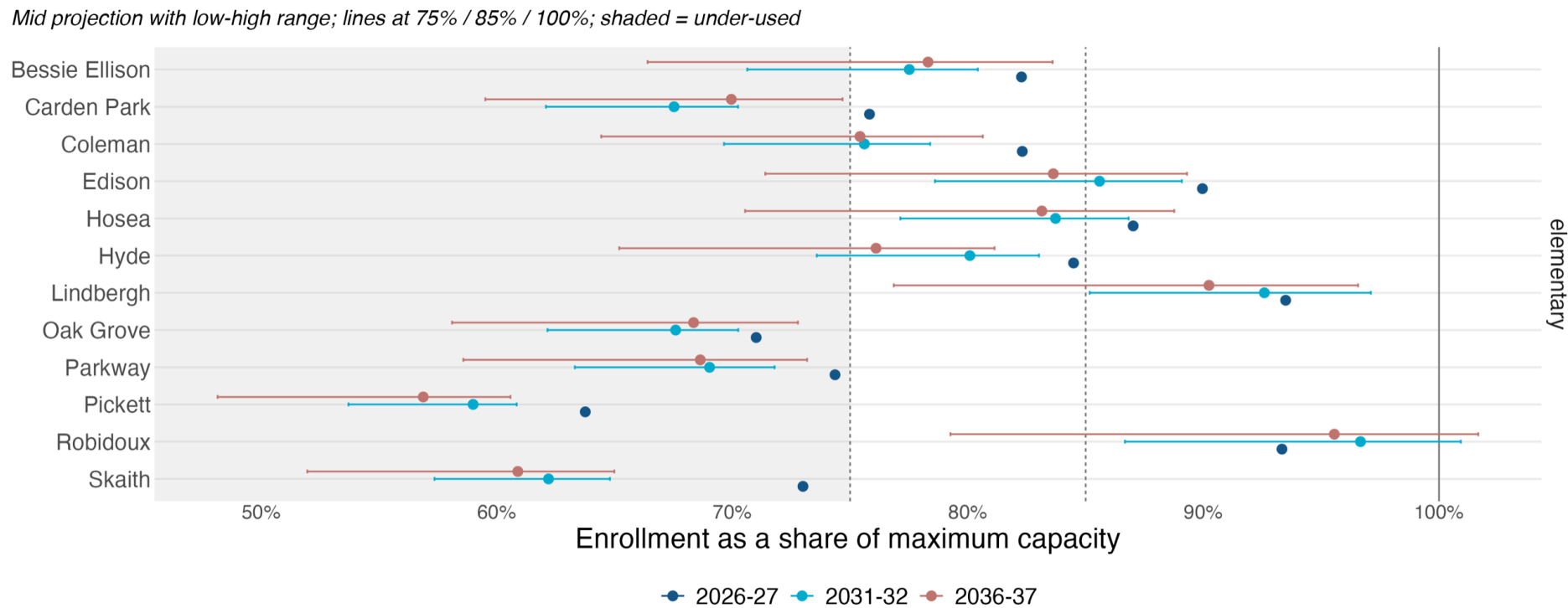
Mid projection with low-high range; lines at 75% / 85% / 100%; shaded = under-used



Capacity: St. Joseph School District, Building Capacity Analysis (Facilities & Operations, October 2, 2026).

2026-27: high schools at 95% and middle schools at 43% of maximum capacity, with about 1,837 middle-school seats unused; Lafayette at 32%. Capacity: St. Joseph School District, Building Capacity Analysis (Facilities & Operations, October 2, 2026).

Utilization: Elementary Schools



Capacity: St. Joseph School District, Building Capacity Analysis (Facilities & Operations, October 2, 2026).

2026-27: elementary schools at 81% of maximum capacity. In 2036-37 the fullest are Robidoux (96%) and Lindbergh (90%). Capacity: St. Joseph School District, Building Capacity Analysis (Facilities & Operations, October 2, 2026).

Staffing

-25

teacher positions by 2031-32, mid

-42

teacher positions by 2036-37, mid

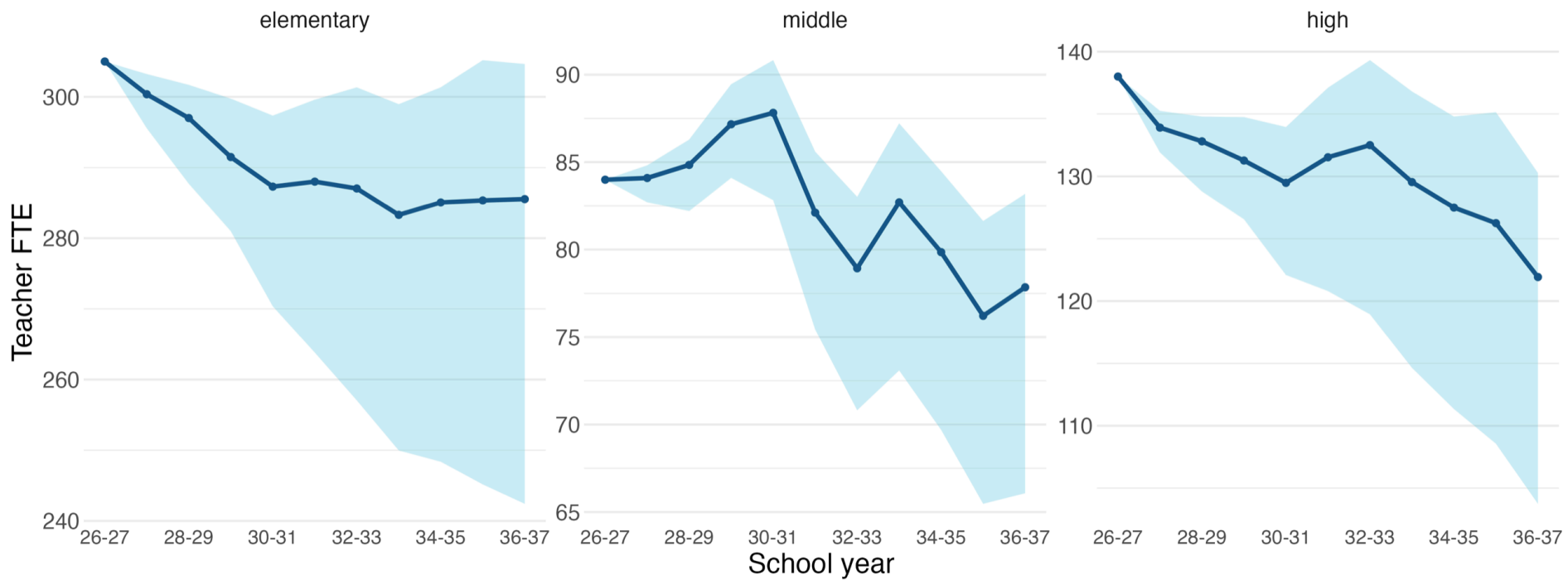
-9 to -115

high to low projection, 2036-37

- Holding each building's 2026-27 students-per-teacher ratio
- Spread over ten years, a pace normal attrition can largely absorb

Teacher Positions By Level

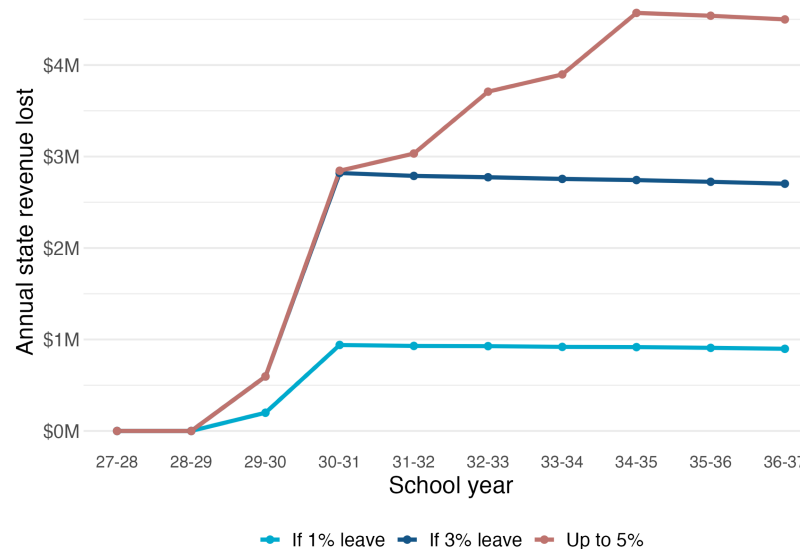
2026-27 students per teacher held by facility; mid with low-high range



If Missouri Adopts Open Enrollment

- **Not law in Missouri.** The latest Senate bill: transfers from 2028-29, capped at 3% of enrollment, rising to 5%
- **State aid follows the student:** about \$10,419 a year each, two years later
- **If 1% leave:** about 90 students, \$0.9M a year
- **If 3% leave:** about 270 students, \$2.8M a year
- **Up to 5%:** about 431 students, \$4.5M a year by 2036-37
- **Transfers in would offset:** 1% in is about 90 students, +\$1.0M a year
- **Tuition students today:** 9 to 11 nonresident students a year since 2020-21

Students transferring out, on the mid forecast; FY2026 formula values; two-year lag



State aid lost each year if students leave (RFP 2.3.2); gains from students transferring in count at once, losses phase in over two years. The forecast itself assumes no open enrollment.

Recommendations

- **Plan for a smaller district and update the forecast each fall.** Build plans on the mid projection and test them against the low edge
- **Decide the future of surplus middle school space.** About 1,800 seats stay unused throughout; Lafayette holds 32% of its maximum capacity
- **No building exceeds its maximum capacity:** Central and Benton ease from 97% and 90% of maximum today; the fullest elementary schools in 2036-37 are Robidoux (96%) and Lindbergh (90%)
- **Align staffing with enrollment at the pace of attrition:** about 25 fewer positions by 2031-32 and 42 by 2036-37
- **Track why students leave.** Review exit coding and add a short exit survey
- **Continue monitoring English-learner enrollment,** which rose from 6.3% to 11.9% of students since 2016-17
- **Confirm the development pipeline with the City** each year before the forecast update

What To Watch In The 2027-28 Count

671

kindergarten, projected

9,156

K-12 total, projected

9,012–9,243

K-12 band; a total near the low edge signals a second year of reorganization losses

- Kindergarten rests on the Census estimate of 955 county births in 2022, the lowest on record; confirm it against Missouri vital statistics
- The forecast should be updated each fall from the September count

Plan For A Smaller District

K-12 enrollment falls from **9,312** to about **8,560** by 2036-37, gradually and for reasons no single event explains. The pressure on buildings is uneven: **middle schools hold about 1,837 unused seats, no building exceeds its maximum capacity**, and staffing can follow enrollment at the pace of attrition.