

**Enrollment/Forecasts Demographics Subcommittee Meeting
of the Long Range Educational Facilities Planning Work Group
Meeting #5
City Hall, 301 King Street
Thursday, January 16, 2014 – 6:00pm
Meeting Summary**

Meeting notes are recorded by City Staff to provide a written record of principal items of discussion, key comments, decisions of the Work Group, and comments from the public. They are not intended to be a verbatim transcription of the meeting.

Meeting Attendees

Subcommittee Members

Ken Billingsley
Chris Hartman
Justin Wilson

Members not in attendance

Herb Berg
Yvonne Folkerts

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS)

Laurel Hammig

City of Alexandria

Steve Chozick
Pat Mann
Karl Moritz
Ryan Price
Amber Wheeler
Katherine Carraway

Welcome and Introductions

Karl Moritz, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning, welcomed attendees and gave an overview of the meeting's goals, which were to present the short-term enrollment forecast based on the subcommittee's approved methodology, and staff's recommended long-term enrollment forecast.

Short-Term Enrollment Forecast

Laurel Hammig, Facilities Planner/GIS Specialist, ACPS, presented [short-term enrollment projections \(2014-2019\)](#), by school and by grade, based on the approved methodology from the subcommittee's previous meeting. These projections were incorporated in the current budget process – the CIP and pending release of the ACPS operating budget – and will enable ACPS to determine class size caps and staffing needs.

Ms. Hammig also presented [mid-term projections through 2023](#), which used the same methodology as for short-term with the exception of a change in births assumption. It was changed to a 15-year average number of births, a more stable, long-term average, rather than the more aggressive increases Alexandria has had recently.

Mr. Hartman asked if it was known which schools were forecasted with most significant growth. While not on hand during the meeting, that data will be provided. Ms. Hammig did indicate that the totals reflect ACPS's modified enrollment policy (MOE) – meaning some students may be transferred to a school based on the (over)capacity of another.

The group also discussed space currently scheduled to be added to particular schools, and how data comparing home schools vs. attending schools may offer more information.

Recommended Long-Term Enrollment Forecast

Pat Mann, Urban Planner, City of Alexandria, presented [analysis completed to determine a long-term enrollment forecast through FY2040](#) – including a recommended forecast to use in planning as well as alternate potential scenarios demonstrating differences in assumptions and what they mean for the future.

Inputs used in the forecasting model included population forecast and birth rate, kindergarten capture, and cohort survival by grade. Findings were tested against the ACPS mid-term projection, student generation by residential type, students per 1,000/population over time, and compared to other jurisdictions as well as Alexandria's own history.

Staff's recommended long-term forecast is carried through to FY2040, which is based on the current birth rate continuing for 5 years then decreasing; kindergarten capture dropping from 60% to 58% in five years and then again to the current long-term average of 56% by FY2040; and the cohort survival rate falling approximately 1 percentage point in all grades gradually through FY2040. This was recommended as a probable maximum forecast to use for long-term planning rather than a "most probable" forecast, in that it represents the potential need for classrooms if an expected drop in the rate of enrollment increase does not take place right away.

The group discussed the effects of the city's housing stock's ability to accommodate families with children as a limit on potential enrollment, and how the urbanization that is occurring could affect the enrollment projections. Mr. Wilson asked if other areas in the region have experienced this same kind of urbanization and whether the subcommittee's assumptions could be tested against those models.

While staff has not yet gotten to this level of detail, Mr. Moritz said it is possible other regions have done some analyses. The group discussed the types of data that could be examined to gather this information, including student generation rates for various types of development. Mr. Mann indicated that staff has looked at the student

generation rates for Alexandria’s development that would be required to support the enrollment forecast, and found that while they are higher than in the recent past, they are realistic in comparison with other jurisdictions.

The group discussed the likelihood of the recommended forecast being higher than likely based on historic conditions in Alexandria and the direction of new development toward smaller units and smaller households. Out-migration is volatile, and can move large numbers of students out of the city rapidly as evidenced by the changes from 2000 to 2005. Mr. Mann agreed with the potential for the rate of enrollment growth to fall, but emphasized that the forecast already assumes a reversal of current trends in births. He indicated the only sign that points to slowing of enrollment growth is the 2013 drop in kindergarten enrollment, which is a statistic for a single grade in a single year and thus can’t be depended on to indicate a change without other supporting data. The group discussed that each year we have the tools to reassess the long term forecast, and that it may be appropriate to make a lower “most likely” estimate if a forecast thought to be a realistic maximum estimate is to be used as a planning guideline.

The next step in the process will be to forecast by local geographies, which may provide some more definitive information.

Discussion continued concerning factors associated with students returning each year and which grade levels had higher cohort survival. The group also noted the similarities with Arlington, even though each city’s housing stock is so different.

Mr. Hartman proposed the idea of using standard deviation/probability analysis for further validation of the group’s findings, especially as a tool for confirming findings at the local level rather than on a system-wide basis. The group discussed this as being a viable option for validating each individual forecast component (i.e., birth rates, kindergarten capture, cohort survival, etc.) rather than the numbers as a whole in a given year.

Mr. Billingsley suggested contacting schools directly to obtain certain internal data collection, especially as it relates to in- and out-migration. Ms. Hammig noted that some information is collected when students register for Kindergarten or as a new incoming student, but students are not asked to update this type of information each year. The State of Virginia collects some information from each student, but not necessarily what will be applicable to forecasting purposes. Mr. Moritz reminded the group that this subcommittee can recommend ACPS start collecting certain data that will assist in forecasting enrollment in the future.

Next Steps

The group discussed the next steps for the subcommittee and determined that more analysis should be completed before finalizing the recommended forecast.

The next steps include forecasting by geography; completing student generation review for 2013; updating the long term forecast with 2013 birth data; and preparing a long term forecast to accompany the FY2015 enrollment projection.

Meeting Handouts

[Agenda](#)

[ACPS Short- and Mid-Term Enrollment Projections](#)

[Long-Term Enrollment Forecast Presentation](#)

[Long-Term Forecast Description](#)

[Discussion Points for Standard Deviation](#)