

Estacada School District Population Trends Findings & Recommendations

Report to the Estacada School Board
January 8, 2003

Prepared by:
The Population Trends Advisory Task Force

Population Trends Advisory Task Force Members

Parents/Citizens

Susan Phillips-Barber
Jill Peterson
Brian Woodruff
Jan Abernathy
M.V. Whitney
Lauri Hull

School Board

David Bugni
Mark Greene
Danny Scott

Administrators

Mike Call
Dr. Howard Fetz
Kevin Olds
Larry Adamson
Jan Jaqua

Advisory

Randy Ealy

Representing

Eagle Creek Elementary
Eagle Creek Elementary
Estacada Grade School
Estacada Grade School
River Mill Elementary
River Mill Elementary

Director & Task Force Facilitator
Director
Director

The District, Superintendent
The District, Curriculum & Special Services Director
Estacada Grade School, Principal
River Mill Elementary School, Principal
Eagle Creek Elementary School, Principal

City of Estacada, City Manager

Introduction

The PTA Task Force met to study trends in population within the Estacada School District, and how those trends may affect the consistency of education within the three elementary schools. This study was motivated by a recently completed population study (the September 2001 Barmack Report), which indicated that if the district does nothing to promote enrollment growth, enrollment will decrease approximately 11% by the end of the 2006-2007 school year, to 2,083 students. Furthermore, this decrease will, in all likelihood, not be uniform throughout the district. The predominance of the decline will occur in grades K-8, and the non-uniformity of this decrease may potentially cause inconsistent educational opportunities for students at the elementary schools.

The Meeting Process

The names of members of the District's Population Trends Advisory Task Force are listed in the front of this report. The task force includes representation from the school district board of directors, administration, and parents.

The Task Force drew from printed material and meetings with people having direct knowledge and experience with various aspects of population projections and infrastructure development around our area. Printed resources that the task force used included the Barmack Report, the 2000 Federal Census for the Estacada Area, Master Plans for Clackamas County and the City of Estacada, and the task force members' own libraries.

Meetings of the Task Force were held on the following dates at the school district's central office:

October 7, 2002

October 28, 2002

November 18, 2002

All meetings of the Population Trends Advisory Task Force were open to the public.

The findings and recommendations presented in this report reflect the views of the entire Population Trends Advisory Task Force. Task force members were invited to add any qualifying comments if they wished to do so.

Findings Regarding Planning Requirements

1. 2000 Census

The Estacada CCD, the Estacada Urban Cluster and the City of Estacada were the geographic areas studied within the 2000 Census. The CCD is an acronym for Census County Division (see discussion below for a description of the CCD boundary). The Estacada Urban Cluster includes that area within the city limits as well as surrounding areas immediately adjacent to the city along Eagle Creek Road and east along Highway 224.

2000 Census Comparison of Selected Subjects (100% Data)			
Subject	City of Estacada	Estacada Urban Cluster	Estacada Census County Division (CCD)
Population	2,371	3,243	15,531
Median Age	32.7	33.7	38.6
Population of Children under 5 years of age	164 (6.9%)	224 (6.9%)	848 (5.5%)
Population of Children between the ages of 5 and 19	614 (26%)	818 (25.2%)	3,761 (24.2%) ¹
Number of Family ² Households	592 (69.6%)	813 (70.6%)	4,175 (76.6%)
Number of Family Households with Own Children under 18 years	339 (39.9%)	453 (39.4%)	1,852 (34%)
Number of Households with Individuals under 18 years	370 (43.5%)	500 (43.4%)	2104 (38.6%)
Average Household Size (persons)	2.78	2.81	2.81
Average Family Size (persons)	3.26	3.25	3.14
Total Occupied Housing Units	850	1,151	5,447

Footnotes:

¹ For the Estacada CCD, the number of children age 19 is 211. The number of children age 18 is 268. If we assume none of the 19 year old children and only one half of the 18 year olds are in high school, this would provide an approximate upper limit on potential K-12 enrollment of $(3,761 - 211 - \frac{1}{2}(268)) = 3,416$. According to the table below, based only upon sample data, the K-12 potential enrollment is estimated to be 3,186. We will use this lower number for conservatism.

² According to the 2000 census, the definition of a family is “Two or more people who reside together and are related by birth, marriage or adoption.”

Geographically, the Estacada CCD is an area very similar to that of the school district, with the exception of the following areas:

- The CCD includes an area, primarily zoned for Timber (TBR) and Ag/Forest (AG/F), between Ridge Road and Highway 211 (to the west and east) and between Unger Road and Fellows Road (to the south and north), and therefore contributes a small population. This area is located towards the town of Colton.

- The CCD area excludes the George area, which lies north and east of the City of Estacada and is within the school district boundary. This area is zoned for Timber (TBR) and Ag/Forest (AG/F) and therefore contributes a small population.
- The CCD area excludes a small area between Mattoon Road and Springwater Road (to the west and east) and between Redland Road and Spring Creek Road (to the south and north).
- The CCD includes an area between Trubel and Firwood Roads (to the north and east) and between Highway 211 and Deep Creek (to the south and west) that is outside of the district's boundary. This is towards the City of Sandy.

We will now try to estimate a population for the school district based upon the information about the CCD by adding and subtracting estimates of the populations within the areas described above. If we assume that the populations are approximately equal between the George and Mattoon Road areas and the area towards Colton (to cancel out population counts), then we would need only to subtract an estimate of population within the CCD area that is near the City of Sandy. A crude estimate of this population can be made as follows: There are approximately 250 parcels of land within this area. If it is assumed that 38.6% of the households have children under the age of 18 (see table above), and we further assume that each parcel has a residence on it (a conservative assumption for our purposes), then 97 parcels within this area have a residence with children. If we further conservatively assume that each of these households has two children, then about 194 children reside within this area.

If the sample data noted below is reasonably correct, then we can assume that about $3186 - 194 = 2992$ children reside within school district boundaries. If the school district, during the 2000-2001 school year, had an enrollment of 2312 students, then about 680 children reside within the school district and do not attend public school there (either they do not attend school, they attend private school, they are home schooled, or they attend a public school outside of the Estacada school district). The Timber Lake Job Corps is also included in this amount. The number of children, age 16-18, at the Job Corps is about 115. Therefore, assume the number of students potentially available to the district, to be housed within its facilities, is $680 - 115 = 565$, or conservatively assume 500 students.

We can also estimate the overall population within the school district boundary by a similar analysis: If the CCD area has a population of 15,531 and there are 250 parcels with 2.81 persons per household that are within the CCD but outside of the school district boundary (again, assuming each parcel has a residence on it, which is overly conservative), this would yield an approximate overall Estacada School district population of 14,829, or about 15,000 people. This is consistent with estimates made in the recent past by other means.

2000 Census Selected Social Characteristics (Sample Data)	
Subject	Estacada Census County Division (CCD)
School Enrollment (DP-2)	
Preschool (3 years to Kindergarten)	191
Kindergarten	212
Grades 1- 8	2,006
High School	968
Total (K-12)	3,186
Occupation, 16 years and over (DP-3)	
Management, professional	1,640 (23.0%)
Service occupations	946 (13.3%)
Sales & office occupations	1,750 (24.6%)
Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	104 (1.5%)
Construction, extraction and maintenance occupations	1,184 (16.6%)
Production, transportation and material moving occupations	1,492 (21.0%)
Total	7,116
Median family income	\$49,567

2. Barmack Report

The Estacada School District's Enrollment Projection Update, dated September 2001 (also known as the Barmack Report), arrived at the following principle conclusions:

- Enrollment is projected to drop eleven percent between 2001 and 2006, to a level estimated at 2,083 students.
- The district's recent enrollment losses are attributable to:
 - The aging population and declining births in the district;
 - The faltering regional economy, the decrease in the number of people moving to Oregon from other states and the weak housing market;
 - The lack of new development in the City of Estacada, and
 - Attrition to home schooling and private education.
- Enrollment declines will be concentrated in Grades K-8.
- The most important factors driving the district's enrollment are:
 - The echo baby boom and the aging population;
 - Hispanic enrollment gains;
 - Population and housing trends within the region;
 - New housing within the community, and
 - Home schooling and private education.
- The decline in births in the Estacada area during the past decade suggests that there is likely to be further reduction in kindergarten enrollment.
- Residential development within the City of Estacada will be slow.
- There is an ample amount of land within the urban growth boundary (UGB) of the City of Estacada for development, and an increase in the UGB is not anticipated as a result. (This conclusion was independently reinforced by the Land Conservation and Development Commission in their analysis of land requirements within the UGB for the City of Estacada for the next 20 years.) However, outside of the UGB, most zoning minimizes further development.

- 118 students were enrolled in home instruction. [The accuracy of this number is debatable, and the actual number is probably somewhat higher.]

[Note: the Barmack study does not include any contribution in student population from the current arrangement with the Timber Lake Job Corps.]

3. Building Capacities (that reflect new school bond construction)

School	Minimum Number of Students	Maximum Capacity
Eagle Creek	See discussion immediately below	450 (limited by the septic system)
Grade School	See discussion immediately below	550 (at 25 students per class), 660 (at 30 students per class)
River Mill	See discussion immediately below	475 (at 25 students/class), 570 (at 30 students per class)
Junior High	Not Determined	600 (at 25 students/class), 720 (at 30 students per class)
High School	Not Determined	1,199 (every room, every period), 959 (rooms not scheduled 20% of the day for teacher preparation)

The minimum number of students that each elementary school could support prior to becoming economically inefficient was studied. Clearly, the more unequal the student populations are within each school, the larger the difference in operational costs on a per student basis. Operational costs are defined as containing the following items: Office of the Principal (accounting code 2410), Utilities (accounting code 2549), Technology Services (accounting code 2660) and the Care and Upkeep of the building (including the custodial salaries and benefits, accounting code 2540). For example, during the 2001-2002 school year, the following operational costs per student were realized:

- Eagle Creek: \$930.95 (343 students)
- Grade School: \$905.65 (372 students)
- River Mill: \$762.91 (434 students)

The gross operational costs of each school were roughly the same during the 2001-2002 school year:

- Eagle Creek: \$319,317.00
- Grade School: \$336,902.00
- River Mill: \$331,102.00

When the new Grade School is operational, its operating costs should be somewhat less than previous years', due to increased efficiencies in the mechanical and electrical systems and the probable reduction of any significant repair work required. Also, given the maximum capacity that limits the student population of Eagle Creek Elementary (450), if the overall elementary school enrollment of the district falls within the range of 925 to 1000, it would be economically beneficial (though politically troublesome) to close Eagle Creek and consolidate its population into the two remaining larger schools. This would probably save a significant portion of the operating costs attributable to Eagle Creek. However, given the significance of this decision, the non-economic factors may outweigh this potential savings. According to the Barmack report, the district's elementary school population will approach this level (1003) by the year 2006. Therefore, if severe financial distress continues within the public education system, to avoid having to confront the possibility of a school closure, increases in elementary level enrollment should be a principal goal.

4. Status of Infrastructure Development within the City of Estacada and Clackamas County:

- The 20-year Clackamas County Capital Improvement Plan does not identify any significant public projects within the Estacada area.
- The Mt. Hood Economic Alliance currently has no projects identified for the City of Estacada.
- The City of Estacada is currently pursuing the creation of an Economic Improvement District and an Urban Renewal District. If successful and fully implemented, these have the potential to lure additional businesses to our area.
- According to Clackamas County, the Sunrise Corridor project (a four lane highway from I-205 to Highway 26 through Damascus and Boring) is on hold. The estimated cost of this transportation corridor is about \$520 million. The project is on hold due to lack of funding. As a result, the county anticipates that the project will not begin for at least 10 years. However, this schedule may be accelerated if high population growth within the Damascus and Boring areas occurs due to an increase in the urban growth boundary in that area. However, due to the faltering economy, Metro’s latest estimates (fall 2002) for growth needs in the Damascus and Boring areas have been scaled back from previous growth projections.

To summarize, no major public infrastructure projects are planned within our area to stimulate appreciable economic growth or population increase.

5. A Study of Current Inflow/Outflow of Students within the Elementary Schools

A study was performed of the transfers into and out of the three elementary schools at the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year. The net changes are summarized below:

Net Change of Students Through Transfers			
Category	Eagle Creek	River Mill	Grade School
Private or Home School (to/from)	0	+1	-10
In-district (to/from), includes VMSS	+37	-36	-1
Other public school districts (to/from)	+23	-8	+8
Total change	+60	-43	-3

Note: Positive numbers above denote movement into that school, negative numbers denote movement out of that school. No shows are not included in this analysis.

From the above data, the majority of the in-district transfers occurred as a result of the boundary line change between River Mill and Eagle Creek. The loss of children from the Grade School to either private or home school may only be temporary, due to the Colton relocation. Therefore, long term conclusions should not be drawn from this analysis. However, future analyses such as these will be valuable and should be continued.

6. A Summary of Home School Findings, including those from the CPA Task Force

During the months of November and December 2001, the Estacada School District conducted a survey of Private/Home School parents. This was part of the efforts of the CPA Task Force. The purpose of the survey was to learn why parents had elected to home school their children or enroll them in private

schools. There were several questions on this survey asking parents why they chose to take their children out of public school (or to never enroll them from the outset) and teach them at home or send them to private schools. There were 178 surveys mailed out and 41 were returned.

Of the numerous reasons parents gave for not educating their children in a public school environment, four primary reasons were evident:

1. Standards of Education
 - a. For this broad category, 66% of the parents were concerned about the quality of education their children receive in public schools.
 - b. Many of the parents' concerns pertained to the population size of the classrooms. They believe the student-to-teacher ratio was too large. They believe children receive more attention in the home or in private school versus a classroom of 27 to 31 children to one teacher. They also believe that in the public school environment the students are allowed to talk in class and this disrupts the others from learning.
 - c. A recent issue that was mentioned is the number of days that are being cut from the school year. [Although this does not, at this time, pertain to the Estacada School District.]
 - d. They also believe that there needs to be more emphasis on curriculum and less on playtime and athletics.
2. Lack of Religion in the Public School
 - a. In this category, 56% of the parents chose private or home schooling in order to base their child's education on scripture. (Only Christian-based religions were mentioned.)
3. Violence and Lack of Respect
 - a. In this case, 51% of the parents were very concerned about the violence in public schools today.
 - b. Parents are afraid of sending their children to public school for fear of the perceived level of violence. In recent years all of the shootings and acts of violence in our public school has turned parents to pursue home school or private school. Many of the parents had comments about the lack of discipline and rules, which also leads to violence.
 - c. Regarding lack of respect, the parents believe that the students do not get taught respect. The parents responding to the survey believe that the teachers allow the students to be disrespectful and that there are no consequences for the student's actions. There were also complaints about the dress code for teachers, such as "the teachers are allowed to dress like slob, if a teacher dresses sloppy, I felt they might educate sloppy." When you home school there are not other children influencing the way your children want to dress. Most private schools require uniforms or implement strict dress codes.
4. Public Schools Do Not Sufficiently Prepare Students For College
 - a. In this case, 49% of the parents were concerned that their children are not being academically challenged.
 - b. In many cases, the parents are concerned that the academic achievement levels that are set are not as high as they should be for students who would like to attend college in the future. The parents are also concerned that there is a lack of choice when it comes to electives that are offered in the public schools due to budget cuts. They believe there should be more language electives and science programs.
 - c. Parents believe that their children are not being academically challenged. They believe that their children have to learn at a slower rate to accommodate all of the children in the classroom.

While a more minor point, 46% of the parents stated they would consider re-enrolling their children in the Estacada School District if a K-8 school was an available option.

Recommendations Regarding Planning Requirements

1. The district should continue to strive to achieve educational programmatic consistency between its three elementary schools. Since building budgets are a function of building populations, the goal is to maintain a reasonably consistent population between the schools as much as practicable to ensure a consistent level of services. Since each building possesses differing capacities, as the population does grow in the future, and each building tends toward that capacity, the district must monitor this growth to ensure that consistency is being maintained.
2. At this time the district has adequate capacity in each of its elementary school buildings and the distribution of students within each school is reasonably consistent. This level of utilization should decrease (due to possible declines in enrollment) and the relative distribution should remain consistent over the course of the next five years; therefore, no changes in boundaries between the elementary schools are recommended. (Continue to monitor each building's enrollment and compare that figure to the population projections as noted in Configuration Model 1A (which incorporates the boundary line change between River Mill and Eagle Creek) of the CPA Task Force.)
3. Due to declining student enrollment (not including the increase due to the high school students who reside at the Timber Lake Job Corps) and a demonstrable lack of enrollment increase due to projected limited population growth within district boundaries, the district should initiate other means to increase student population including:
 - a. Eliminate out-of-district placements (except for severe extenuating circumstances)
 - b. Continue to promote the district's attributes to home schoolers and private schoolers.
 - i. Implement new economical ways to enhance that promotion.
 - ii. Promote the safe environment that exists in the Estacada community and its school district, as compared to other districts within the metropolitan area. Cite relevant crime statistics, which are available from Clackamas County Sheriffs department.
 - iii. Promote areas of academic success.
 - iv. Promote the extra-curricular academic and athletic activities available.
 - v. Promote the beneficial changes occurring within the high school that are better preparing students for college.
 - c. Continue the Timber Lake Job Corps cooperative program.
 - d. Continue to advocate for continued residential and economic development within the city limits and elsewhere within the district. Consider a formal relationship with the City of Estacada to promote the community to prospective out-of-town businesses. Consider promoting the attributes of the district to other communities around the Portland Metro area.

There are at least 500 students within our district that do not attend school within the Estacada School District. The district should set as a goal to retrieve at least 20% of these students over the next three years. (The Timber Lake Job Corps program is not considered in this 500 student count.)
4. Stop, or at least slow, the decline in elementary school enrollment. If the predictions of the Barmack report are realized, by 2006 the district's elementary school population will have reached a level where the possibility of the closure of an elementary school will become economically viable.

5. Periodically monitor population growth around the cities of Sandy, Damascus and Boring. As these areas grow, population pressures will be exerted upon the Estacada area.
6. Since no major infrastructure improvement projects or rezoning of rural land are contemplated within the next five years to increase population within the district, it is reasonable to assume that the student population projections outlined in the Barmack report are reliable. However, these projections may need to be revised as the district develops policies and other means to increase student enrollment from other sources (home school, private school, out-of-district placements, etc).
7. From the 2000 Census, it would appear that a reasonable assumption to use for the percentage of households that contain children under the age of 18 is 34% to 40%. It can be assumed that this is a reasonable percentage to apply to future residential development within our area in order to estimate a potential student population.
8. Future enrollment projection studies performed by outside consultants (such as Judith Barmack) shall consider the relevant statistics pertaining to the Estacada CCD, and adjusted by whatever means appropriate, to more closely reflect the demographics within the Estacada School District boundaries.
9. The district should annually analyze the influx and out flux of students from its schools. Data to report should include: 1) Where students will be going (both outside and inside the district), 2) For incoming students, where they are coming from, and, 3) For those students leaving the district, the reason for their leaving.

Periodic Evaluation of Population Trends

The purpose of evaluating population trends on a periodic basis is to monitor student population changes within the school district. As growth, or changes in zoning, or shifts in demographic make-up occur, this may have an effect on student population distribution, which may require the district to revise elementary school boundaries, recommend that new construction occur, or that facility contraction (selective closures) take place.

It is the recommendation of this task force to have the district review student population trends on a three-year basis. This frequency of evaluation should also align with the population studies prepared by the district's consulting demographer.

The Superintendent will report to the Board on a three-year basis, after completing the assessment of the population study, to inform the Board about student population trends within the district.