

Establishing a Design Enrollment with the MSBA

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”) works with local communities to create affordable, sustainable, and energy efficient schools across Massachusetts. A critical early component in achieving these objectives begins with an appropriate design enrollment that positions the District to efficiently meet space capacity needs throughout future enrollment variations. The MSBA then works with each district and its designer to aggressively pursue strategies to create right-sized facilities that avoid unnecessary building area resulting in buildings that are more affordable to construct and less costly to operate and maintain. The MSBA, with the assistance of its consultant, developed a data driven enrollment projection methodology based on the modified grade-to-grade cohort survival methodology (“enrollment methodology”).

During Eligibility Period the district completes an enrollment questionnaire, educational profile, and meets with staff to discuss the potential grade configurations and local issues that may impact school enrollments. Based on submitted information the MSBA generates an enrollment projection using its enrollment methodology and meets with the district to discuss. The process is complete when the district executes a design enrollment certification (one student population being studied) or study enrollment certification (more than one school configuration being studied).

The MSBA’s enrollment methodology generates a baseline enrollment projection using historic enrollment data (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), birth data (Massachusetts Department of Public Health), and female population data and projections (University of Massachusetts’ Donahue Institute) as follows:

- Birth data is used to calculate fertility rates;
- Fertility rates are applied to actual and projected female populations;
- Birth data and Kindergarten enrollment data is used to calculate a birth-to-kindergarten (“B-K”) ratio;
- The B-K ratio is applied to actual and project births to generate Kindergarten enrollments;
- Historic enrollment data is used to calculate grade-to-grade survival ratios (the proportion of students enrolled in one grade and school year to the number of students enrolled in the next grade and school year) to project the number of students in each grade;
- Grade-to-grade survival ratios are applied to actual and projected student enrollments to generate grade 1-12 enrollment projections; and
- The baseline enrollment is calculated using the 10-year average of projected enrollments for the grades to be considered in the proposed feasibility study.

After generating the baseline enrollment projection the MSBA meets with the district to share and review the baseline enrollment projection and to discuss potential grade configurations or school consolidations, and local factors that the district believes may impact enrollment projections. Based on these discussions, and if applicable additional information submitted by the district, the MSBA will evaluate and may apply one or more of the following adjustments to the baseline projection should supplied data demonstrate that an adjustment is warranted:

- Development adjustment should recent development exceed that seen in the past;
- Construction induced enrollment bump that may encourage out of district students to return; and
- Continuous projected growth adjustment should sufficient continued and sustained growth be observed.

The MSBA generates and sends an enrollment letter describing the analysis that includes a certification which is signed and returned to the MSBA should the District agree with the proposed enrollment. Establishing a mutually agreeable enrollment is critical prior to engaging professionals and starting a feasibility study as the design enrollment (or study enrollment should more than one grade configuration be considered in the proposed feasibility study) informs the educational program, which informs the feasibility study which informs the District’s proposed project.