Housing and School Enrollment In New Hampshire:

A Decade of Dramatic Change

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Prepared For: New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority

Prepared By: Applied Economic Research Laconia, New Hampshire

Housing and School Enrollment in New Hampshire: 2000-2010—A Decade of Dramatic Change Summary Report

This analysis was prepared by Applied Economic Research and commissioned by the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. It is the third in a series of NHHFA-sponsored research examining the relationship between housing and school enrollment in New Hampshire.

Conclusions

There is a continuing concern within many New Hampshire communities that new housing will overburden local schools and drive up property taxes. This premise was prevalent in the 1990s, during which New Hampshire's enrollment grew by 41,000, but the first two studies revealed that the majority of that growth came from the local families that were already in the community in existing housing. It was the impact of the baby boom echo, children of baby boomers, that was felt by the local schools.

Today, as those children age out of the school systems, that impact is very different but continues to show that demographic forces have a greater influence on enrollment than housing construction.

- Between 2000 and 2010 enrollment in New Hampshire's schools declined by 21,600 despite the growth of 44,300 occupied housing units. Demographic forces are a more powerful determinant of school enrollment than housing construction;
- All but 31 of the state's 161 school districts experienced declining enrollment from 2001 to 2010. Of those districts experiencing enrollment growth, only 8 districts added 100 or more students;
- Fewer than one-third of New Hampshire's housing units have someone under age 18 living in them;
- Family households are on the decline in New Hampshire while a growing number of housing units are occupied by only one person, or several unrelated people living together;
- Based on a case study analysis of new housing in four New Hampshire communities, the typical new single family home generates 0.64 public school students and new multi-family units generate 0.17 public school students per unit.

These trends are well documented and pervasive. Communities across the nation are grappling with the effects of declining enrollment, including declining state aid (formulas are often based on enrollment), closing schools, consolidating school districts and seeking out alternative uses for abandoned school properties. Enrollment declines do not necessarily mean lower costs, because many education costs are fixed. In some settings—Portland, Oregon, for example—communities are considering policies to subsidize families in the face of high housing costs, so as to minimize enrollment declines. This is the opposite of the current thinking in many New Hampshire communities.

The experience of Applied Economic Research is that many New Hampshire communities welcome age-restricted housing without children, while discouraging the development of new family housing, because of a concern about the impact of new housing on local education costs. The analysis in this study indicates that many New Hampshire communities, large and small, should reconsider this posture. In

many districts the enrollment issue has become one of coping with declining enrollment rather than accommodating rising enrollment. Many districts in the state now have excess capacity in their schools. Projections call for continuing enrollment losses due to demographic factors and slower growth, overall. In this context, adding more students may help some communities maintain healthy school populations and generate new property tax revenues, without a sharp increase in school costs.

Prior Studies

In the spring of 2004 NHHFA published the results of AER's first analysis of the relationship between new housing construction and school enrollment in New Hampshire. The research was published as a monograph in the spring 2004 issue of NHHFA's Housing Headlines newsletter.[1] That analysis, entitled "New Residential Development and School Enrollment: Just the Facts," addressed the conventional wisdom that new housing is the underlying cause of what had been sharply rising school enrollment in New Hampshire during the 1990s—which witnessed school enrollment in the state rise by 41,000 between 1990 and 2000. The conventional wisdom held that (1) essentially this entire enrollment bulge was attributable to new housing construction and that (2) the typical new single family home generated at least two students per unit. This brief analysis found that rising enrollment was at least partially attributable to demographic shifts—the children of baby boomers over-populated New Hampshire schools during the 1990s—and the typical single family home in the state generated 0.51 public school students. It concluded that "…the Conventional Wisdom substantially overstates the enrollment new housing is likely to generate."

That monograph struck a responsive chord within the housing industry, and among planning/school boards. As a result, NHHFA sponsored a more detailed analysis which examined year 2000 Census data and growth/demographic trends in more detail and incorporated a case study analysis looking at the unit by unit school generation from new housing in four New Hampshire communities.[2] The results of that analysis were published in May of 2005 in a report entitled "Housing and School Enrollment in New Hampshire: An Expanded View." The major findings of that analysis were:

- ***Demographic forces had a more powerful impact than growth on school enrollment.*** School enrollment was expanding in New Hampshire in the 1990s because of growth and development, but also because of powerful demographic forces. The baby boom generation is the largest age group in the state. During the 1990s and early in the 2000s decade, New Hampshire enrollment mushroomed primarily because the children of baby boomers fell in the school age category.

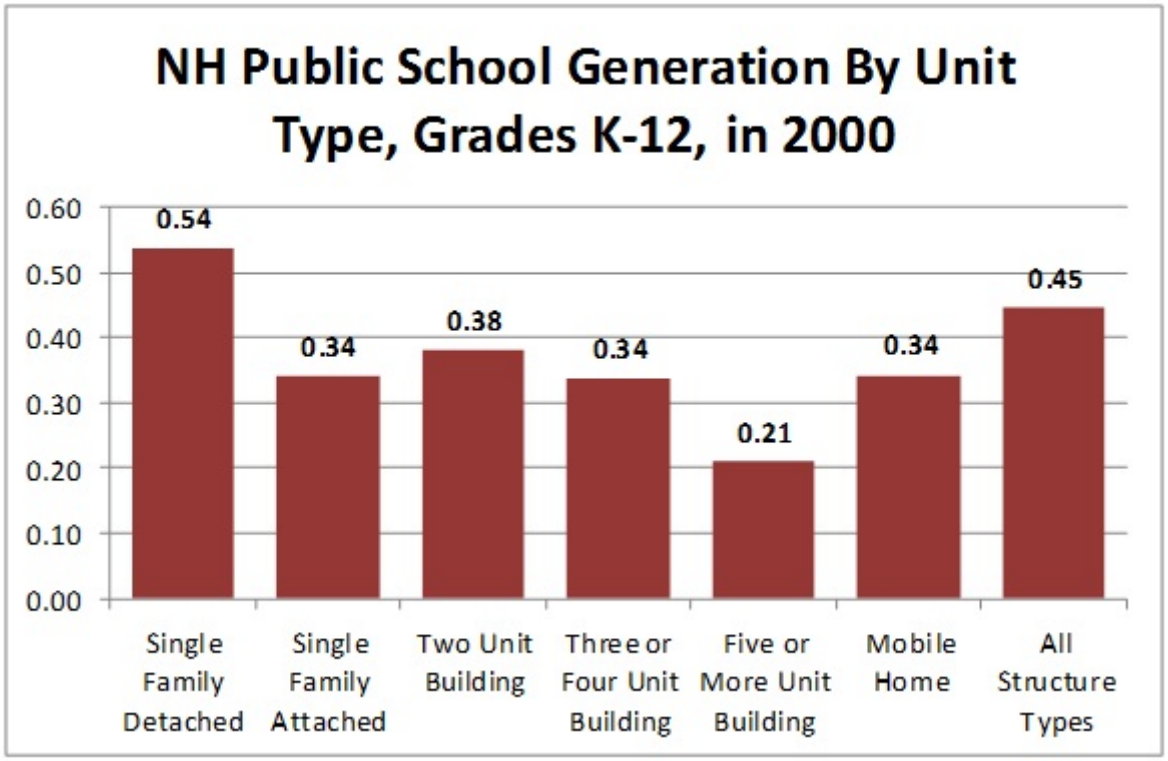
- ***New Hampshire's period of rapid enrollment growth was all but over.*** The New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning projected that New Hampshire's total population would increase by 157,100 during the 2000-2010 decade (in fact, population increased by just over 80,000). School age population, in contrast, was projected to increase by only 5,500 (in fact, the state's school age population declined by 12,400 during the decade). This was in contrast to a school age population growth of 39,700 in the 1990s. Baby boomer children were graduating from local public schools. The coming generation of new parents was seen to be much smaller than the baby boomers. As such, there were fewer children entering public schools.

[1] See http://www.nhhfa.org/rl_docs/housingdata/school_enrollment/SchoolEnrollment2004.pdf
[2] See http://www.nhhfa.org/rl_docs/housingdata/school_enrollment/SchoolStudy.pdf

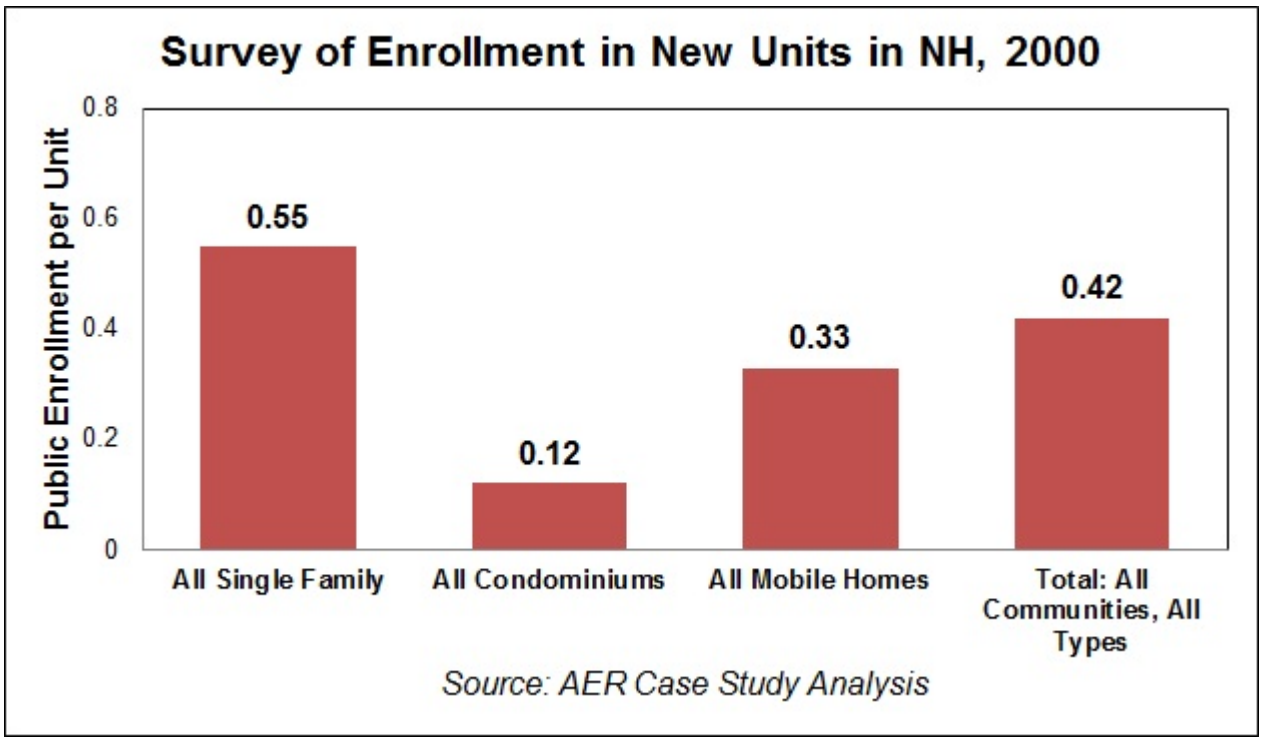
- ***Total public school enrollment was seen as beginning to decline in NH.*** First grade enrollment was declining. As these smaller classes progressed through the grades, the pressure on growth in total enrollment was expected to subside.

- ***Communities that were not adding a significant number of new housing units were expected to see declining enrollment in the following years, because of these demographic forces.***

- ***New Hampshire's occupied housing units generated an average of only 0.45 students in the year 2000.*** Census data, based on a sample of New Hampshire households in 2000, indicated New Hampshire enrollment by type of housing unit (including new and existing units) was well below the two children per housing unit assumed by the "conventional wisdom."



- ***Most new housing unit types were found to generate students at about the same rate as existing units.*** AER supplemented Census data by conducting a unit-by-unit tally of school enrollment in 3,400 housing units built between 1998 and 2004 in Bedford, Hudson, Lebanon and Rochester. When viewed in relationship to the previous chart, the following chart shows how the rates of public school enrollment generated by new housing units are similar to the rates of older units.



With the exception of the case study generation data, that analysis examined enrollment data that is now more than 10 years old. As noted above the state's total population and school age population growth during the decade fell well short of anticipated growth. At the time of that study, school enrollment was just beginning to show signs of ebbing—whether projected enrollment would fall in line with expectations was a matter of speculation at that time.

This current analysis updates the prior study by:

- Incorporating results of the 2010 US Census;
- Analyzing 2000-2010 enrollment trends;
- Examining housing construction trends;
- Conducting a new case study analysis examining enrollment generated by units built between 2005 and 2011;
- Performing a school enrollment projection incorporating all of the above.

The results of the analysis are set forth in several documents:

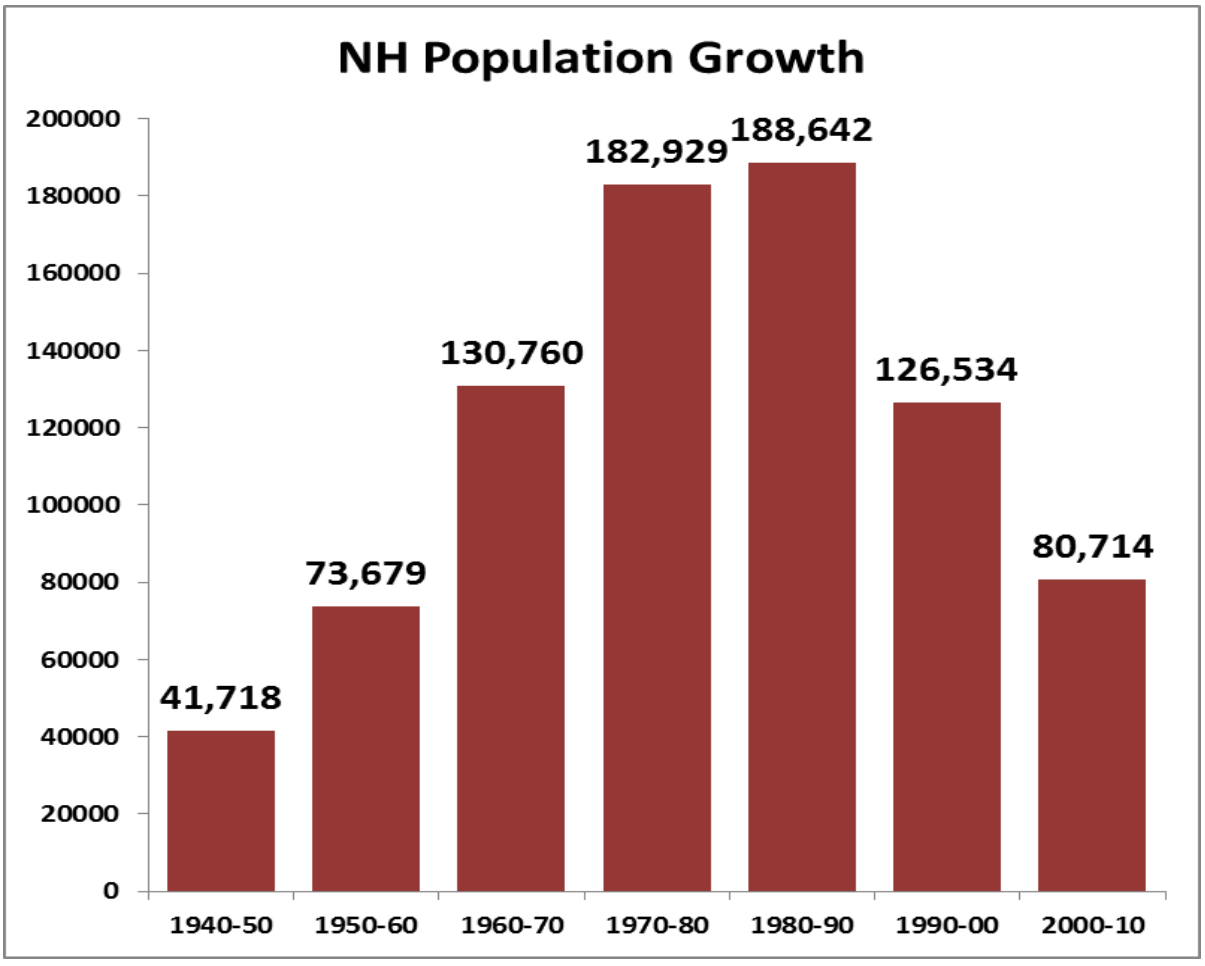
- This summary report;
- A Powerpoint presentation showing study findings;
- A technical appendix describing the case study analysis and enrollment projections along with supporting data and a brief compilation of research addressing the relationship between housing, demographic trends and school enrollment.

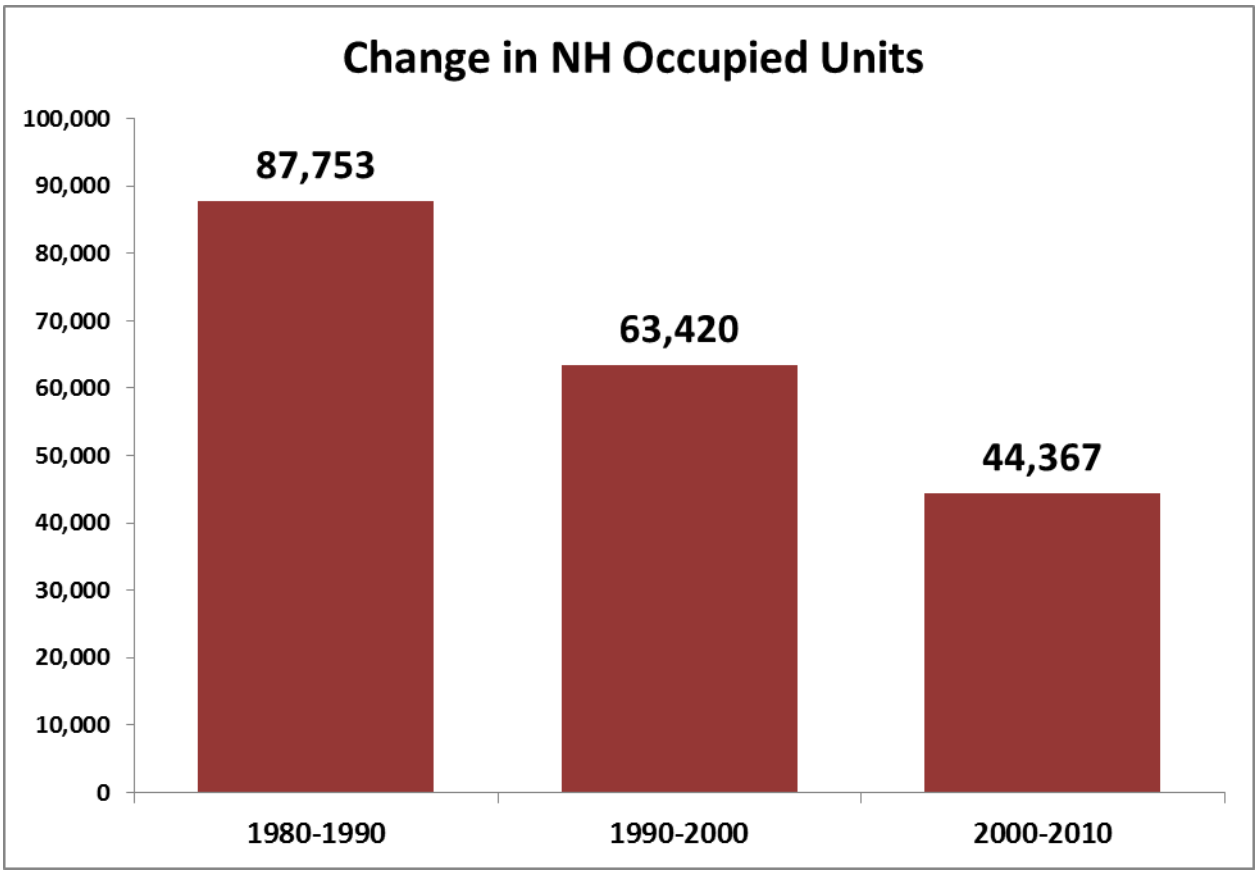
Major Findings and Conclusions

The major finding of this analysis is that the past decade stands in stark contrast to the 1990s in terms of overall population growth, housing construction activity, demographics and the implications for school enrollment in the state.

Growth Patterns

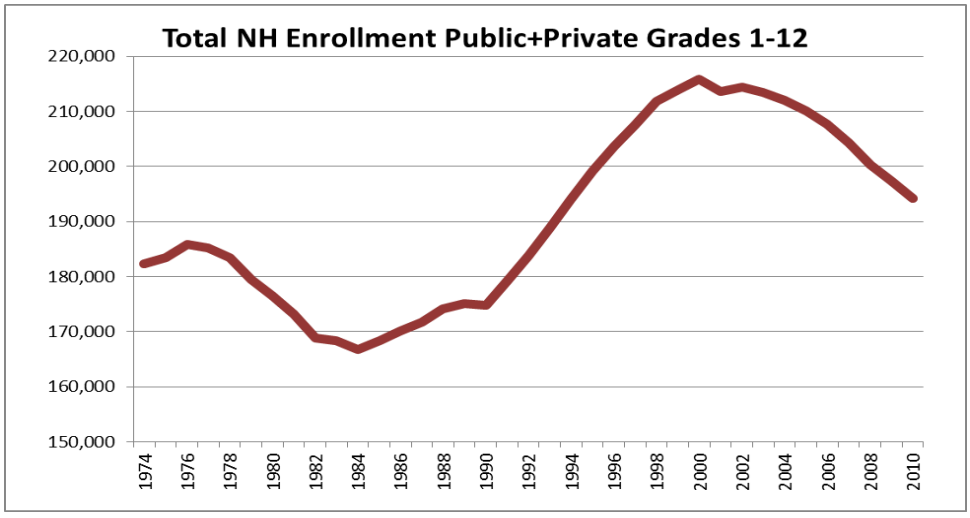
New Hampshire has long prided itself on being a fast-growth state, one of the fastest growing states east of the Mississippi River. The state's growth, however, slowed markedly during the past decade. It was less than half that of the boom years (1970-90) and a third slower than in the 1990s. This slower population growth necessarily means that the pace of housing construction declined as well.



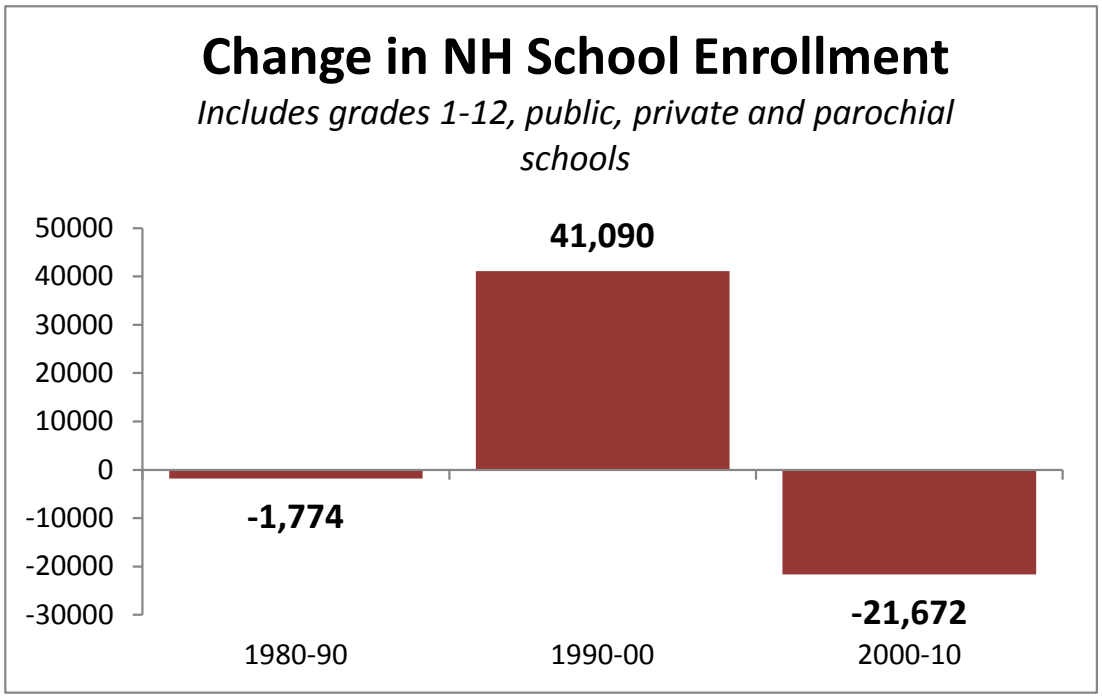


Source: US Census

This slower overall growth in population and housing units, in and of itself, would mean that enrollment *would continue to grow*, but at a slower rate than in prior decades. In fact, however, something else is also going on. Enrollment declined sharply during the decade, in spite of the state adding over 80,000 new residents and witnessing 44,000 new occupied housing units.



Source: NH Dept. of Education



Source: NH Dept of Education

Enrollment change was dramatically different during the past decade in contrast to the 1990s. Whereas enrollment mushroomed in the 1990s, it declined dramatically between 2000 and 2010—a swing of over 62,000 students between a gain of 41,000 in the 1990s and a decline of over 21,500 in the ensuing decade. The decline probably would have been yet more pronounced apart from a state policy changing the dropout age from 16 to 18 during the decade.

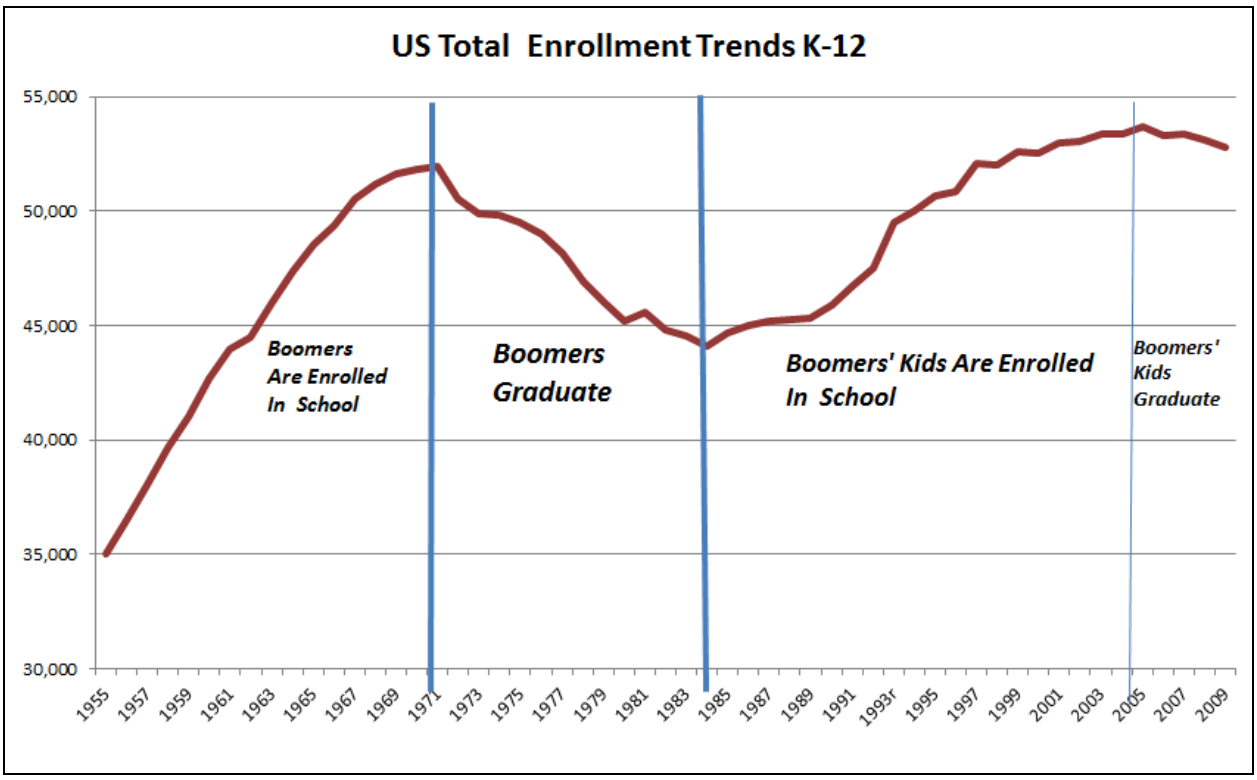
As a result, the overcrowding anxiety that school districts suffered a decade ago has aburptly transformed into difficult decisions about possible school closing and consolidation. In some communities, this is beginning to transform the way planning boards view new housing proposals. There is less resistance to new housing based on school impacts than was the case when AER's prior studies were undertaken, but some communities still view new family housing with a jaundiced eye because of *perceived* impacts on local education costs.

The Underlying Forces

What forces underlie this unprecedented shift in just one decade? Several factors are at play. One is the state's slower overall growth, cited above. Demographics—the changing age structure of the state's population—is another important element.

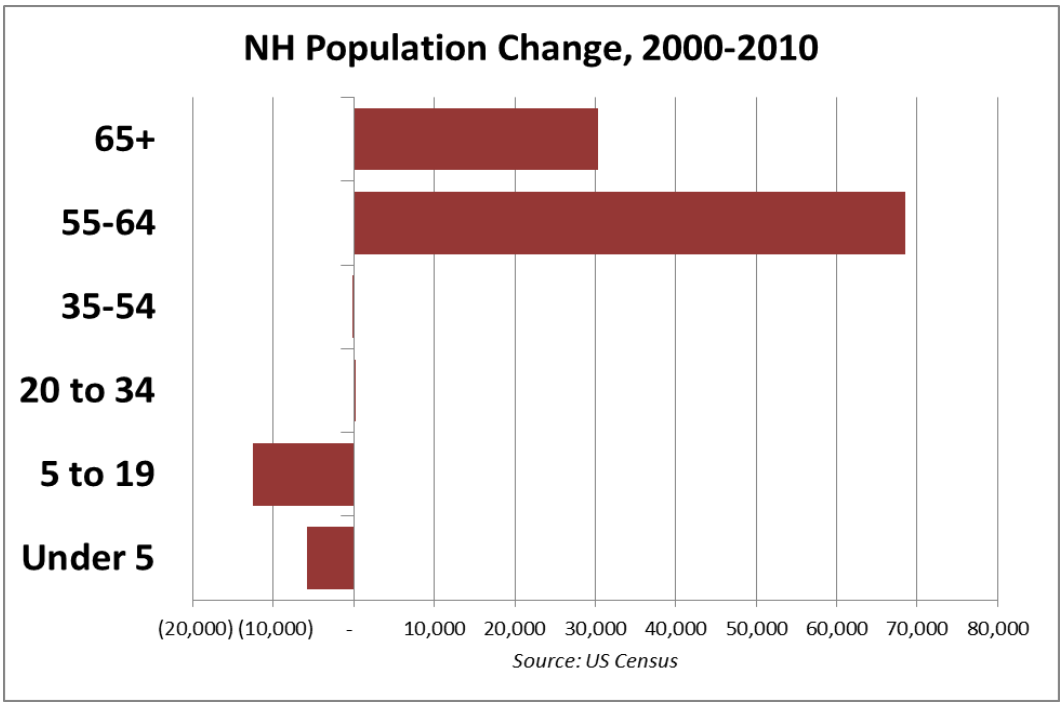
Baby boomers

The aging of the baby boom generation, the largest demographic group in the country, is the driving demographic force that affects a wide swath of population and economic issues. Much has been made of the implications of aging baby boomers. There is another element of consideration as well—the impact of aging boomers on school enrollment. In terms of school enrollment, four periods can be discerned in enrollment trends: boomers are enrolled in school; boomers graduate; boomers' kids are enrolled in school; and boomers' kids graduate.



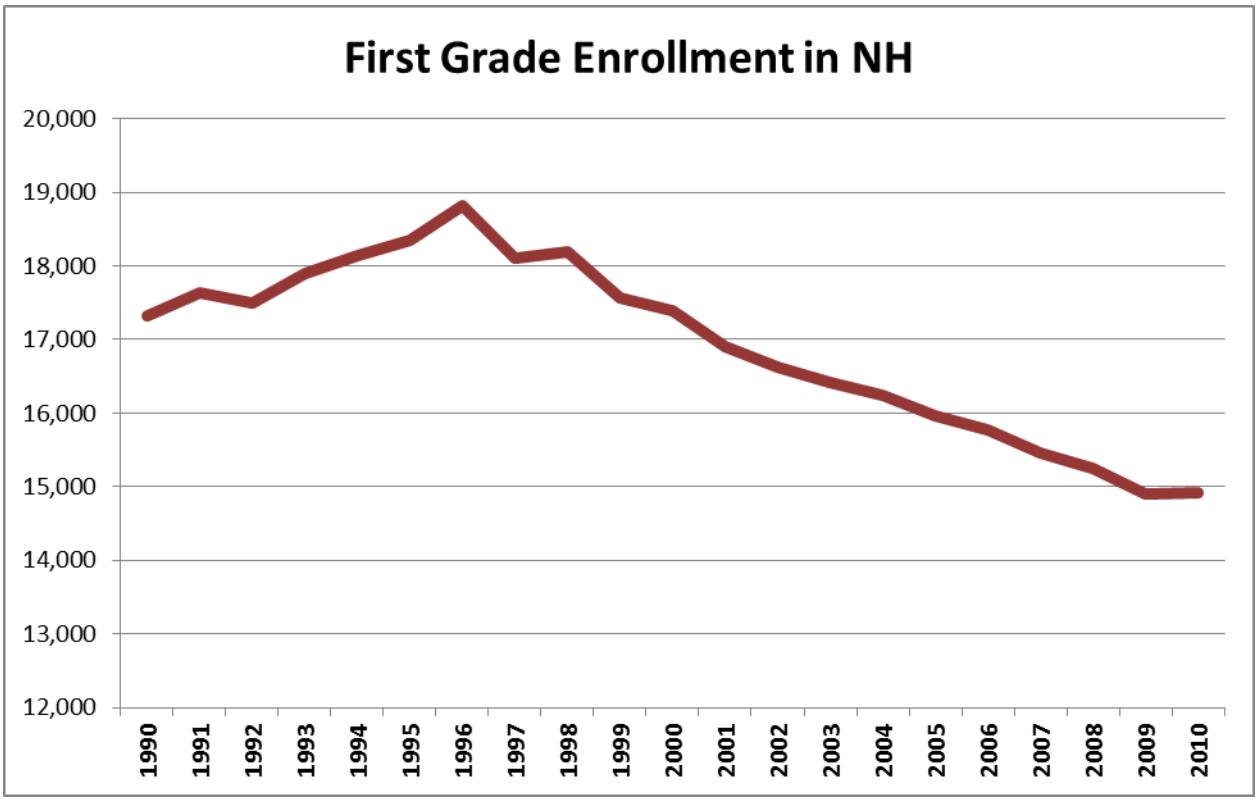
Source: US Dept. of Education

The most dramatic statement of the impact of an aging population is revealed in age-specific population trends. The following graph shows that all of the state's population growth in the past decade was in the over age 55 categories.



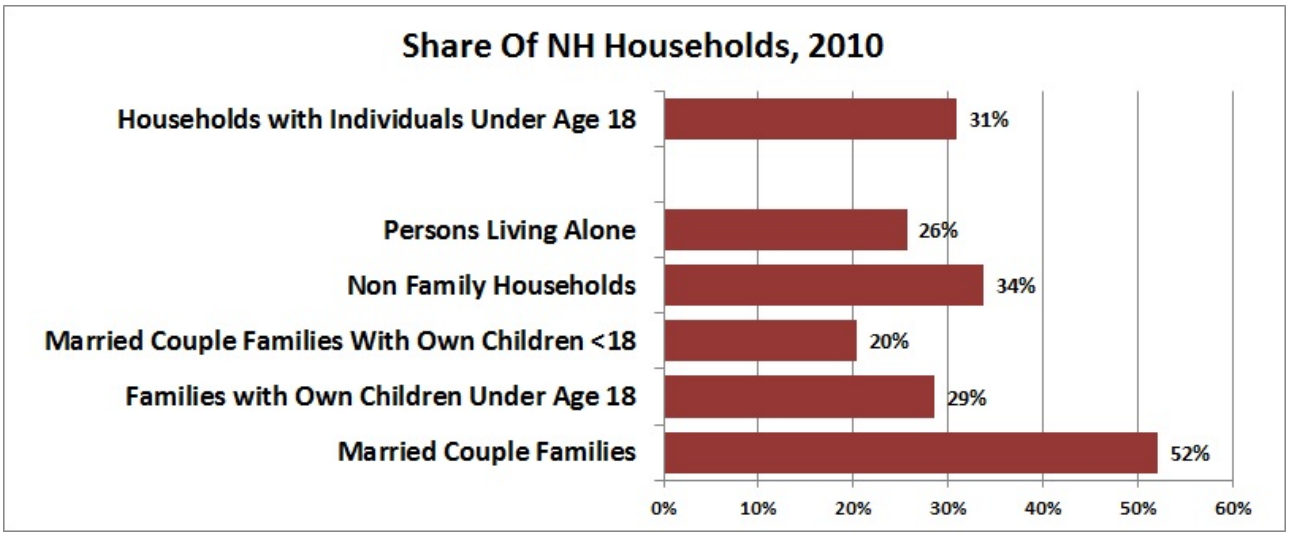
Population within the mid-life age groups (ages 35-54) and young households (ages 20-34), which are likely to have school age children, was stable. Population in the under age 20 categories declined.

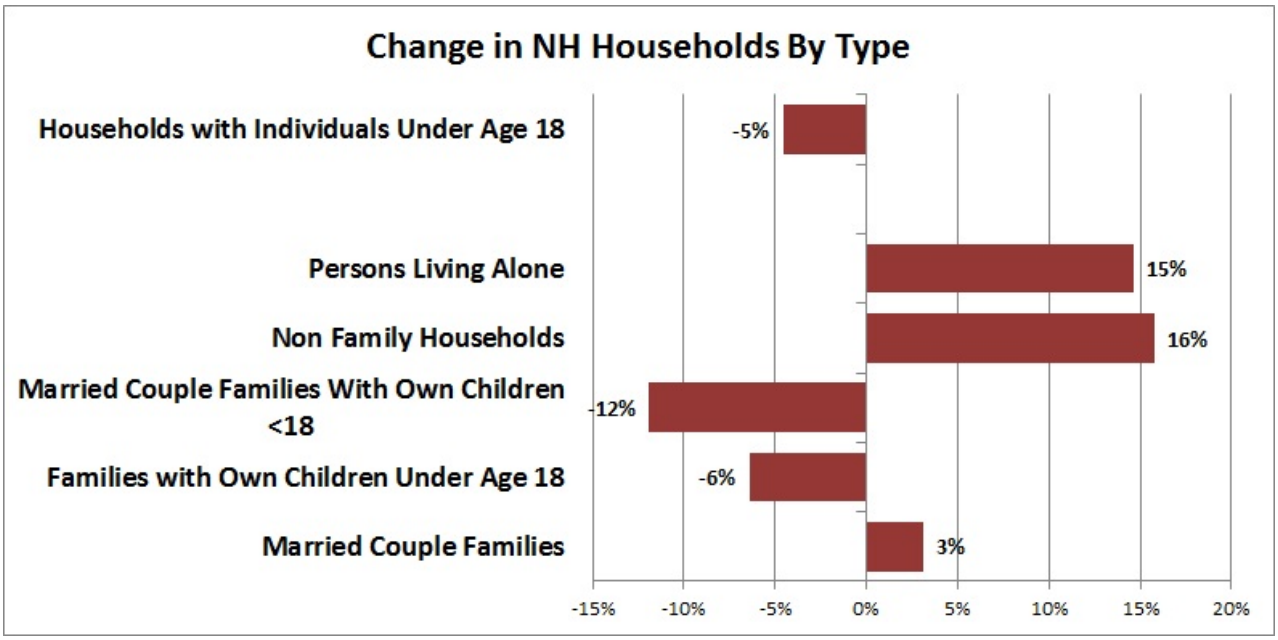
We are now in the era when the school classes of children of baby boomers (boomers are now generally 45-65 years old) are graduating and being replaced by classes that are smaller in size than graduating classes, according to data compiled by the New Hampshire Department of Education. Consequently, enrollment is dropping, despite rising overall population in the state. These smaller entering class sizes will influence enrollment during the current decade, serving to moderate enrollment growth as these smaller classes move through the grade levels.



Changing Household Composition

An additional factor structuring enrollment is the changing composition of housing occupancy (households) in the state. AER noted in its 2005 study that the "Brady Bunch" household—mom, dad and a flock of children—is decidedly a thing of the past. Understanding who lives in New Hampshire's housing units is an important element in understanding the relationship between housing activity and school enrollment.





Source: US Census

It is striking to note that:

- Only one in five of the state's housing units is occupied by a married couple family with children under age 18;
- There are almost as many housing units occupied by only one person (26%) as those with someone under age 18 (31%);
- Less than one-third of the state's occupied housing units have someone under age 18.

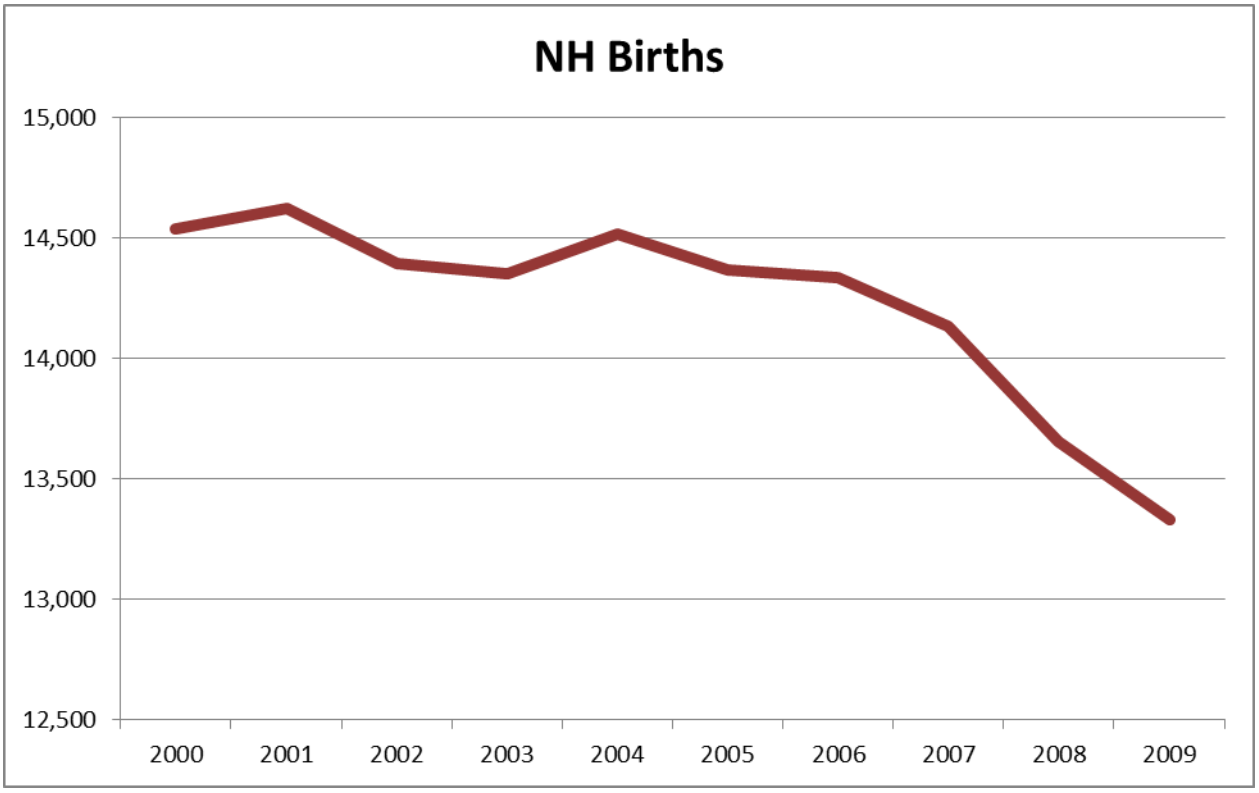
Moreover, the changes wrought during the past decade show housing occupancy moving yet further away from the "Brady Bunch" household. Non-family households (generally one person households or

households with two or more unrelated individuals) along with persons living alone are the fastest growing type of households—and they have essentially no school age children. Conversely, the households with children under age 18 are declining.

A Look to the Future: Projected School Enrollment

The past three decades show starkly contrasting enrollment trends—stability in the 1980s, rapid enrollment growth in the 1990s, and a sharp drop in enrollment in the past decade. What can we expect going forward?

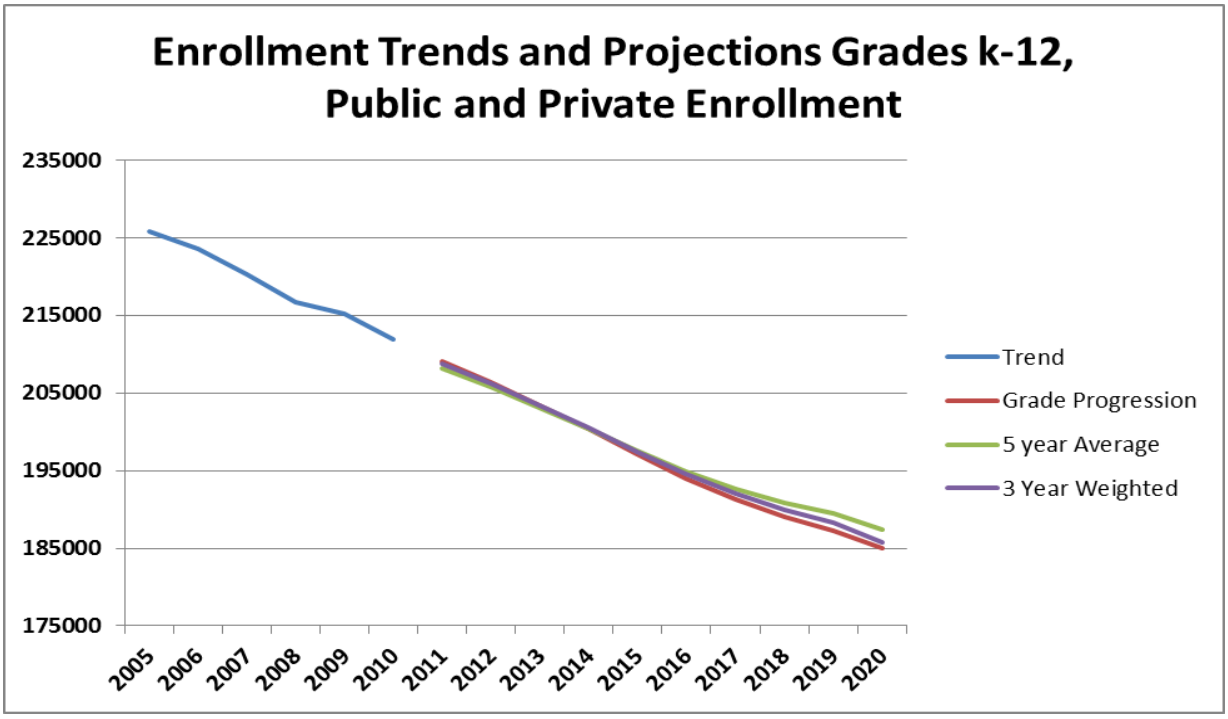
The first indication is provided by examining the number of births in the state:



Births have dropped sharply since the middle of the decade because there are fewer women in the child bearing age categories. Younger households are postponing having children, and when they do have children, they generally choose to have fewer children than their parents did.

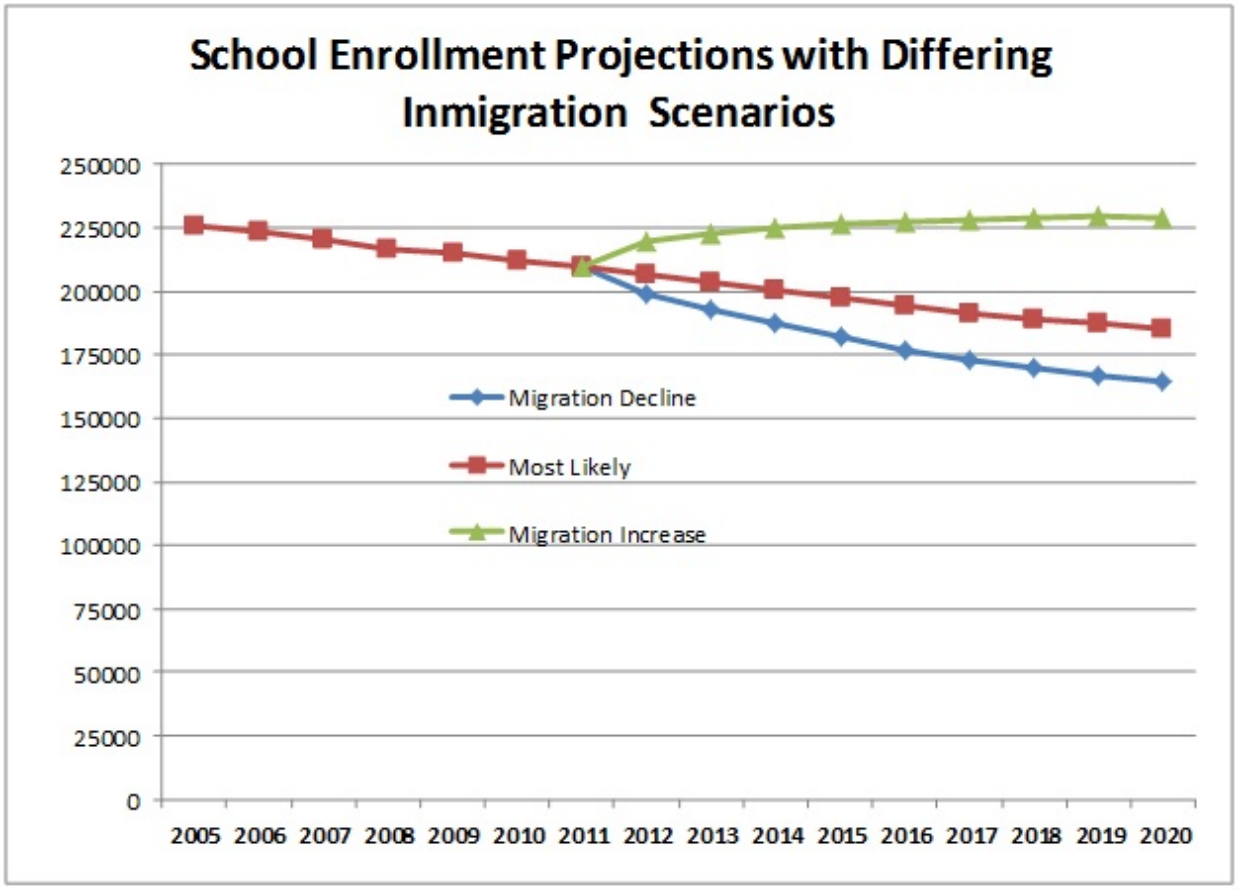
The second element structuring future enrollment is migration into the state. As noted earlier in this report, the state's population growth is slowing. In part, this slower growth is attributable to slower employment growth in New Hampshire, which is reducing migration into the state. This may be a temporary phenomenon attributable to the national recession, but the fact is that the state had its fastest job growth in the 1980s and job growth has been slower in each succeeding decade. A dramatic change in employment growth/migration could occur, but it is not the most likely scenario going forward.

Given declining births, the demographic shifts cited above, and recently slower migration, it is reasonable to expect that school enrollment will not expand rapidly in the coming years. In fact, our projection of future enrollment indicates that declines are likely to continue going forward at about the same pace as in recent years in the absence of a major shift in migration.[3]



AER also examined the impact of both declining and increasing migration into the state to test the sensitivity of the projections. AER reduced the cohort projection by two percent to allow for lower migration into the state (the state has been experiencing net out-migration recently) and raised the cohort by four to allow for more rapid migration into the state. The graph below compares the school enrollment impact of three possible migration scenarios: lower migration, consistent migration, and increased migration.

[3] The methodology aged the current school enrollment by grade and incorporated recent birth data to derive this projection.



In effect, even with a significant increase in migration, the state would not experience sharp enrollment growth—with enrollment returning to year 2005 levels if migration rose significantly. Higher migration than what was assumed cannot be totally ruled out, but it is unlikely.

Enrollment per Occupied Housing Unit

Planning boards and developers have an acute interest in the rate of school enrollment per occupied housing unit. Planning boards have a long-standing concern about the impact of new housing on school enrollment and local education costs, which typically consume two-thirds of local property tax bills and have been rising sharply, despite declining enrollment in most districts.

There are three principal indicators of school enrollment per housing unit examined in this study:

- Decennial Census data;
- Sample data from the American Community Survey (which has largely replaced the Decennial Census for detailed tabulations);
- A survey of new housing units in four New Hampshire communities and the enrollment they generate.

Census data reveals a significant decline in enrollment per occupied unit during the past decade in New Hampshire:

NH Public School Enrollment Trends

				Change 2000-2010	
	2000	2005	2010	Number	Percent
Total School Enrollment	205,300	205,800	194,000	**-11,300**	-5.5%
Pre-K/Kindergarten	11,500	13,100	15,100	3,600	31.3%
Grades 1-12	193,800	192,700	178,900	-14,900	-7.7%
Occupied Housing Units	474,600	510,300	519,000	44,400	9.4%
Enrollment per Occupied Unit					
Total Public School Enrollment	**0.43**	**0.40**	**0.37**		
Pre-K	0.02	0.03	0.03		
Grades 1-12	0.41	0.38	0.34		

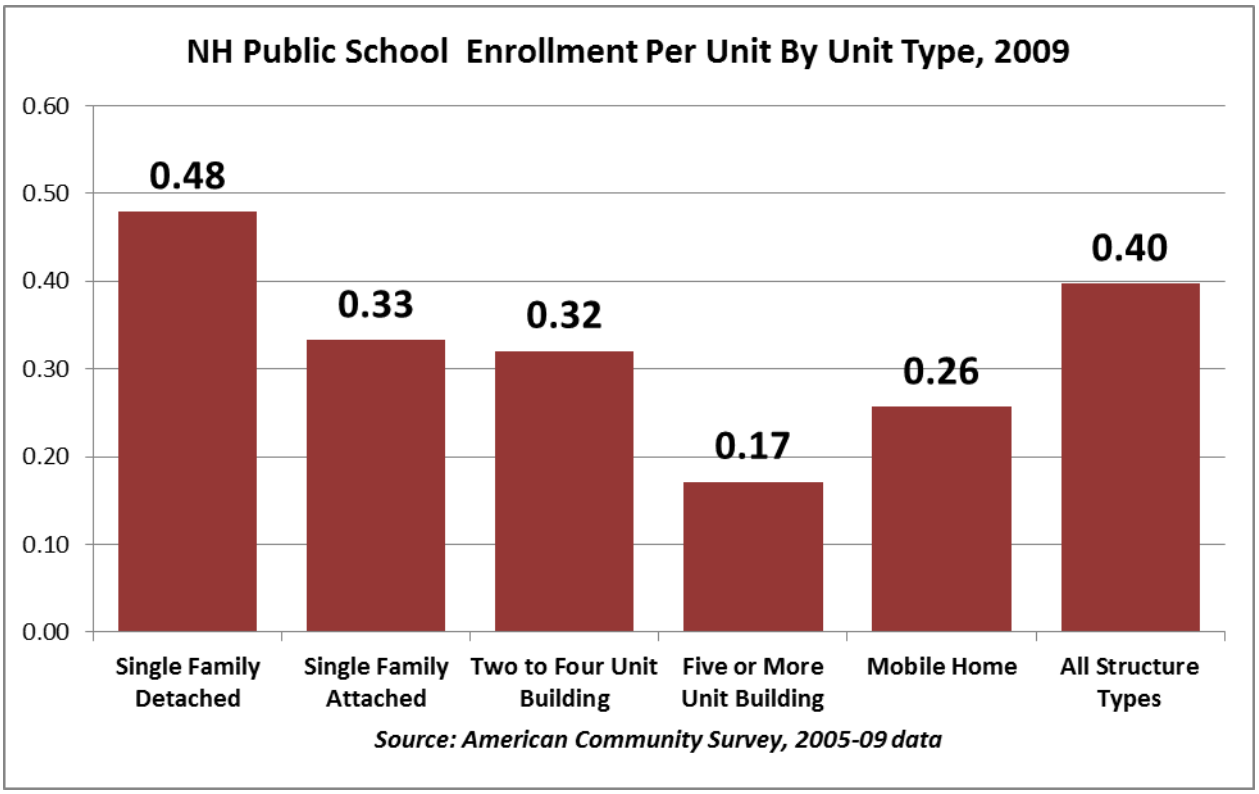
Source NH Dept. Of Education (enrollment) Census
(Occupied Units 2000, 2010, NHHFA (Occupied Units 2005), AER
Enrollments include students in Public District Schools, Public Academies, Joint Maintenance Agreement and Public Charter Schools.

Public school enrollment in grades 1-12 fell by 14,900[4] while the number of occupied housing units in the state jumped by 44,400. As a result, the overall enrollment ratio fell from 0.43 public school students per unit in the year 2000 to 0.37 students per unit in the year 2010. Had enrollment remained at the 2000 ratio in the year 2010, there would have been almost 30,000 more students enrolled in 2010. Clearly the demographic forces cited above have had a major influence on enrollment in the state's public schools.

Based on this data, the typical occupied housing unit (single family, multifamily and manufactured) generated an average of 0.37 students, or one student for about every three occupied housing units.

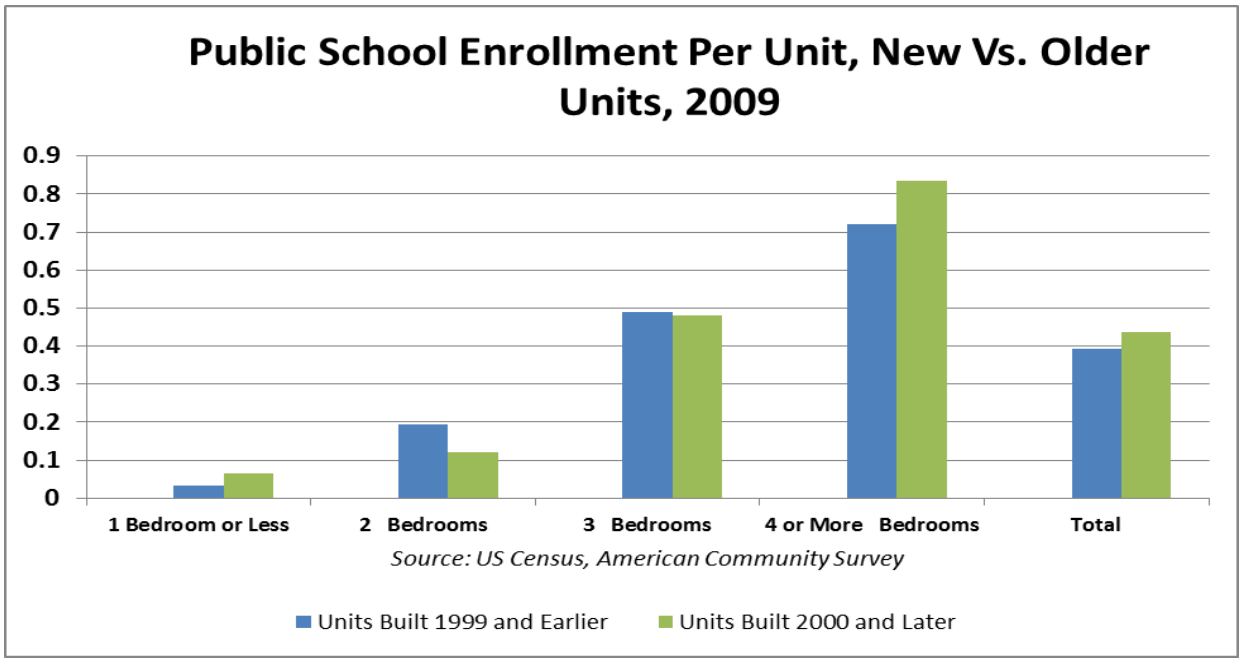
The American Community Survey (ACS) queries a sample of households every year to abstract detailed information about American households. The data permit a breakdown of enrollment by housing unit type. The ACS data abstracted by NHHFA staff indicate:

[4] The rise in Kindergarten enrollment is attributable in part to the state beginning to mandate kindergarten during the decade.



The survey of new housing units in four New Hampshire communities reveals a modestly higher overall rate of enrollment—.40 students per unit versus the .37 students per unit cited in the preceding paragraph—but is generally consistent with the Decennial Census data. The ratios fall from .48 students per unit in single family units to .17 students per unit in larger (five or more units) multifamily structures.

The survey revealed that new larger units (four bedrooms or more) generate somewhat higher student enrollment factors than older units, but otherwise there was not much difference between new and older units. This similarity in student enrollment rates is illustrated in the following chart.



Interestingly, even new units with four or more bedrooms on average generate less than one student per unit.

Regional Demographic and Enrollment Trends

The two broad forces structuring declining enrollment in New Hampshire's schools are slower overall population growth and an aging population. These forces are evidenced to varying degrees in each of the state's counties. Overall, school age population losses are most pronounced in the state's North Country, because overall population growth is slower than the state average and the population there is aging faster than in the state. This is particularly true in Coos County, which has seen a loss of younger households because of declining job opportunities. The state's more urban central counties (Merrimack and Hillsborough) have experienced less pronounced enrollment losses, probably because their employment base is more appealing to young families.

	Populaton Change			
	1990-00		2000-10	
	Total Populaton	School Age Population	Total Populaton	School Age Population
Lakes/North Country	11.4%	10.8%	5.9%	-10.5%
Central	13.4%	21.6%	5.8%	-3.7%
Seacoast/I93	11.3%	19.0%	7.4%	-2.6%
Connecticut Valley	6.7%	8.1%	7.1%	-7.5%
New Hampshire	***11.4%***	***17.3%***	***6.5%***	***-4.6%***

The NHHFA staff has analyzed school enrollment per occupied housing unit figures on a sub-state basis using the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data from the American Community Survey. These data

cannot be analyzed directly at the county level in New Hampshire due to sampling errors that result from smaller area delineations, but nonetheless there is sub-state level data that can be reported. Overall, enrollment has declined in each of the PUMS areas, with the least pronounced declines experienced in the state's urban areas (Metropolitan Manchester and Eastern Rockingham County (Portsmouth, Dover, Rochester, etc.)). Enrollment-per-unit figures for 2009 are highest in the rural areas of Hillsborough county and Western Rockingham County (due to a preponderance of larger, newer homes appealing to families with children). This same pattern was true in the year 2000.

Average School Enrollment Per Unit In New Hampshire (Public Enrollment Only)

	Total: 2009	Total: 2000	Change
Grade K - 12 (All Unit Types)			
PUMA 1 - Coos & Grafton Co.	0.35	0.40	-0.05
PUMA 2 - Carroll & Belknap Co.	0.39	0.41	-0.02
PUMA 3 - Strafford Co.	0.36	0.43	-0.07
PUMA 4 - Merrimack Co.	0.38	0.45	-0.07
PUMA 5 - Sullivan & Cheshire Co.	0.35	0.44	-0.09
PUMA 6 - Hillsborough Co. Non-Metro	0.50	0.57	-0.07
PUMA 7&8 - Manchester Metro Area	0.43	0.45	-0.02
PUMA 9 - Nashua Metro Area	0.39	0.46	-0.07
PUMA 10 - Western Rockingham Co.	0.46	0.52	-0.06
PUMA 11 - Eastern Rockingham Co.	0.36	0.37	-0.01

The PUMS data below compares school generation by unit type within sub-state areas.

Average Public School Enrollment Per Unit In New Hampshire

	1 Bedroom or Less	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms	4 or More Bedrooms	Total: 2009
Grade K - 12 (All Unit Types)					
PUMA 1 - Coos & Grafton Co.	0.03	0.20	0.47	0.59	0.35
PUMA 2 - Carroll & Belknap Co.	0.06	0.17	0.47	0.71	0.39
PUMA 3 - Strafford Co.	#N/A	0.19	0.49	0.65	0.36
PUMA 4 - Merrimack Co.	#N/A	0.18	0.47	0.75	0.38
PUMA 5 - Sullivan & Cheshire Co.	#N/A	0.14	0.43	0.69	0.35
PUMA 6 - Hillsborough Co. Non-Metro	#N/A	0.20	0.51	0.86	0.50
PUMA 7&8 - Manchester Metro Area	0.05	0.22	0.55	0.79	0.43
PUMA 9 - Nashua Metro Area	#N/A	0.19	0.49	0.74	0.39
PUMA 10 - Western Rockingham Co.	0.07	0.19	0.53	0.78	0.46
PUMA 11 - Eastern Rockingham Co.	0.05	0.18	0.44	0.67	0.36

The rural areas of Hillsborough and Western Rockingham County tend to generate more students per unit after controlling for number of bedrooms, indicating that there are more family households in those areas than in other areas in the state. Overall, however, the regional variation in enrollment per unit by number of bedrooms is relatively modest—the broad demographic forces structuring enrollment are evident throughout the state and its sub-areas.

Case Study Analysis

A sample of new units built in New Hampshire (exclusive of age-restricted units) is probably the most specific indicator of school generation per new housing unit. AER selected four case study communities:

Belmont was selected because it is located outside of the fast growth southern tier, but nonetheless experienced enough new housing construction to provide insight into enrollment in new housing units.

Milford was selected because it is a fast growth southern New Hampshire community in the greater Nashua region.

Rochester was selected because it is a rapidly growing community on the fringe of the state's Seacoast region. Unlike the other case study communities, it is more heavily populated and a city with a diverse economic base.

Windham was selected because it is a rapidly growing community in the I-93 corridor.

In the four case study communities, 1,608 units were identified as being built between 2005 and 2011. These units generated a total of 777 public school students or 0.48 students per unit, on average—consistent with (if a bit higher than) the Census and American Community Survey figures. We attribute this to a mix of units that favored three and four bedroom single family units in the case study communities as compared to the overall housing mix in the state, which has a larger number of smaller, rental units in the overall composition of occupied units.

This table shows the students per unit results, broken down by unit type.

Case Study Community School Generation Multipliers

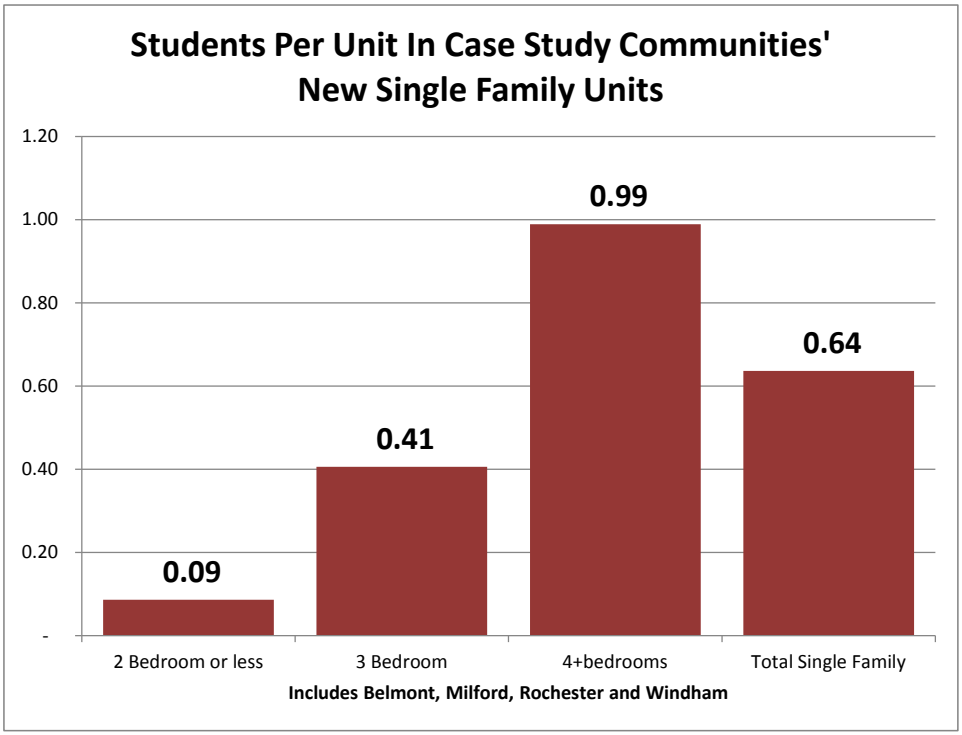
	Students	*Units*	*Students per Unit*
Multi Family*			
2 Bedroom or Less	15	281	0.05
3 Bedroom+	27	88	0.31
Total Multi Family	***77***	***441***	***0.17***
Single Family			
2 Bedroom or less	7	81	0.09
3 Bedroom	208	512	0.41
4+bedrooms	456	461	0.99
Total Single Family	***671***	***1054***	***0.64***
Manufactured Housing*	***29***	***113***	***0.26***
Total All Unit Types	***777***	***1608***	***0.48***

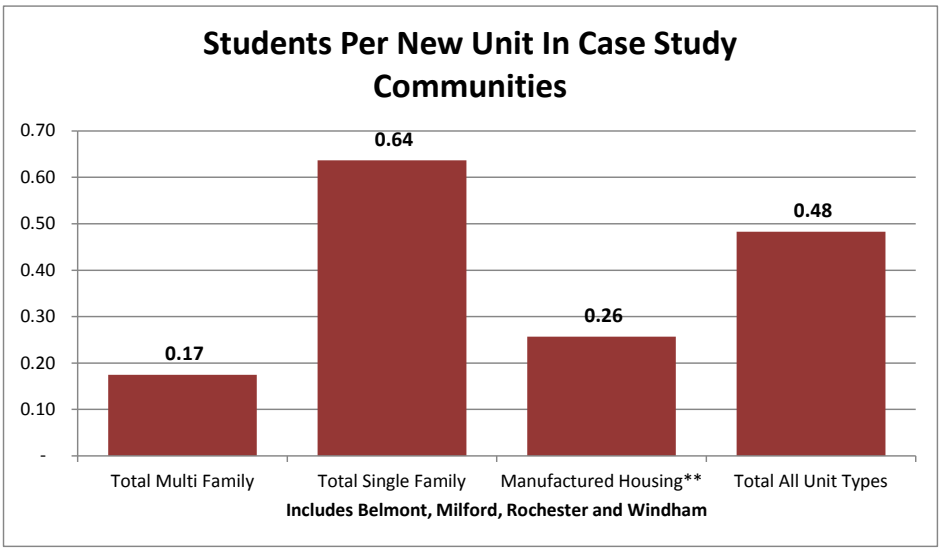
* Bedroom count was not specified or there was an insufficient number of units to tablulate results by number of bedrooms in Belmont and Milford for multi family units. The multi family figurs from these communities are, however, included in the multi family total figures.

** Data from Rochester only

Note: All Figures Exclude Age-Restrcited Units

The following graphs provide a side-by-side comparison of how many school enrollments are generated by new single family units and by all types of new units in the case study communities.





The case study communities do show a variation in enrollment generation overall and by unit type. For example, among single family units the multipliers are:

Public School Students per Unit in New Single Family Units

	3 Bedroom	*4 Bedroom*	*Total*
Belmont	0.53	0.95	0.53
Milford	0.44	0.99	0.64
Rochester	0.36	0.54	0.37
Windham	0.46	1.06	0.87
Combined	0.41	0.99	0.64

Excludes age-restricted units

The highest multipliers surfaced in Windham. Overall, new single family homes in Windham generated 0.87 students per unit. This is primarily because newer units in Windham were more likely to have four bedrooms (the generators in Windham are not markedly different when examined by the number of bedrooms in a unit). Conversely, the generators were lower in Rochester, both on an overall basis and by number of bedrooms. This indicates that Rochester may be less likely to attract families with school age children than the other case study communities. Additionally, Rochester does have a parochial school, whereas the case study addressed only public school enrollment.

Care should be taken in reading too much into any one community's figures, although overall there is a large enough base of units among the case study communities to provide insight into the relationship between new housing and school enrollment. In New Hampshire's smaller communities, a single development can skew the results. For example, a new rental development in Belmont had a disproportionate number of units with three bedrooms. Moreover, that development was specifically intended to be occupied by families with children. Both of these factors resulted in higher multipliers than would have been the case for a conventional, market rate rental development which would have a preponderance of two bedroom units.

Overall, however, the results of the case study analysis are consistent with NHHFA's prior research and Census-based enrollment indicators. Therefore, they are seen as providing a reasonable indication of the influence of new housing construction on school enrollment in New Hampshire.

Policy Considerations

For several decades New Hampshire communities have been concerned about the cost of educating new students who occupy new housing units. This concern was intense as the decade of the 1990s drew to a close and continues to be a concern in many communities today. This has led some communities to discourage new family housing, while welcoming age-restricted units.

This study finds, however, that declining school enrollment is pervasive in New Hampshire. Overall total enrollment in the state's public and private schools fell by more than 21,000 during the last decade. All but 37 of the state's 161 school districts experienced declining enrollment between 2000 and 2010. Today finds 20 of the state's school districts with fewer than 100 students, raising questions about their economic, if not educational, viability.

Declining enrollment is not unique to New Hampshire, but rather is a national pattern with only limited exceptions, such as when a state is experiencing rapid overall population growth or has sizable growth in its immigrant population. Declining enrollment has not, however, resulted in lower costs, because many education costs are fixed—maintaining schools, staffing a classroom, etc. In general, costs have continued to rise, despite enrollment declines.

This has led some school districts and communities in some states to recruit new families with children to reverse the pattern of declining enrollment. This is particularly true when the state is a major contributor to local education costs. In those settings, when enrollment declines, state contributions (which are often based on the number of students in a district) to local education drop faster than costs.

Enrollment projections completed as part of this analysis indicate that even if migration increases in New Hampshire, enrollment will not return to the growth experienced in the 1990s.

This analysis indicates that for most New Hampshire communities the school enrollment issue is no longer rapid enrollment growth, but rather stemming the impacts of enrollment declines. In turn, this suggests that, in some New Hampshire communities, encouraging (or at least willingly accepting) family housing is a more prudent policy option than discouraging that housing. Most districts have the capacity to accommodate more students with only a modest increase in education costs, while new housing can generate increased tax revenues.

Click here to see PowerPoint slides

Click here to see Technical Appendix