

Demographics Study Task Force (DSTF)
Part 2 Report – June 8, 2010
Guiding Principles and Options for Adapting to Enrollment Changes

The Demographics Study Task Force recommends that the school district respond to declining enrollment by applying carefully determined guiding principles. These principles will elicit responses that keep the district focused on important educational considerations, thus avoiding situational decision-making that over time can appear disconnected and inconsistent. The following guiding principles (#s 1 to 5) and related options (e.g. actions, steps) are suggested:

1. The district must show fiscal responsibility in responding to expected enrollment declines, while at the same time avoid being “penny wise and dollar foolish.” Just as past school boards have appropriately added financial resources as enrollment increased, it is equally appropriate for future school boards to consider reductions as enrollment declines.

A. Generate impact statements annually for any proposed programmatic reductions. This impact statement should include the budgetary impact in tax rate terms and the educational pros and cons.

B. An opportunity for public discussion should be provided during the budget development process before the school board takes a final position or solidifies the budget.

2. It should be recognized that if student enrollments decline, then potential staff and/or course reductions take place unevenly from one year to the next (i.e. as K-6 grade level enrollments decreased from high 50s to mid/high 30s, class sizes gradually decreased over approximately 7 years before going to 2 sections instead of 3 for certain grade levels).

Note: It is important to watch for the bottom of enrollment declines to emerge and a leveling or increase to start.

A. Benchmark staffing levels at various enrollment points in the district’s history and project when future enrollment declines will return enrollment to benchmarked points.

B. Analyze how present requirements may have changed since historical benchmarks. (e.g. graduation requirements, special education, drop out age, community expectations, etc.)

C. At the beginning of each school year, project the impact of any declining enrollment trends on class sizes, as well as needed faculty/staff and programs for the next school year (i.e. decrease in number of regular education class sections in grades K to 6, decrease in number of special

area classes in grades K to 6, decrease in number of class sections for each subject area in grades 7 to 12, changes in numbers of students with special needs).

3. The district should continue to maintain program offerings and advantageous class sizes for its students. This means meeting the needs of students' diverse abilities and interests in the arts, science, social studies, mathematics, physical education, humanities, technology, athletics and co-curricular activities. In responding to declining enrollment, the district should not subjugate the importance of one curriculum area under another.

In order to accomplish this, the district will need to find innovative ways of delivering programs for students whose needs and interests are in areas where enrollment is too low to provide traditionally structured classes annually.

- A. Explore distance learning opportunities including video conferencing and computer based courses.
- B. Explore expansion of cooperative course offerings with neighboring districts (e.g. Inter-Lakes).
- C. Explore supervised independent study (e.g. one teacher may be given a period to work with students pursuing different courses).
- D. Offer high school courses on an alternating years basis (e.g. AP Environmental Science currently offered every other year).
- E. In October, annually examine class sizes and course offerings at MA in an effort to determine estimated class sizes and course offerings for the next school year.
- F. Consider split grade or multi-age offerings (e.g. one teacher teaches science to both grades 5 and 6, grade 2/3 classroom).

4. The district should strive to protect its investment in "human capital" by maintaining a stable faculty and an atmosphere in which faculty do not fear losing their jobs.

- A. The district should continue to promote "win-win" opportunities that encourage the retirement of teachers who are almost ready to end their careers (e.g. retirement incentives).
- B. When possible, the process of attrition will be used to address staff reductions.
- C. The faculty should have a clear understanding of how the district will proceed when staff reductions occur.

- D. Whenever attrition takes place for any reason (i.e. retirements, leaves, resignations), administration and School Board will consider options available based on projected needs for the next school year (e.g. replace staff member, not replace staff member, combine staff member placement needs).
 - E. When hiring new teachers, if possible take advantage of employing teachers with certification in multiple subject areas.
 - F. Faculty members will be encouraged to use their professional development funds to become certified or highly qualified in additional subject areas.
 - G. Create a ready list of ways the district may reorganize so that when a staff member resignation occurs, the opportunity can be used for implementation of creative approaches.
 - H. Consider job-sharing arrangements for staff members who could phase into retirement by working part-time.
 - I. Assign teachers and/or staff members to travel between MA and MCS in an effort to maintain full-time positions rather than multiple part-time positions.
5. The district should maximize and capitalize on the utilization of physical plant and other resources, which may become available as a result of enrollment decline.
- A. Remain open to the possibility of arrangements that would allow other districts to send their children to Moultonborough Schools.
 - B. Consider using available space for regional special education programs which would be too small for a single district to operate. This would generate revenue for the district.
 - C. Consider arrangements that would provide revenue for use of building facilities (e.g. auditoriums, unused classrooms).
 - D. Because the demographic area that includes senior citizens is projected to expand greatly, consider ways in which the buildings might be used to support this group of citizens.

Respectfully submitted by the members of the Demographics Study Task Force:

- Louis Goscinski
- Kenneth Greenbaum
- Michael Lancor
- Dawn Law
- Charles Pugh
- Michelle Shipp
- Fox Smith

