

HCPSS Enrollment Projection Methodology

The Office of School Planning (OSP) produces an updated enrollment projection every year, compiling updated data including projected housing construction, historical and projected births, housing resales, and student population characteristics. The data are provided by Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), MD Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), MD Department of Planning (MDP), and HCPSS Student Information System.

Since Howard County is rapidly growing, OSP supplements the industry-standard cohort survival method by incorporating student yield rates for housing transactions that could generate new students. At each step in our process, the goal is to use historical data to select the rate that performs best at predicting the future, while considering local knowledge, development and planning trends, and historical accuracy. Our system includes tools to help determine which data points have historically been the best indicators of future enrollment.

In 2013 and 2015, Dejong-Richter (now known as Cooperative Strategies) reviewed the OSP’s projection methodology. This review concluded that OSP enrollment projection methods are valid, producing accurate results compared to other methods and surrounding districts. These findings were presented to the Board of Education.

The modified cohort survival method used by OSP begins with prior year official enrollment (green box). Moving up the diagram, factors are added starting with the non-housing factors (cohort survival), then the housing factors and out of district, leading to a projection for September 30th of the following year and beyond. Middle and High School projections are developed in the same fashion, substituting rising 6th and 9th grade cohorts for K, and excluding Pre-K move-ins.

