



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

1 December 2021

To: School Committee

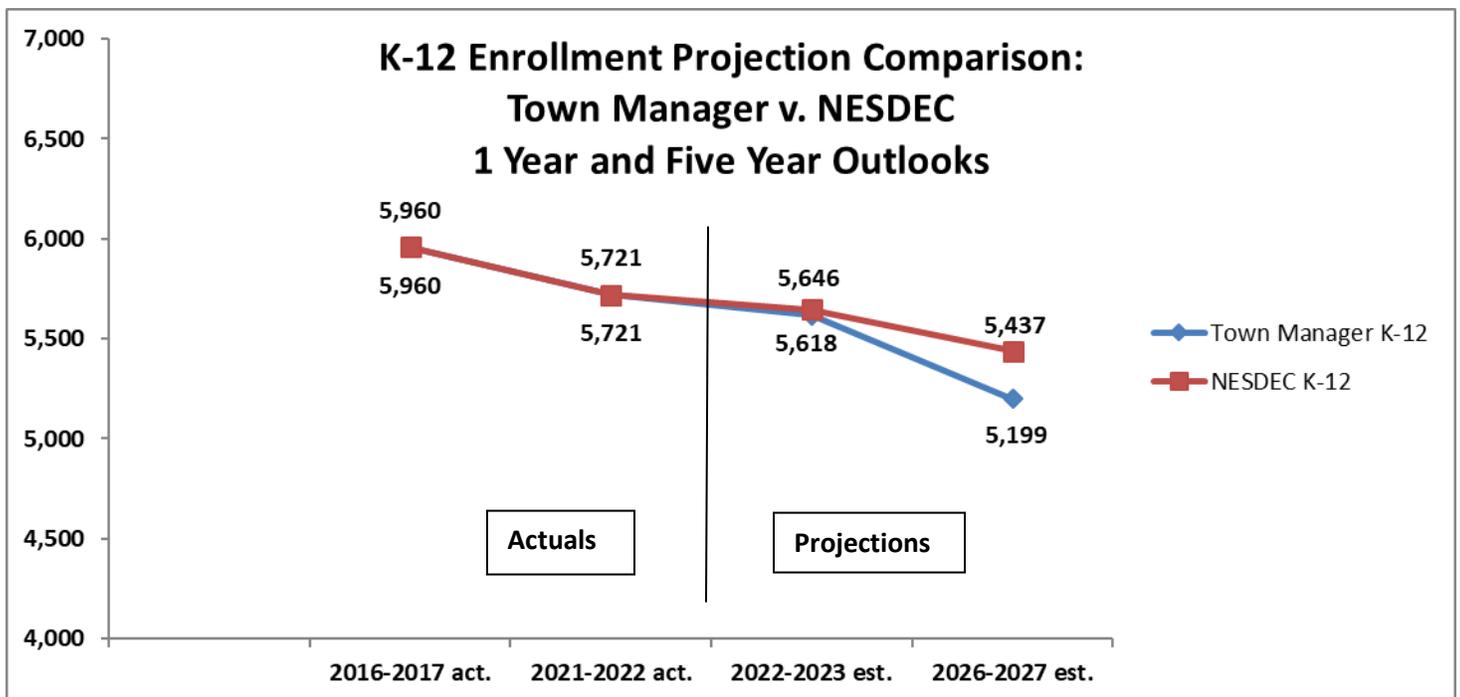
Subj: ENROLLMENT PROJECTION REPORT

Background

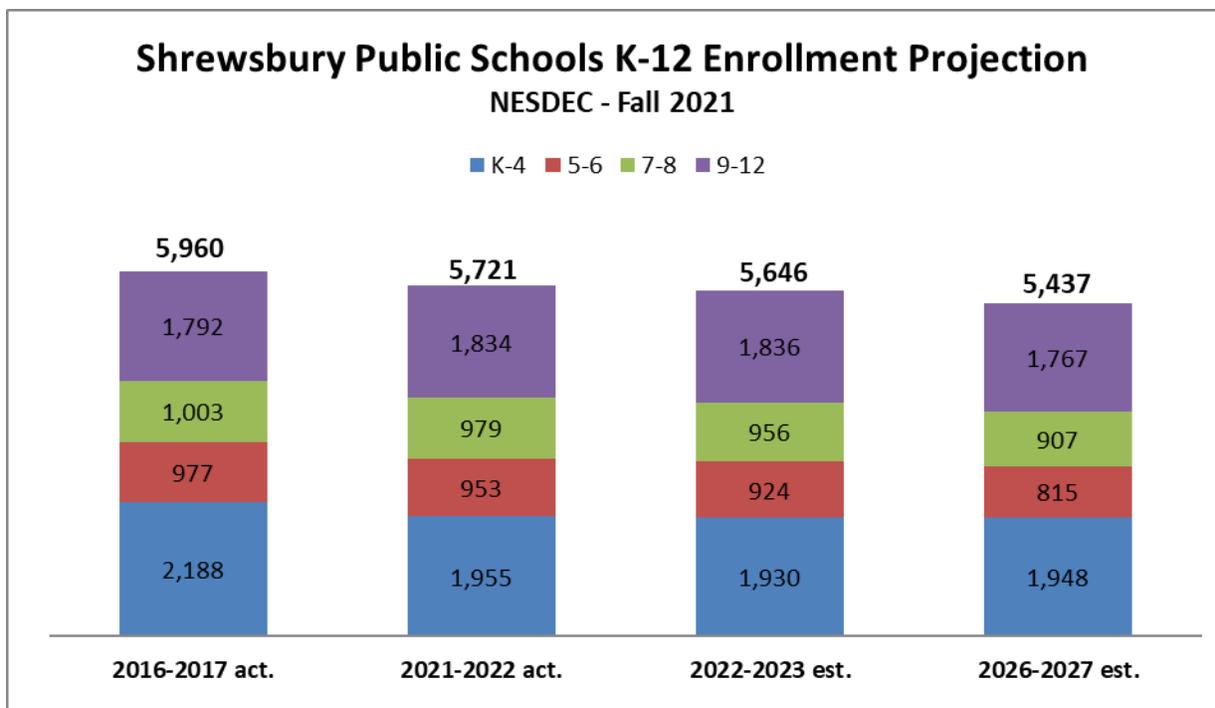
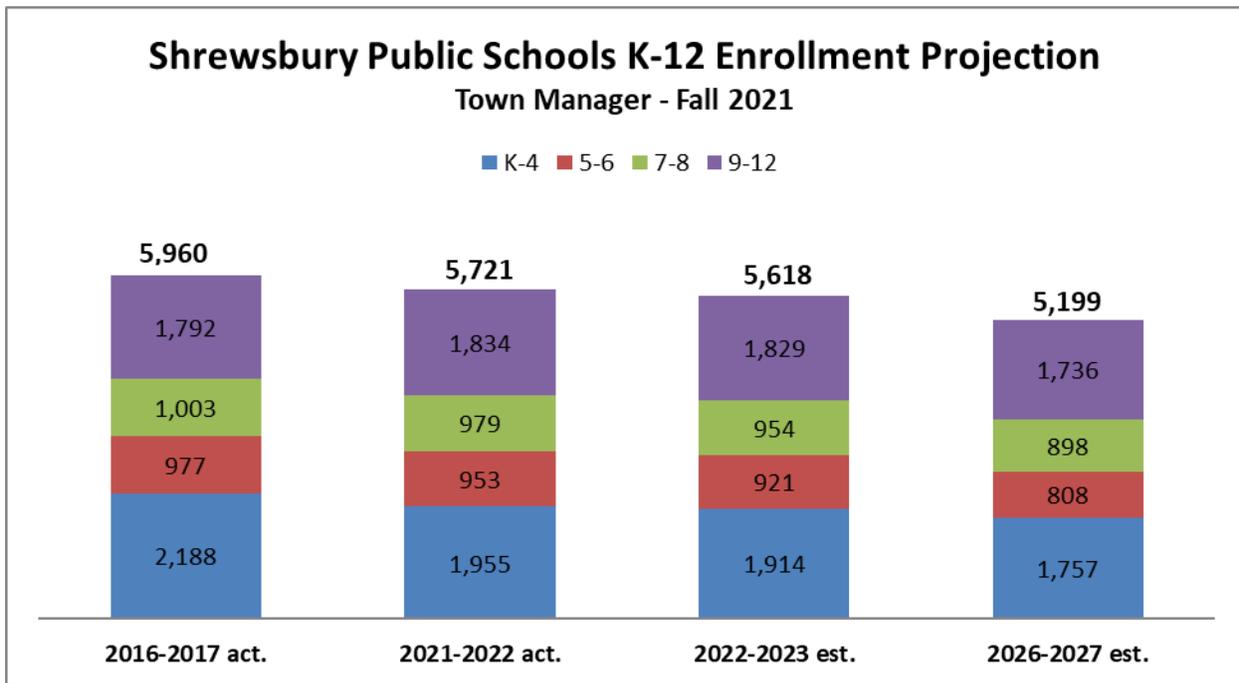
Enrollment projections are an essential element in short and long-term school planning. We use enrollment projections for capital planning purposes and near-term class size and staff planning. In Shrewsbury, we receive each year an enrollment projection from the Town Manager’s Office. That projection is a standard *cohort survival method* using a five-year average for each cohort survival ratio. In addition, as a member of the New England School Development Council [NESDEC] we receive an annual enrollment projection from them. They used a three-year cohort survival ratio for grades 1-12 and a 99% survival ratio for birth to kindergarten.

Highlights

Since the Town Manager’s Projection does not include Preschool enrollment we will use K-12 enrollments for comparative purposes. The chart below depicts both K-12 projections at one-year and five-year intervals. The NESDEC and Town Manager projections show both a one and five-year decline.



In the following charts we see the K-12 enrollment projections segmented by our current grade configuration. For planning purposes for the 2022-2023 school year, we have used the higher of the two projections for each grade level with the intent of avoiding “surprises” and also to safely plan for appropriate levels of teaching staff to ensure reasonable class sizes.



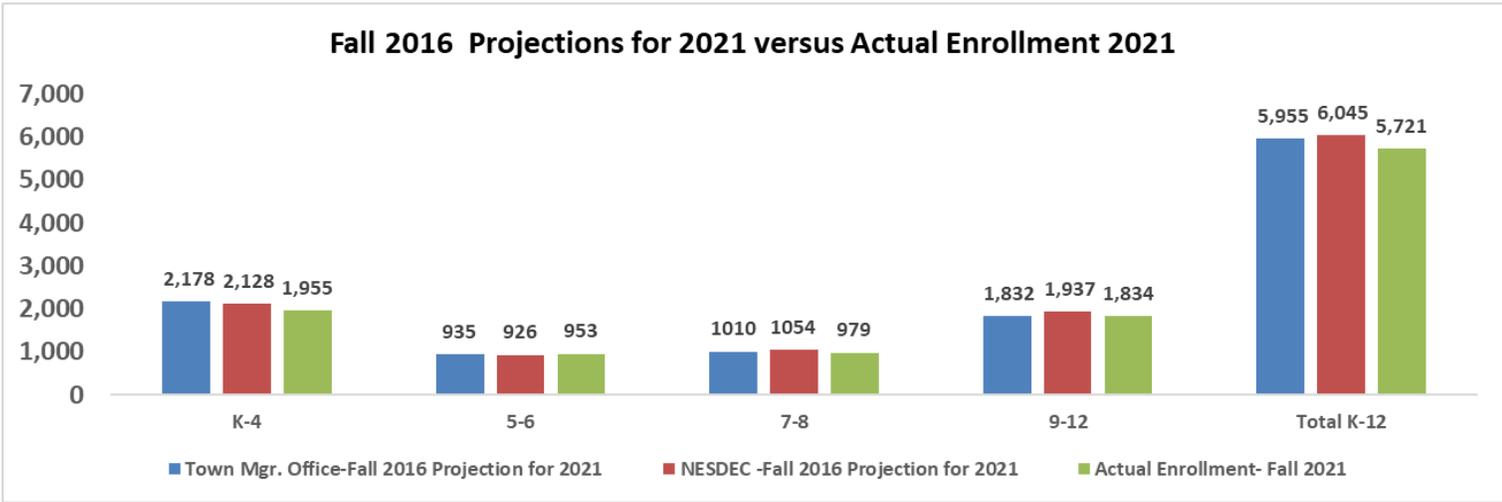
The grade by grade comparison of current [10/1/2021] enrollment and next year's projections [2022-2023] are shown in the chart below.

	10/1/2021 Enrollment	Town Manager Projected for SY 22-23	Change: 10/1/21 to SY 22-23		NESDEC Projected for SY 22-23	Change: 10/1/21 to SY 22-23
K	343	301	-42		313	-30
Gr. 1	339	398	59		402	63
Gr. 2	417	351	-66		349	-68
Gr. 3	429	425	-4		432	3
Gr. 4	427	438	11		434	7
K-4	1955	1913	-42		1930	-25
Gr. 5	484	432	-52		432	-52
Gr. 6	469	489	20		492	23
Gr. 5 + Gr. 6	953	921	-32		924	-29
Gr. 7	481	471	-10		474	-7
Gr. 8	498	483	-15		482	-16
Gr. 7 + Gr. 8	979	954	-25		956	-23
Gr. 9	459	458	-1		464	5
Gr. 10	450	460	10		461	11
Gr. 11	464	446	-18		446	-18
Gr. 12	461	464	3		465	4
Gr. 9-12	1834	1828	-6		1836	2
Totals	5721	5616	-105		5646	-75

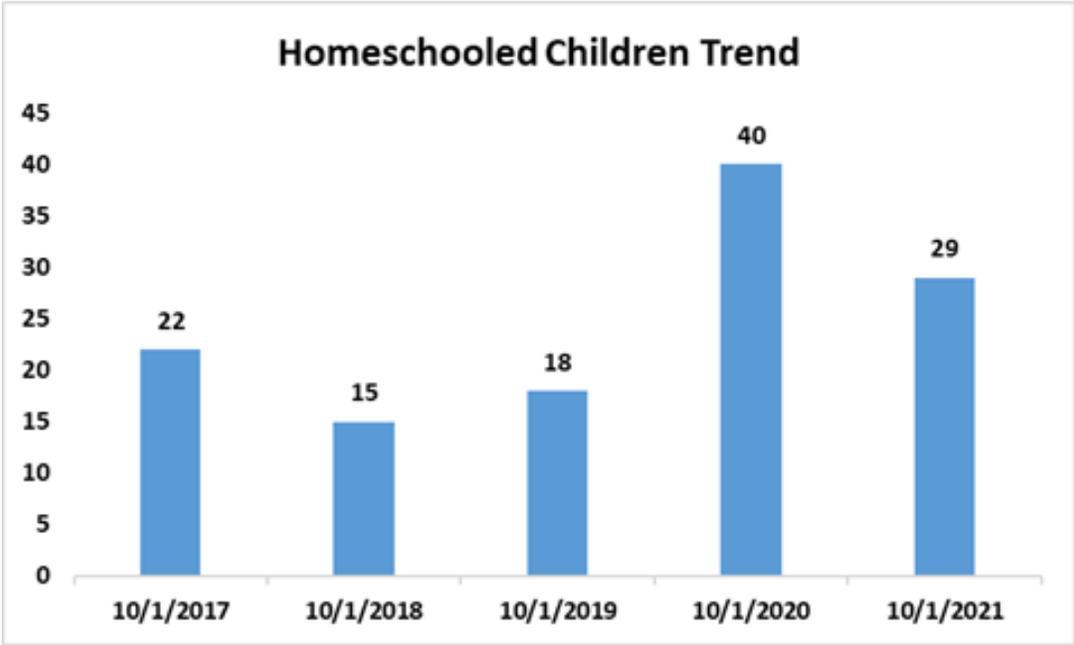
The detailed enrollment projections are included in a related Powerpoint presentation document and I will review the details at our upcoming meeting.

Projection Review

In the past, pre-pandemic, we had a very high degree of confidence in the one-year projections as both typically had a 99%+ degree of accuracy. We do know that the Coronavirus pandemic has clearly had an impact on enrollment in public schools across the nation and our state. This effect has clearly impacted the precision of previously completed enrollment projections. As done in the past, we have reviewed and shown in the chart below the projection from five years ago [2016] and compared that with our actual enrollment for the Fall 2021. Our actual enrollment has fallen short of both projections by 234-324 students for a variance of -3.9% to -5.4%.



As a result of the unusually high shortfall, one place we have reviewed is the population of homeschooled students and one can see the uptick due to Covid in the chart on the following page. However, this accounts for only a small portion of the variance. So, it's unclear if the pandemic is having a longer lasting impact or if our incoming cohorts of students will be at a lower level than previously projected.



Summary

The enclosed enrollment projections allow us to complete our staff planning for the 2022-2023 school year. But the areas with highest potential variability in terms of enrollment are at the K-1 grades and grade 9.

We need to continue to be attentive to our high school population. With 1,834 current students we have significantly exceeded the design capacity of 1,475 and the current classroom utilization rate is 99%. As you know, the state has directed vocational/technical high schools to modify their admissions policies giving first priority admittance to students belonging to their member districts. Shrewsbury is not a member of Assabet

Valley Regional Technical High School District so we should expect few, if any, eighth graders to gain admittance next year which will serve to add enrollment to our high school.

Finally, we are eager to engage with LPAA on an updated Prek-12 Capital Inventory and Assessment Study. This in-depth report will assess our current school space, its general condition, and match that with projected enrollment at all levels. This report ought to give us a roadmap to navigate our capital planning process for the future just as their 1997 report did for us.