



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

20 January 2023

To: School Committee

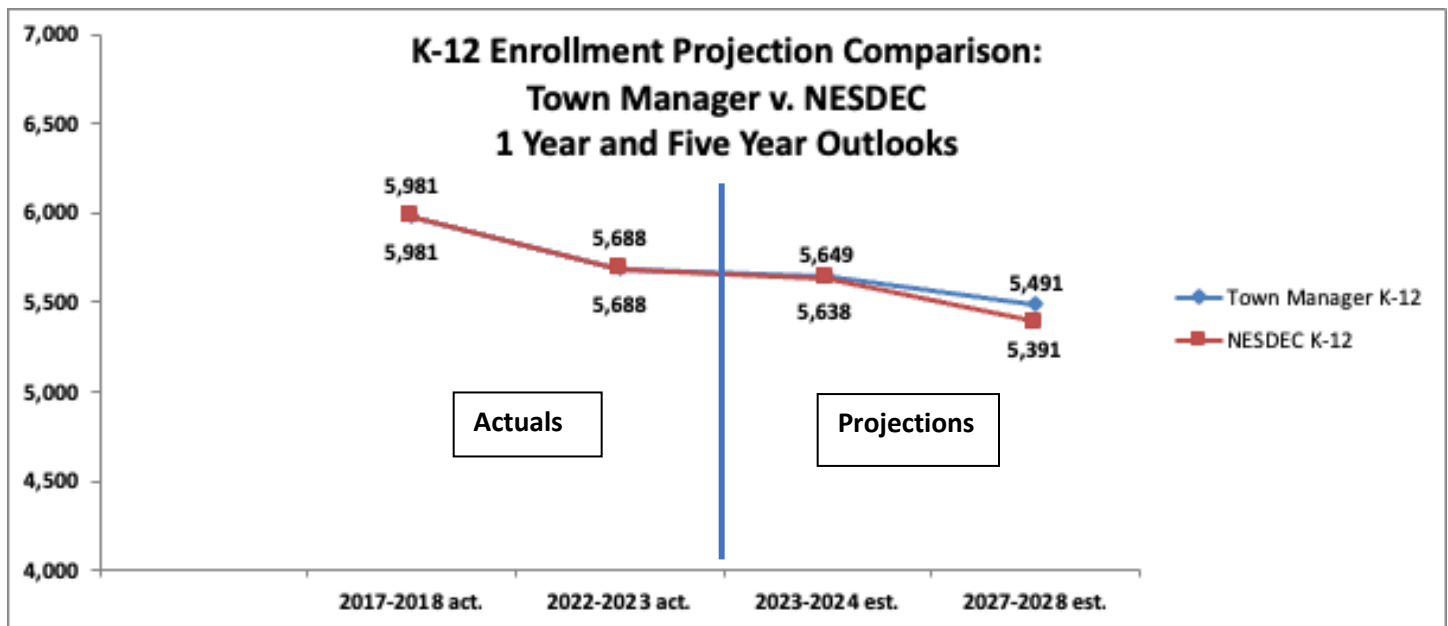
Subj: ENROLLMENT PROJECTION REPORT

Background

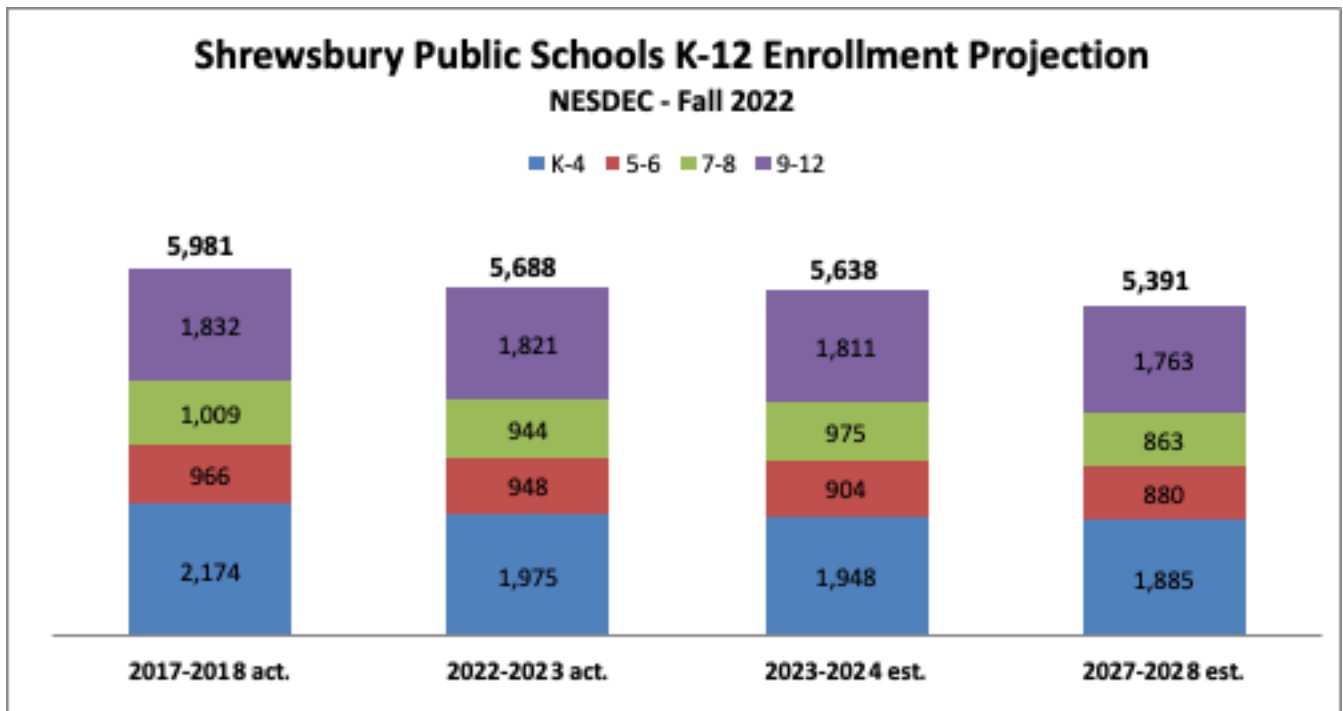
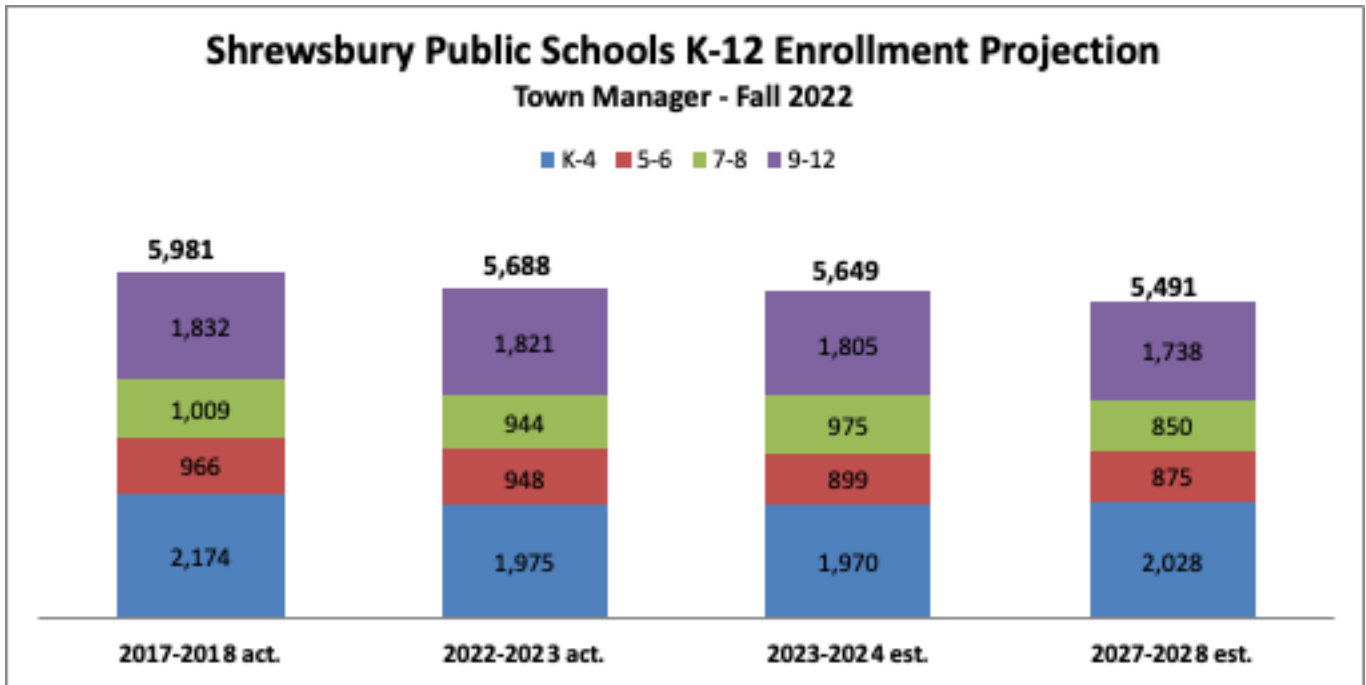
Enrollment projections are an essential element in short and long-term school planning. We use enrollment projections for capital planning purposes and near-term class size and staff planning. In Shrewsbury, we receive each year an enrollment projection from the Town Manager's Office. That projection 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 2023-2024 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.



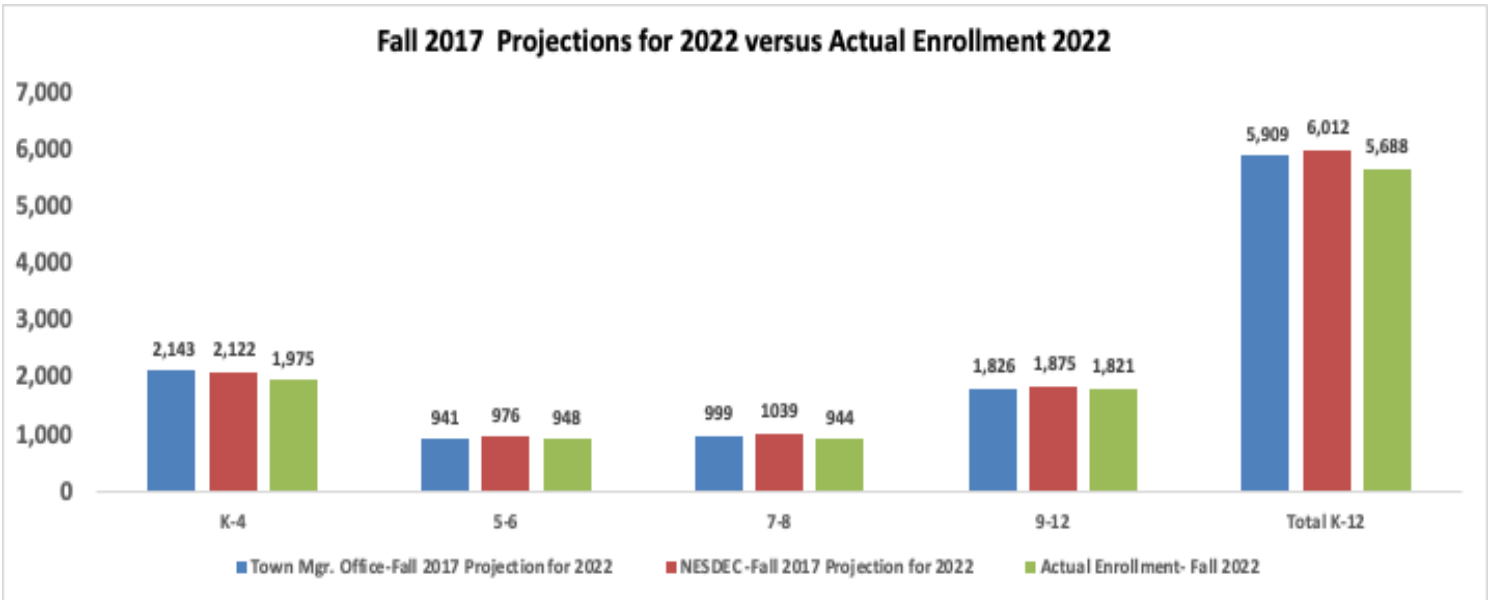
The grade by grade comparison of current [10/1/2022] enrollment and next year’s projections [2023-2024] are shown in the chart below.

	10/1/2022 Enrollment		Town Manager Projected for SY 23-24	Change: 10/1/22 to SY 23-24		NESDEC Projected for SY 23-24	Change: 10/1/22 to SY 23-24
K	358		351	-7		330	-28
Gr. 1	372		415	43		412	40
Gr. 2	375		390	15		391	16
Gr. 3	425		380	-45		379	-46
Gr. 4	445		434	-11		436	-9
K-4	1975		1970	-5		1948	-27
Gr. 5	440		453	13		455	15
Gr. 6	508		446	-62		449	-59
Gr. 5 + Gr. 6	948		899	-49		904	-44
Gr. 7	465		509	44		509	44
Gr. 8	479		466	-13		466	-13
Gr. 7 + Gr. 8	944		975	31		975	31
Gr. 9	486		446	-40		450	-36
Gr. 10	452		486	34		486	34
Gr. 11	430		444	14		445	15
Gr. 12	453		429	-24		430	-23
Gr. 9-12	1821		1805	-16		1811	-10
Totals	5688		5649	-39		5638	-50

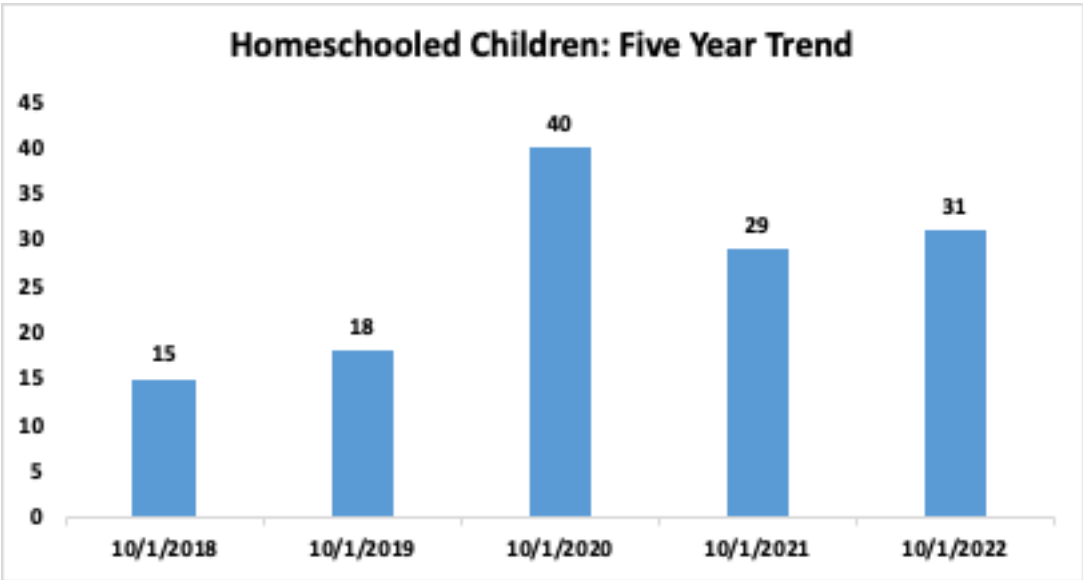
The detailed enrollment projections are included in a related Powerpoint presentation document that I will use to review the details at our upcoming meeting.

Projection Review

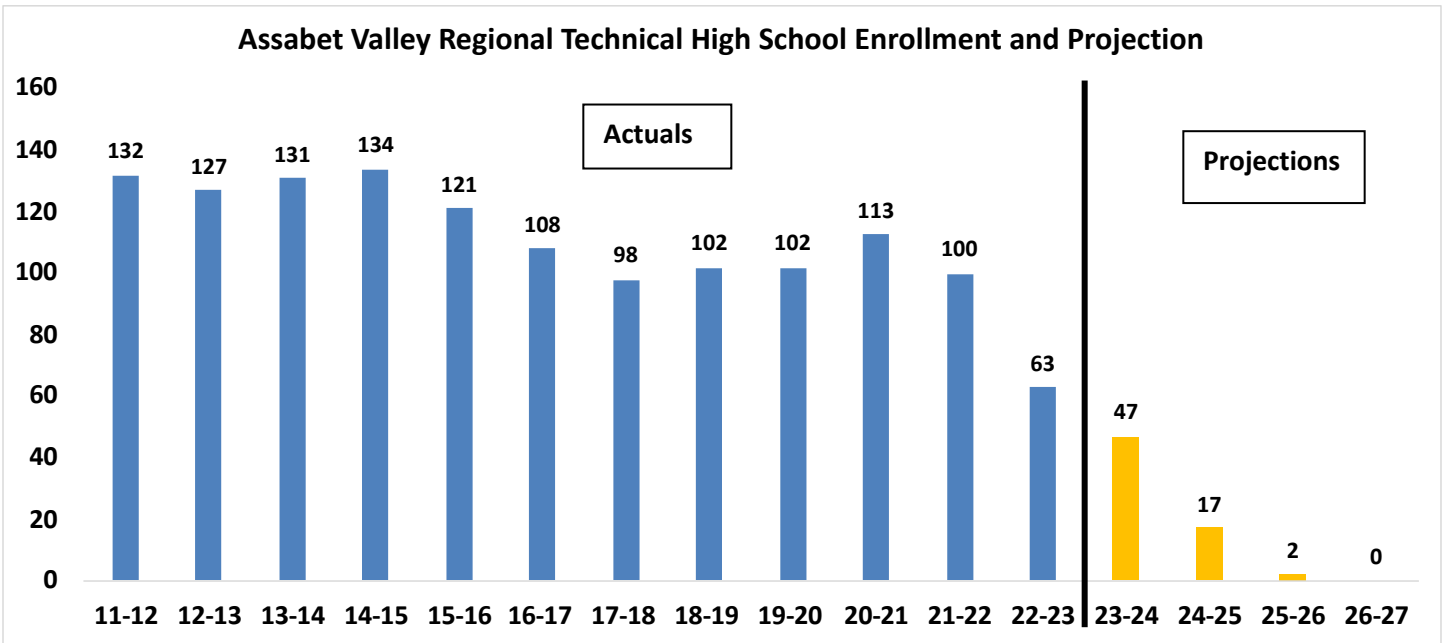
In the past, pre-pandemic, we had a very high degree of confidence in the one-year projections as both typically had a 99%+ degree of accuracy. We do know that the Coronavirus pandemic has clearly had an impact on enrollment in public schools across the nation and our state. This effect has clearly impacted 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 [2017] and compared that with our actual enrollment for the Fall 2022. Our actual enrollment has fallen short of both projections by 221-324 students for a variance of -3.9% to -5.7%.



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.



Another area of recent concern is enrollment of our Shrewsbury resident students at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School. Due to a change in the admissions policy, very few students have been accepted in these past two years and that trend will continue. Shown below is a recent history of our grade 9-12 students attending Assabet and also the projection for the next four years which will likely bring enrollment to zero as existing students graduate each year and no new enrollments occur. This is a policy-level issue that the School Committee and administration have made several efforts to address and bring a remedy.



Summary

The enclosed enrollment projections allow us to complete our staff planning for the 2023-2024 school year. But the areas with highest potential variability in terms of enrollment are kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 9.

We need to continue to be attentive to our high school population. With 1,821 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.

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. That report is expected to be completed in the coming weeks.