

Tippecanoe School Corporation



ENROLLMENT FORECASTS, AND FACILITIES UTILIZATION AND ASSESSMENT

Dr. Scott Hanback, Superintendent
Amanda Brackett, Chief Financial Officer

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Prepared by:
Educational Services Company
3535 East 96th Street, Suite 126
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Don Dyck, *Consultant*
Thomas Grabill, *Consultant*

Executive Summary

Tippecanoe School Corporation (TSC) is a geographically large rural-suburban school corporation with an enrollment of approximately 12,400 students in 19 schools covering 432 square miles located in northwestern Indiana. It surrounds and includes parts of the cities of Lafayette and West Lafayette. Three new schools—two elementary and one middle—have been constructed since 2008. Substantial additions are currently being made to two other elementary schools, and additions and important improvements have also been made to support facilities.

In the last ten years enrollment increased approximately 1,800 students, or about 17 percent. Year-to-year increases have been approximately 1.6 percent except for notable highs in 2005 – 06 and 2012 – 2013. The changes in enrollment between the two high schools during the past five years have been different; McCutcheon High School went down approximately one percent while William Harrison High School increased by approximately three percent.

Enrollment in all grades for the McCutcheon High School attendance area increased almost 12 percent during the past ten year period while enrollment in the William Harrison High School attendance area increased by more than 22 percent. During the most recent five-year period, the McCutcheon attendance area enrollment declined while enrollment in the William Harrison attendance area increased. The trends in enrollment between the two areas were consistent with differences in population growth, estimated birth rates and residential construction. Considering demographic and residential construction data, enrollment forecasts based on the most recent five-year trends may be more typical of emerging conditions.

Over the next ten years enrollment for the McCutcheon attendance area is forecast to drop four percent for grade K – 5 schools, six percent for grade 6 – 8 schools, and two percent for McCutcheon High School. However, two elementary schools within the area, Wea Ridge and Woodland, may increase due to residential construction. Enrollment in those schools and two others (Mayflower Mill and Mintonye) are currently over or near optimum capacity although enrollments in those schools probably will not exceed functional capacities.

On the other hand, ten-year enrollments based on the most recent five-year trends for the William Harrison attendance area are forecast to increase by over 30 percent in grades K – 5, nearly 40 percent in grades 6 – 8, and almost 50 percent in grades 9 – 12. Furthermore, grade K – 5 enrollments in Burnett Creek, Klondike and Wyandotte schools are currently over or very near optimum capacities. If the extensive residential development experienced in the past five years continues in those school boundary areas, they may grow to near functional capacity.

Middle schools in both attendance areas appear to have sufficient optimum capacity to accommodate enrollments as elementary students move into grades 6 – 8. William Harrison High School enrollment is forecast to reach the school's optimum capacity by 2017 – 18 and may exceed functional capacity by the year 2021 – 22.

An assessment of facility education adequacy according to eight factors to determine how well TSC schools accommodate current and potential education programs identified four elementary schools that serve those programs quite well. The assessment identified six others schools, including both high schools, that serve programs well. Five elementary schools and one middle school were identified

as needing minor improvements. Three middle schools were identified as being very near the threshold for needing major improvements.

The volatility of the factors fueling enrollment growth in the William Harrison and McCutcheon attendance areas—population growth, residential development and enrollment changes—require frequent and careful monitoring in order to remain well prepared to provide the educational programs at the appropriate grade levels TSC expects. This vigilance is also necessary in order to provide facilities in the areas of greatest residential development and at the same time to avoid building unnecessary facilities or facilities with unneeded capacity. It is also necessary in order to use enrollment decline or growth as a strategic opportunity to continually improve TSC programs and facilities serving those programs.