

School Growth in Chatham County Schools

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CHATHAM
COUNTY SCHOOLS

Introduction

Planning for student population growth is a complex and necessary task for school systems like Chatham County Schools. This involves working with outside partners, stakeholders, county government agencies, County Commissioners, and the County Manager's Office.

Introduction

Our presentation today focuses on three aspects of this work, Projections, Planning, and Implications. Later today we will present information related to a new stakeholder advisory group (Growth and Future Redistricting Advisory) we are starting this year that will be part of these efforts.

Presentation Goals

How do we monitor/project our student population numbers?

How do these projections impact planning for things like new schools and or classroom additions?

What are the implications?

Chatham County Schools Today

Nineteen (19) school campuses located across 709 square miles.

- Six (6) Elementary Schools
- Five (5) K-8 Schools
- Three (3) Middle Schools
- Four (4) Traditional High Schools
- One (1) Early College/One Academy

Chatham County Schools Today

As is the case in most school districts, school buildings reflect a substantial range of construction dates. Here is a quick look at this information for the primary classroom spaces located on each of our 19 campuses. **Keep in mind that school buildings (if properly maintained, renovated and added to) can have an almost indefinite life expectancy.**

CCS Eldest

1950s-1960s primary instructional construction

- Chatham Central High School (1959)
- Chatham Early College (1960)
- George Moses Horton Middle School (1956)
- J. S. Waters School (1953)
- Jordan-Matthews High School (1956)
- Moncure School (1958)
- Pittsboro Elementary (1960)

CCS Middle Agers

1970s-1990s primary instructional construction

- Bennett School (1993)
- Bonlee School (1993)
- Chatham Middle School (1996)
- North Chatham Elementary (1990)
- Northwood High School (1972)
- Perry Harrison Elementary (1996)
- Siler City Elementary (1977)
- Silk Hope School (1992)

CCS Youngest

2000s to present day primary instructional construction

- Chatham Grove Elementary (2020)
- Margaret Pollard Middle School (2011)
- Seaforth High School (2021)
- Virginia Cross Elementary (2007)

Projections

How do we monitor/project our student population numbers?

Chatham County Schools and OREd

Projecting student population growth or decline is a complex and difficult process. Chatham County Schools (CCS) works with the Operations Research Education Laboratory (OREd) from NC State University to accomplish this task. This is a long-standing relationship.

OREd Land Use Study

- A full Land Use Study involves a deep look at a variety of data points including resident live births, and interviews with eight agencies including county and municipal permitting, the EDC and Chatham Park developers.
- The purpose of a Land Use Study is to reset the student population baseline data when the district is experiencing ongoing growth or decline.
- In the past, CCS Land Use Studies were done every 4 to 5 years. This interval has now been shortened to every other year with annual student population projections.

OREd Ten-Year Student Population Projections

- It is important to keep in mind that student population projections from OREd tend to be somewhat conservative.
- These projections are based on housing projects that are already approved, and not those on hold due to lack of water/sewer or final approval.
- Here is what both the District and High School Attendance Zone student population projections look like for the next ten years starting with Month 1 enrollments for 2025-2026.

CCS District Student Population Projections

As a District.

**(19 school campuses- 1 alternative/early college, 6 elementaries, 5 K-8s,
3 middle schools, and 4 traditional high schools)**

Grade Level	2025-2026	2030-2031 (5 year mark)	2035-2036 (10 year mark)
Elementary and K8s	3,975	4,806	6,348
Middle Schools	1,744	1,932	2,369
High schools	2,935	3,292	3,621
Total	8,654	10,029	12,339

CCS District Student Population Projections

- During the next 10 years Chatham County Schools will experience a substantial (approx. 43%) amount of student growth, primarily at the elementary/K-8 level.
- Much of this increase is due to Chatham Park.
- The rate of growth sharply accelerates during the second 5 years.

By High School Attendance Zone

For our purposes we will divide the district into three high school attendance zones, Chatham Central, Jordan-Matthews, and Northwood/Seaforth. Northwood and Seaforth are combined due to the fact that they share the majority of their feeder zone schools.

Chatham Central Student Population Projections

Chatham Central High School (Bennett School, Bonlee School, J. S. Waters School, Chatham Central HS)

Grade Level	2025-2026	2030-2031 (5 year mark)	2035-2036 (10 year mark)
Elementary/K8s	688	693	713
Middle Schools	N/A	N/A	N/A
High Schools	295	335	334
TOTALS	983	1,030	1,047

Jordan-Matthews Student Population Projections

**Jordan-Matthews High School.
(Siler City Elementary, Virginia Cross Elementary, Silk Hope School,
Chatham Middle, Jordan-Matthews HS)**

Grade Level	2025-2026	2030-2031 (5 year mark)	2035-2036 (10 year mark)
Elementary/K8s	1,249	1,332	1,485
Middle Schools	535	486	605
High Schools	753	730	852
TOTALS	2,537	2,547	2,942

Northwood/Seaforth Student Population Projections

Northwood/Seaforth High Schools

(Perry Harrison Elementary, North Chatham Elementary, Pittsboro Elementary, Chatham Grove Elementary, Moncure School, George Moses Horton Middle, Margaret Pollard Middle, Northwood HS, Seaforth HS)

Grade Level	2025-2026	2030-2031 (5 year mark)	2035-2036 (10 year mark)
Elementary/K8s	2,038	2,781	4,150
Middle Schools	1,209	1,446	1,763
High Schools	1,713	2,052	2,262
TOTALS	4,960	6,279	8,176

Planning

How do these projections impact planning for things like new schools and or classroom additions?

Current Approved Chatham County CIP Projects

- Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Projects are already approved to address middle school capacity at Margaret Pollard Middle and a new elementary school in the Chatham Park Northern Village during the next five years.
- In addition, it is expected during the second five years to need to build another elementary school in the Chatham Park Southern Village and a larger version of Moncure School.

Building New Schools

New schools are very expensive and time intensive projects. **The construction of a new school is generally driven by substantial changes in student population.** Here are estimates related to the current costs and the length of time needed to get a school from the start of design to opening for students.

Building New Schools (Big \$ and Time)

Elementary School (750 students)	\$45-50 million	3 years from design to opening
Middle School (750 students)	\$58-62 million	3.5 years from design to opening
High School (1,400 students)	\$118-122 million	4 years from design to opening

Implications

What are the implications that we need to begin considering and addressing?

- Creating a Growth Mindset
- Facilities/Infrastructure Implications
- Personnel Implications
- Budget/Other Implications

Implications- Creating a Growth Mindset

Creating a Growth Mindset with all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, other stakeholders) is key. Doing so will allow CCS the opportunity to stay ahead of the growth curve in a way that is fiscally sustainable, stakeholder responsive, and meets the needs of our students.

Implications- Facilities/Infrastructure

- New Schools- When, Where, and Why
- Adding Classroom Space to Existing Schools
- Remodeling, Merging, Redistricting, Closing, and/or Repurposing Existing Schools
- Network, Maintenance, Transportation, Administration
- Addressing “What have you done lately for my part of the district?”

Implications- Personnel

- Reassigning Personnel
- Hiring Additional Personnel
- Repurposing Existing Positions to Meet Changing Realities
- Right Sizing for Our Current and Future Realities.

Implications- Budget/Other

- Budget resources to build/accomplish what is needed, and to maintain it.
- Stakeholder Input and Decision Making
Transparency
- Curricular, Extra-Curricular, and
Co-Curricular Program Impacts

Conclusion- What did we present today?

Planning for Growth is a complex and necessary task for school systems like Chatham County Schools. Our presentation today shows where we are today, and three aspects of this work; Projections, Planning, and Implications

Conclusion- Where are we today?

All nineteen of our existing campuses are well maintained and/or have had numerous renovations. Most have also had several additions over the years. **All CCS students will receive a great education at any of our schools, regardless of the building's date of construction.**

Conclusion- Projections

- We have a long standing relationship with OREd to provide updated student population projections and land use studies every other year.
- We may need to create a 10 year strategic growth plan which will be updated annually based on OREd generated data.

Conclusion- Planning

Failing to plan in this area is likely going to mean we are planning to fail. We will have to continue doing what we already have in place and expand the scope of this work. A new stakeholder advisory group that we are starting this year will be a good first step in these efforts.

Conclusion- Implications

We need to begin considering and addressing implications in the following areas:

- Creating a Growth Mindset
- Facility/Infrastructure Implications
- Personnel Implications
- Budget/Other Implications

In Closing...

Chatham County is experiencing substantial levels of economic development and population growth. These kinds of projects and increased water/sewer capacity are just the beginning. We will continue monitoring the impact of these changes on our student population, and providing needed classroom space to serve **all of our students, across all of Chatham County.**
One Chatham!

Questions?

