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CS NEWSFLASH: FLUCTUATING ENROLLMENT? ASK THESE QUESTIONS TO FIND ANSWERS

With many school districts still experiencing rapid changes in student populations, enrollment projections can help determine future staffing needs and facilities impact for upcoming years. The tricky part is identifying and understanding the factors that can influence changes. Whether you prepare enrollment projections annually or are conducting a study for the first time, the following are some best practice questions to consider:

-  **Accuracy of Past Projections:** If your enrollment numbers were way off, what caused the discrepancies?
-  **Historical Enrollment:** What are your past enrollment trends? Have special programs influenced the number of students at certain school sites?
-  **Transfers:** What percentage of your students are inter-district transfers and will that same trend continue?
-  **School of Residence vs School of Attendance:** Do many students attend schools outside of home boundaries? Will this policy change in the future?
-  **Birth Rates:** What are the historical birth trends and is there a correlation between kindergarten enrollment and birth rates?
-  **Existing Housing:** Is there an aging population or are there resales causing new families to move in?
-  **Local Development:** What is the housing allocation for the area served by your school district? When will certain developments come online?
-  **Local Factors:** Are there any political or economic factors that may impact enrollment?
-  **Open Enrollment:** How does open enrollment and school choice affect your school district?
-  **Goal of the Projections:** Will you only use the numbers for yearly staffing and classroom allocation planning or do you have any facilities needs that the projections can provide insight for?

Many school districts also find it helpful to compile the findings of these questions into a Board or community presentation. Illustrating any assumptions made when projecting future enrollment provides far more understanding and support when planning decisions are made. With fall enrollment finalized, now is the perfect time to start thinking about 2017-18 staffing and facilities needs.

If you need any help determining what factors your school district should be taking into account or would like assistance with enrollment projections, please contact us at 844.654.2421 x320 or info@coopstrategies.com.

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