

Norwalk Schools
Current & Projected Enrollment Growth

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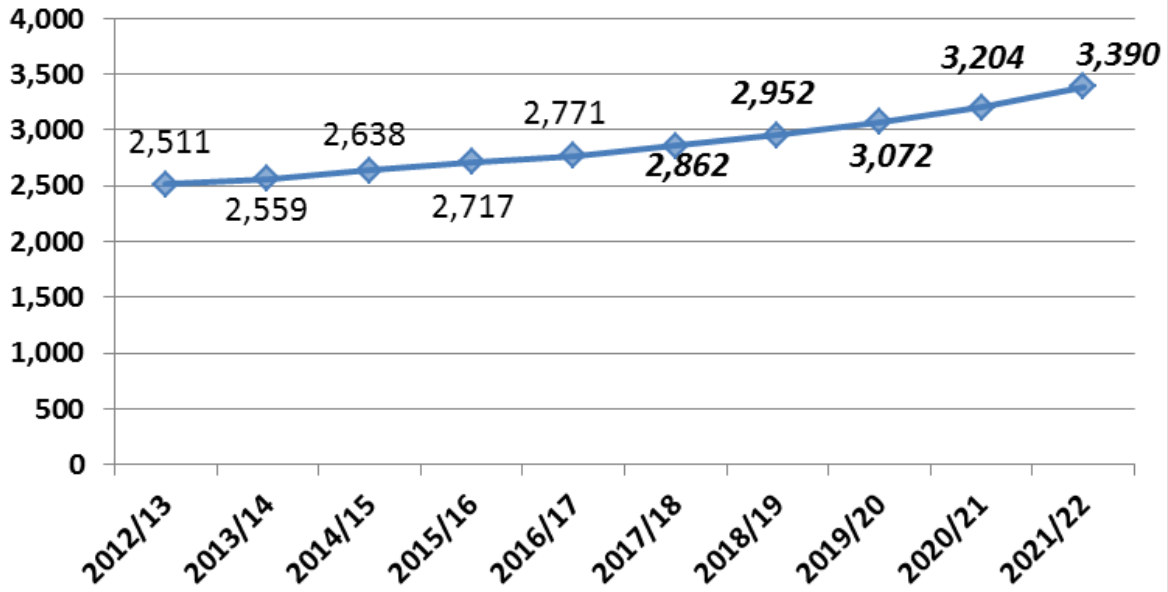
The Norwalk Community School District is comprised of 49.6 square miles, all within Warren County. Five cities have jurisdictional area in the District: 100% of Norwalk, 75-90% of Cumming, 100% of Spring Hill, and smaller percentages of West Des Moines and Des Moines. Many of you are citizens like me that choose the Norwalk or Cumming community as your home, coming from other areas of Iowa to raise your family.

The City of Norwalk has grown by 40% since 2000, rising to a record population of 9,639 in 2013. Cumming has grown by 145% in that same time period, rising to a population of 397 in 2014. The annexation of West Des Moines has added to the District population too in the past five years. In addition, rural areas of Warren County continue to grow as housing developments and acreages spring up all around. Approximately 40% of the households in the District have children with an average of 2.68 students per household. All of these factors lead to increased enrollment growth.

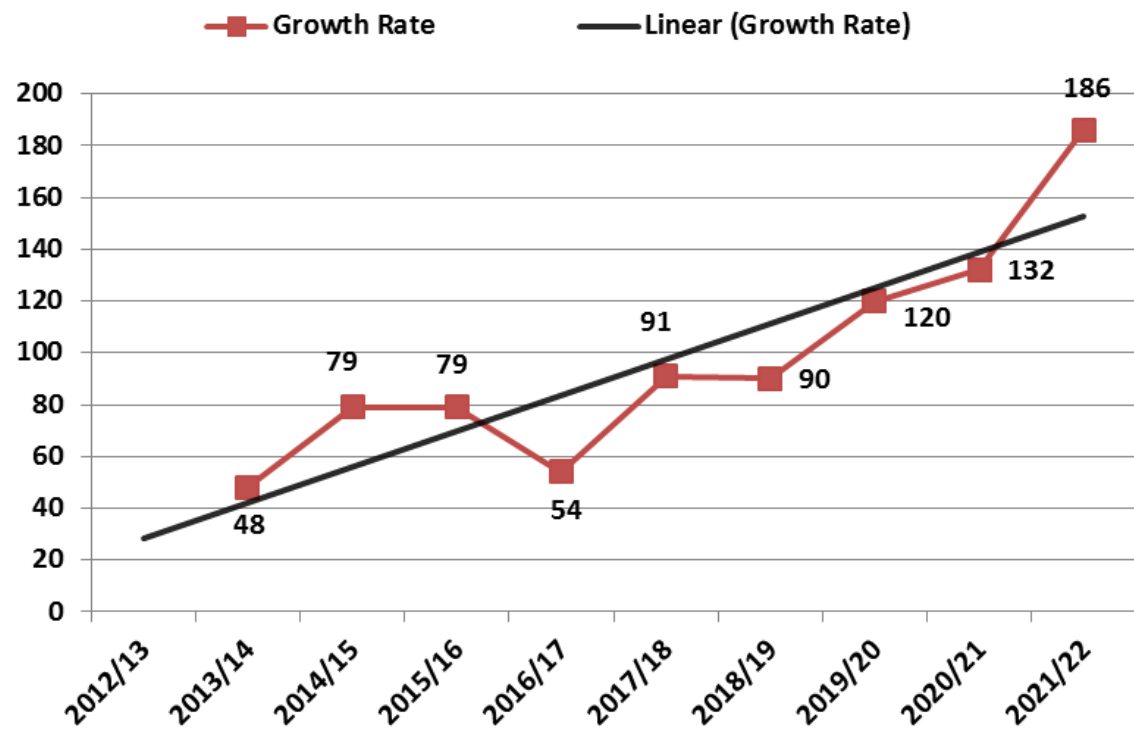
To better understand and prepare for the future growth, in 2014, the District commissioned a professional demographer to conduct an enrollment study. Previously the District relied on locally determined projections that were based on historical trends. The District hired RSP & Associates (RSP) out of Kansas City, MO. RSP was selected based on references from other Metro area schools. RSP has projected enrollment trends in Waukee, Johnston, Ankeny, Southeast Polk (SEP), Adel-Desoto-Minburn (ADM) and Dallas Center-Grimes (DC-G) during the past five plus years. Waukee, one of the fastest growing districts in the state, has found RSP projections to be 98-99% accurate. DC-G reported actual enrollments were less than a 10 student variance of RPS projections in each of the past two years. Johnston, SEP and Ankeny all agreed that RSP's projections are spot on when compared to actual enrollment. For Norwalk, RSP was within 17 students in the fall of 2015 and only off by one student in the fall of 2016. The credibility and accuracy of RSP's enrollment is solid because it is based on careful analysis of data specific to each individual school district. RSP collects past enrollment data, demographics of individual households, birth rates, housing trends, projected housing developments, employment data, etc. and runs the data through sophisticated algorithms to determine the enrollment projections.

Like the cities of Norwalk and Cumming, the population of the District has grown considerably during the past 10 years and is projected to grow higher in the next 10 years. Below is a depiction of the District's actual and projected enrollment.

Norwalk Schools Actual & Projected Enrollment Growth



Growth Rate Students per Year



For the past three decades, the District has worked each year to develop and revise long-term planning to meet the needs of enrollment growth. Long-term planning was premised on an average of 25-40 new students per year. A majority of the planning was centered on the expansion of new classrooms and facilities. In the future, additional planning is required to meet the staffing needs of enrollment growth. In 1994 the Board exercised precautions to control enrollment growth by closing open enrollment for non-resident students. The District has restricted the number of voluntary preschool classrooms to preserve classrooms for the required K-2 students, and partnered with DMAACC to expand postsecondary programs to avoid building new classrooms and hiring more specialized personnel. All of these measures have advantaged students and helped manage growth. Now it is clear that a new projected growth pattern of 150-200 students per year will require new interventions and more detailed planning to meet the needs of all current and new students. The community of Norwalk and Cumming is a wonderful area to live and raise a family. These characteristics are evident in the growth of the school district.