

## **Oyster River Enrollment Increases 4 Years Straight**

Every year the New Hampshire Department of Education requires school districts throughout the state to report enrollment on October 1<sup>st</sup>. This year the official enrollment report shows an increase to 2,095 students from 2,058 students last year. Oyster River's enrollment has consistently grown for the past four years and if we were to add preschool students to this count, the District is over 2,100 students.

Town enrollment is as indicated below. This report includes 33 home-schooled students as required by the state.

Durham	955 students
Lee	702 students
Madbury	384 students
Tuition	87 students

School building enrollment is noted below. The high school enrollment includes 87 tuition students, the vast majority of which are Barrington students, an outcome of the tuition agreement with Barrington.

Mast Way	286 students
Moharimet	411 students
OR Middle	679 students
OR High	719 students

### **The Long Range Planning Committee Projections**

The Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) is an Oyster River School Board appointed committee that has been engaged in enrollment projections for the District for decades. The committee uses historical birth and enrollment trends to project Kindergarten and Grade 1 using linear progression. The committee uses Grade Progression Ratios (GPR) to forecast enrollment in grades 2-12. They then calculate an average GPR over 5 years and apply it to actual and predicted enrollments thus taking into account the net migration into and out of the District over time. If you are interested in reviewing the actual report please go the District web page at [www.orcsd.org](http://www.orcsd.org) where the latest (Nov 2014) Long Range Planning Committee Report is posted.

### **The Long Range Planning Committee Report**

Enrollment will stay above 2000 for the next four-years; however, enrollment is projected to decline when projected over the next ten years.

- Mast Way- currently with 286 students is projected to have 233 students in ten years. The reduction of students at Mast Way begins next year and continues through 2020-21, then begins to rebound.
- Moharimet- currently with 411 students is projected to have 334 students in ten years. Moharimet does not see a loss of students for another two years and continues until 2020-21, and then it too begins to rebound.
- OR Middle School- currently with 679 students is projected to have 470 students in ten years. It will experience a small loss of students that begins in 2016-17. The reduction of students becomes significant in 2020-21.
- OR High School- currently with 719 students, is projected to grow through 2019 with a high of 800 students.
- The Long Range Planning Committee notes that their projections have a calculated error rate. As stated in the report, projections for next year carry an average absolute error estimate of 1.6%. However, when the projections are carried out ten years to 2024-25 the average absolute error rate grows to 14.6%. Further, it should be noted that such as error rate could add to or decline from the stated projections.

### **Why Does the LRPC Project Declines in Enrollment**

There has been a dramatic decline in adults of childbearing age within the District. There were 130 births in the 2002 cohort, only 69 in the 2013 cohort and 72 in the 2014 cohort. In addition, the State of New Hampshire has the lowest birth rate in the nation.

### **Implications**

Enrollment is now stable and has been for the past few years and will be for the next four years. The School Board and administration have been very careful to follow Policy IIB, the Class Size Policy to ensure that staffing matches enrollment. The School Board has been very thoughtful when reviewing proposed budgets to make sure that staffing is appropriate to the needs of students. Oyster River has a proud history of providing an excellent education to the children in Durham, Lee and Madbury, which must continue. In addition, a strong, vibrant public school system helps make our three member communities attractive to those interested in the best education for their children and keeps real estate values high. An example of how Oyster River School District is measured most recently appeared in Newsweek, which ranked Oyster River High School as one of America's top high schools.

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