



Public School Enrollment and Closures in Saint Louis City

This report provides an overview of the historical trends of the city's public education system including enrollment, building size, and number of schools in the context of the city's geography. Here are five key findings from our analysis:

- St. Louis City's system of public schools is highly unstable. Over the past 32 years (1991 to 2023), 85 schools have opened while 104 schools have closed. There is only one instance where the number of schools stayed the same from one year to the next (1998-99).
- The phenomena of decreasing public school enrollment and population decline are intertwined; it would be in the city's best interest to develop policy solutions that address these issues together.
- Historical enrollment trends from 1991 to 2023 vary across the city's geography and by grade range. Some wards have experienced large increases in enrollment while others have witnessed steep declines. Ward 5 experienced the highest increase in enrollment (48%) while Ward 13 saw the sharpest decline (82%). There was a 38% decline in K-8 enrollment while high schools only experienced a 25% decline.
- Currently, neither enrollment nor number of schools is consistent across the city's 14 wards. For example, Ward 14's schools educate 4,510 students in 13 schools, relative to only 792 students in three Ward 6 schools. Even distribution would give each ward approximately 2,000 students and 7 schools.
- Researchers should treat DESE records with considerable caution; numerous LEA and school name changes and changes to punctuation and abbreviations may make it appear that there are more schools than actually exist.