Welcome to the third issue of our quarterly newsletter, which aims to inform and educate school administrators on the process of performing enrollment projections and other topics related to school demography.

Housing Turnover

When I first started consulting back in 1998, I would invariably hear this question when presenting my findings at a Board of Education meeting: "How do your projections account for housing turnover in the community?" Fresh off of completing my doctorate at Rutgers University and performing the necessary literature review for my dissertation, I knew that there was very little research to address housing turnover. I understood the school district administration's concern. While a community may be essentially built out, it could still grow as older residents with grown children sell their homes to younger families with children, thereby increasing enrollment.

A few years ago, colleagues of mine in California devised a method of projecting enrollment through housing turnover. It is a quite complicated and laborious process, but this is basically how it works.[1] To do this analysis, we basically need 3 inputs:

1. Housing turnover rates by length of ownership

2. Current distribution of homes by length of ownership; and

3. Student yields by length of ownership

Step 1 requires going through the community housing database (attached and detached single-family homes) and determining the number of times each home in a community has been sold in the last 25-30 years. Based on this data, I can develop a distribution of the percentage of homes that were sold (turnover rates) after a certain number of years of ownership. What do I usually see? Turnover rates are highest for homes that have not been owned very long (e.g., 3-5 years) and lowest for long-held homes (20 years and up).

Step 2 requires determining what is the current length of ownership of each house in the community in 2010 by looking at the last sale date of each home.

In Step 3, we join the district's student database with the housing database to determine student yields by length of ownership. In other words, how many public school children come out of a house, on average, for a house that is owned 6 years, 10 years, 15 years, etc. Not surprisingly, student yields increase by length of ownership for a period of time (up to 14 or 15 years of ownership, for example) before it starts to decrease as children move out of the house or go off to college.

Using the data from all 3 steps, we can predict how many children will be in the district in the future if houses continue to turn over at their historical averages. School districts can see whether housing turnover is going to contribute to enrollment growth or not. School districts are typically amazed at

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[1] The rationale behind this method was taken from *An Alternate K-12 Enrollment Forecast Method for Older Neighborhoods* by Shelley Lapkoff Ph.D. of Lapkoff and Gobalet Demographic Research, Inc.

the charts and tables that can be generated from this analysis, which helps to either calm their fears or make them aware of impending growth.

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