

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 23, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Responses to Board Requests for Information

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent
R. MacNeil, Assistant Superintendent
T. Parker; Assistant Superintendent
D.R. Power, Assistant Superintendent-Treasurer

RESOURCE

STAFF: Gloria Chalmers, Sultan Ibrahim, Roland Labbe, John Nicoll, Jamie Pallett, Larry Schwenneker

INFORMATION

BOARD REQUEST #277, FEBRUARY 23, 2010, PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING WHETHER THE FUNDING FORMULA IS SUFFICIENT IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF K-9 STUDENTS AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. ALSO PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING WHEN AND WHY THE CURRENT CEU FUNDING FORMULA FOR HIGH SCHOOLS WAS ADOPTED.

Determining if the funding formulas used by Alberta Education or the District are sufficient to meet the needs of students is complex because the formulas are simply a mechanism for distributing resources within the constraints of the funds available. They are not specifically aligned or associated with the costs of providing the services to students. At the District level, Edmonton Public Schools' funding formulas are reviewed on an annual basis by Budget Services with the assistance of an advisory committee of elementary, junior high and senior high principals. This process is intended to ensure that the distribution of financial resources is transparent, simple, easily explained and perceived by all district stakeholders to be equitable and fair.

Credit Enrolment Unit (CEU) funding for high school students was introduced by the provincial government in response to a report authored by the Auditor General (1994) which found that in some cases provincial resources were being provided to school jurisdictions that had not assessed student performance or even provided instruction. The province believed that by adopting the CEU funding model for all non-special needs students these problems would be addressed resulting in a greater degree of accountability throughout the province.

For 2010-2011 the District will receive financial resources through CEU funding when:

- a) The courses delivered to students and claimed for funding meet the conditions outlined in the Funding Manual for School Authorities (September 2010-2011), The Guide to Education: Early Childhood Services (ECS) to Grade 12 and all other Alberta Education legislation, regulations and policies.

- b) A student registered in a regular course (non-Career Technology Studies) has earned a final mark of 50 per cent or greater.
- c) A student registered in a regular course (non-Career Technology Studies) has earned a final mark of 25 per cent or greater but less than 50 per cent in the course, and has attended at least 50 per cent of the classes in the course or has worked on and been assessed on at least 50 per cent of the course content.
- d) A student registered in a one credit Career Technology Studies (CTS) course submitted as complete (COM), incomplete (INC) or withdrawn (WDR) and has worked on and been assessed on at least 50 per cent of the course content.

BOARD REQUEST #278, FEBRUARY 23, 2010, PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE FULTON PLACE ANNEX IN TERMS OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND WHAT REPAIRS MIGHT BE REQUIRED OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. Facilities Services recently inspected the Fulton Place Annex as requested by the Board of Trustees. There were no areas of significant concern related to the condition of the buildings. Also, there were no Occupational Health and Safety issues noted in the inspection. The tenant has responsibly maintained the premises and has recently invested in re-cladding two of the buildings. The remaining buildings will need to be re-cladded in the future but at the present time do not pose a maintenance problem, but are more of an aesthetic issue. Future repairs to the buildings will be those consistent with buildings of that age.

BOARD REQUEST #279, FEBRUARY 23, 2010, PROVIDE INFORMATION CLARIFYING WHETHER PORTABLES CAN BE USED FOR SUCH THINGS AS BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL CARE IN ALBERTA SCHOOLS ALTERNATIVE PROCUREMENT (ASAP) I SCHOOLS OPENING IN 2010 AND INFORMATION ON THE PROCESS FOR SCHOOLS TO ACCESS PORTABLES FOR COMMUNITY USE. Portable classrooms are relocated to schools which require additional capacity for a temporary period of time, typically to accommodate spikes in local student residency. Funding to relocate portable classrooms for instructional use is requested of the province. It is not likely that funding to relocate a portable to a school for non-educational use, such as community use or child care, would be funded by the province. District practice has been to utilize other mechanisms to avoid use of portables, including establishing enrolment guidelines such as optimal enrolment limits, program or grade caps, closed boundaries or expansion of programming or grades to another school with excess capacity. Reduction of portable classrooms has also been a valuable strategy to reduce excess District capacity, as portables are considered as capacity in the provincial Area, Capacity and Utilization formula.

In terms of the use of portables for child care at ASAP I sites, access and servicing for the portables could not be provided from ASAP I buildings or through ASAP I ground maintenance areas. Independent servicing would be required in association with the child care operation. This situation was encountered with the provincial child care initiative implemented at Earl Buxton School. If District portables were used for child care services, Facilities Services estimates the total cost at between \$477,000 and \$598,000 per site. This would involve relocation of two portable classrooms to each site and refitting them to a standard equal to that provided in the provincial child care initiative units. The estimates include separate utility servicing costs, relocation costs, site preparation, interior alterations for washrooms and kitchens, and architectural and permitting fees. Sitting of the portables would require the

authorization of City Parks in terms of open space impacts, and development and building permits would be required, which would be subject to the development appeal process. A total cost of \$900,000 per site is estimated if purpose-built provincial modular units such as those installed at Earl Buxton School were utilized. Provincial modulars are considered as added school capacity once delivered.

As an alternative, the District has received information that before and after-school care may be provided in ASAP I schools if the schools contract the service delivery directly from a third-party operator. This could not occur through a traditional lease, and the space used could not be dedicated to this use. Day-care service requires full-time dedicated space and could not be offered under this restriction. District staff has requested information on the capacity of YMCA to offer before and after-school care at any of the six ASAP I sites.

BOARD REQUEST #280, FEBRUARY 23, 2010, CONTACT THE CITY OF EDMONTON AND PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE REQUIREMENTS AND POSSIBLE IMPACT OF A SPECIAL SCHOOL TAX LEVY PLEBISCITE. ALSO PROVIDE INFORMATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT REGARDING SOURCES OF REVENUE THAT WILL NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE TO THE DISTRICT. A Special School Tax Levy allows a school board to raise up to three per cent of its budget for the year in which the resolution to hold a plebiscite is passed. The plebiscite must be held at the time of the school board general election and if successful the special levy may apply to one, two or three years. The important steps and timelines are attached in Appendix I.

The purpose of the levy is to permit taxpayers to support certain projects or additional services which have the support of the local community. The question put to voters requires a statement of the purpose for which the funds are being raised, the total amount necessary to fund the proposal and the number of years during which the additional requisition is to apply. The wording of the plebiscite is attached in Appendix II.

Using the assumption that the District budget for 2010-2011 will be approximately \$796,000,000, the maximum amount of revenue that could be requisitioned is \$24 million. The City of Edmonton has indicated that in order to raise \$24 million, education taxes on residential property would have to be increased 9.74 per cent and 8.01 per cent on non-residential property. This would have the impact on increasing education taxes by \$21 per year for every \$100,000 in assessed value.

Annually, the District prepares and submits a Three-Year Capital Plan to the Province of Alberta. Priority for capital funding requests is established as follows: new construction and replacement school requests; preservation project requests; modular and portable classroom requests; and, other capital projects. With the exception of funding provided for the construction of nine ASAP schools, no funding has been provided for the other priorities since 2007. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Province has not indicated any change to their school funding mechanism.

With respect to other sources of capital funding, the Government of Alberta provides all school districts annually with Infrastructure, Maintenance and Renewal funding (IMR). This is a block grant distributed to school districts based upon a formula of student population and space inventory and other miscellaneous factors. The amount of IMR funding can fluctuate

from year to year based upon funding from Treasury to Alberta Education. Funding has ranged from \$5.8 million in 2004-2005 to \$35.6 million in 2006-2007. Funding for 2008-2009 was \$14.8 million.

The use of IMR funding is used to fund the major maintenance plan and is subject to regulation by Alberta Infrastructure.

The uncertainty of provincial funding continues to create challenges with respect to addressing the District's deferred maintenance.

BOARD REQUEST #287, MARCH 9, 2010: PROVIDE THE MOST RECENT CITY OF EDMONTON DATA OF PRESCHOOL AGED CHILDREN FOR THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITIES: CAPILANO, DELTON, EASTWOOD, FULTON PLACE, MCCAULEY, PARKDALE AND SPRUCE AVENUE. Appendix III provides demographic data for each of the neighbourhoods designated to the schools in the City Centre Education Partnership (CCEP) and the Greater Hardisty area.

BOARD REQUEST #288, MARCH 9, 2010, PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING VULNERABLE STUDENTS: IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE STUDENTS, HOW WE IDENTIFY OUR MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS, AND HOW DO WE SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS.

Identification of the Most Vulnerable Students

While potentially all students may be vulnerable at some stage or time in their public education years, the term "most vulnerable" describes those students who are at significant risk of not completing high school because they drop out or are expelled. Students who have a combination of the following identifiable demographic characteristics are more likely than others to be significantly vulnerable:

- high social vulnerability (i.e., experiencing poverty)
- high mobility during a school year and between school years
- special needs designation

These characteristics may influence attendance, increase stress levels, lead to emotional episodes related to experiencing trauma or drug and alcohol abuse. A greater proportion of some identifiable groups of students experience these characteristics. For instance, a greater proportion of Aboriginal and refugee students are impacted by poverty (multi-generational in the case of many Aboriginal children). Many refugee youth have disrupted schooling experiences. Aboriginal and immigrant youth, their families and support agencies report racist incidents that impact these student's attendance and behaviour negatively.

Root Causes of Vulnerability of Students Within this Demographic Profile

While there are many reasons for the increased vulnerability of students with these demographic characteristics many can be linked to poverty and particularly to multi-generational poverty. For example, children come to school with an initial vulnerability directly linked to the estimated accumulated '30 million word gap' in exposure to language by age three for students living in a family on welfare as compared to those living in a

professional family. This is combined with a much greater exposure to negative rather than encouraging feedback for children living in families on welfare (Hart and Risley, 2003).

Trauma related to sexual, physical abuse and extreme neglect can also negatively impact learning and behaviour (Zeigler, 2002). This can occur in any family at any income level and is an ongoing and pervasive issue that impacts learning. Sexual abuse is closely linked to illiteracy in adults and to mental health issues which can lead to drug and alcohol abuse (Horseman, 1999; Maté, 2010). Refugee youth may have experienced trauma, including group sexual assaults related to war. Some of our Aboriginal families are experiencing the legacy of trauma caused by the residential schools. These factors can combine to increase family poverty as adults are unable to obtain and retain full time employment and thus impact subsequent generations of children. This can also create conditions where the chances of the children of those who experienced trauma, also experiencing trauma, increase dramatically because their caregivers have unmet mental health needs.

High mobility is correlated with poverty (e.g., move when rents increased, apartments turned to condos or are evicted and costs of moving often prohibitive) and is shown to be a strong contributing factor to poor schooling outcomes because schooling is interrupted, relationships with caring adults are not sustained and communication about learning difficulties is not readily communicated to new schools. Children in care are particularly at risk for frequent moves during a school year.

Combined learning gaps and the behavioural impacts of trauma result in a disproportionate percentage of children living in poverty identified with special learning needs. Research suggests that this practice has not done much to alleviate the gaps in learning or to improve negative behaviours since the underlying causes have not been addressed (Howard, Dresser and Dunklee, 2009). However, resiliency protects against the negative impacts of risk factors and tools for identifying the degree of resiliency of children and youth are available.

Identification of the Most Vulnerable Students by Demographics and by School

In relation to the identified factors and root causes, the District data base enables identification of students residing in high social vulnerability neighbourhoods, who are transient, designated Aboriginal, English Language Learners, or identified as special needs. Additionally, the data can be linked to achievement using Grade Level of Achievement (GLA) in language arts and mathematics, Highest Level Achievement Tests (HLATs) in reading and writing and, for confirmation, Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) in language arts and mathematics.

Consequently, the District is beginning to identify those *complex schools* where identified factors are prevalent for large proportions of students. The factors are complex and interrelated and require long-term dedicated strategies that respond to current needs but also pro-actively support children and youth before academic and behaviour difficulties arise.

Supports for Complex Schools/Vulnerable Students

Based on research a number of strategies with potential to impact root causes have been identified and have been started in at least some *complex schools* in the District. Ultimately, it would be the intent to have the range of strategies available in all *complex schools*. The strategies include:

- **Early and intensive literacy support through full-day kindergarten and early learning programs:** The research indicates that exemplary programs understand the importance of strengthening family parenting skills and recognition of first language and culture. The District in collaboration with researchers from the University of Alberta is studying full-day kindergarten, early learning and the importance of first language. The provision of affordable childcare would further support this work.
- **Afterschool or critical hours and summer programming:** Research indicates that after school or critical hours and summer programming reduces negative behaviours; improves attitudes towards school and learning; and improves achievement and school-completion outcomes for students living in poverty. The City of Edmonton REACH report, (2009) and Alberta Recreation and Parks Association AfterSchool Recreation Initiatives report (2009) are based on research supporting critical hours programming. The District is working with Big Brothers, Big Sisters to develop a framework that would improve sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness of such programming.
- **In-school mentors** (including support coaches), particularly where they increase the number of diverse role-models (i.e., especially for Aboriginal and ethnic communities): A literature review by the Alberta Government (Satchwell, August 2006) showed that a mentoring relationship has a positive impact on a student’s school achievement, school attendance, social skills and attitude and improved peer and family relationships. As well it reported that mentoring plays a role in preventing or reducing child/youth involvement in alcohol, drugs and crime, especially for minority and Aboriginal youth. An American study reported that mentoring is one of the “most common-used interventions to prevent, divert and remediate youth engaged in, or thought to be at risk for, delinquent behaviour, school failure, aggression, or other antisocial behaviour” (Tolan et al, 2008).
- **Staff training in intercultural understanding, anti-racism strategies, resiliency promotion and creation of welcoming environments for students and families:** This work is consistent with the Aboriginal Education and Multicultural Education policies and regulations and is supported by research (Bentro, Brokenleg, Bockern, 2002).
- **Involving ‘hard to reach’ families:** While research indicates the importance of working with families, the reality is that involving families who may be working several jobs, who may be single parenting, who are not English speakers or who have had bad experiences themselves with school. Some examples of what the District is doing in this regard is having a member of the cultural community invite families and provide translation services, holding evening in collaboration with a cultural group (e.g., Wichitowin nights), providing first language and cultural support through Elders or cultural brokers and family literacy programs.
- **Collaborating with community partners** to access other services (e.g., social-emotional, cultural, lifeskills) for students and families: The examples provided in involving ‘hard to reach’ families would not be possible without collaboration with community groups. This is also true of after school and summer programming. The STAR (Strength, Tolerance, Attitude, and Resilience) program at Jasper Place School, the Partners for Kid (PFK) in the City Centre Education Partnership (CCEP) and a few other schools, and The Way in Project at Dan Knott, Edith Rogers and T.D. Baker that serve significant numbers of vulnerable youth, all depend on extensive community partner involvement. The three programs are part of the provincial wraparound research project and also involved with monitoring their particular approach. The W8, a group of 8 schools in the northwest are evolving a collaborative approach across schools and with community partners. The provincial Success in School initiative has enabled the District

to further develop its relationship with children's services and to be more responsive to the needs of children and youth in care. Work to identify and confirm partners for the planned transition support program for refugee and immigrant youth and their families is underway regarding the planned transition support program for refugee and immigrant youth with significant learning gaps and their families is underway.

Additionally, this work is supported by District-wide approaches that support all students. For instance, differentiated instruction, assessment for learning, evidence-based literacy approaches, Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS) 21st century literacy through student engagement, Kindergarten Inclusive Developmental Services (KIDS), Edmonton Student Health Initiative Partnership (ESHIP), Special Education Support Team (SEST), Edmonton Regional Educational Consulting Services (ERECS) and complex needs. Current work on the development of a District literacy framework and on culturally sensitive assessment has potential to support this work as well.

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- APPENDIX I - Important Dates to Remember When Considering a 2010 Special School Tax Levy
- APPENDIX II - Special School Tax Levy Plebiscite Public Notice Form 20A
- APPENDIX III - Neighbourhood Demographic Trends from 1996-2009 for CCEP and Greater Hardisty Area

3. IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER WHEN CONSIDERING A 2010 SPECIAL SCHOOL TAX LEVY

**NOTE: CALCULATION OF THE EXACT DATES MUST BE BASED ON WHEN THE
ACTUAL GENERAL ELECTION DATE IS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD.**

Prior to; Monday, May 3, 2010	Review the <i>School Act (SA)</i> , the <i>Special School Tax Levy Plebiscite Regulation (SSTLP Reg.)</i> , the <i>Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)</i> , and the <i>Municipal Government Act (MGA)</i> .
Prior to; Monday, May 10, 2010	Contact Municipal Affairs to discuss the potential impact of the Special School Tax Levy on the municipality and jurisdiction, and for the municipal contact information.
Monday, May 17, 2010	Coordinate with each affected municipality's returning officer, if plans are to proceed with a question on the ballot.
Sunday, June 20, 2010	Last day to give public notice of the board's intention to meet and consider a resolution to authorize the holding of a plebiscite (Section 190(2) SA).
Thursday, August 19, 2010	Last day to hold a public meeting and pass a resolution to authorize the holding of a plebiscite (Section 190(1) SA).
Sunday, October 17, 2010	Last day to withdraw a plebiscite by resolution, (Section 190(4) SA).
Monday, October 18, 2010	Election Day
Friday, October 22, 2010	Returning officer must post results of plebiscite vote by noon at the office of each local jurisdiction and advise the relevant Minister's Deputy Minister, (Section 96 LAEA).

SPECIAL SCHOOL TAX LEVY PLEBISCITE PUBLIC NOTICE FORM 20A

Form 20A

**SPECIAL SCHOOL TAX LEVY PLEBISCITE
PUBLIC NOTICE**

**School Act, Sections 271 & 276
Special School Tax Levy Plebiscite Regulation, A.R. 94/1998**

ATTENTION: ELECTORS of _____

(Name of District or Division)

No. _____

(Specify a Separate School Jurisdiction)

TAKE NOTICE that: The Board of Trustees of the above District/Division is seeking the approval of electors to levy an additional \$ _____ per year for a period of _____ year/years through a special school tax levy.
(amount) (number)

The funds raised will only be used for:

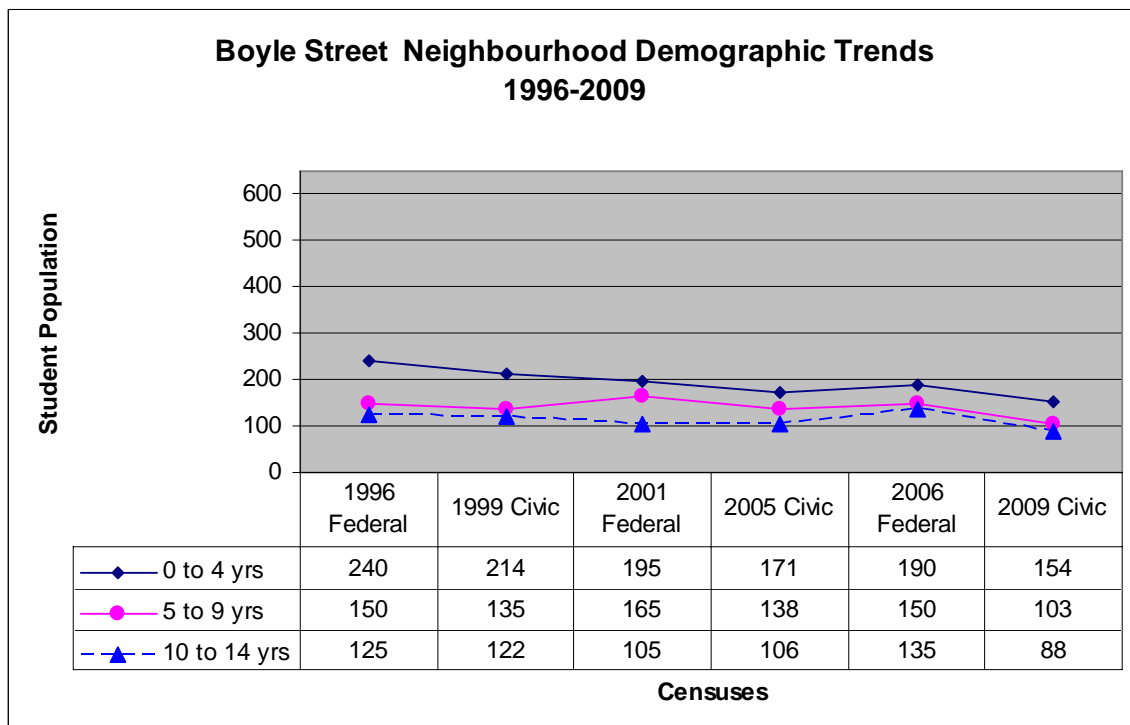
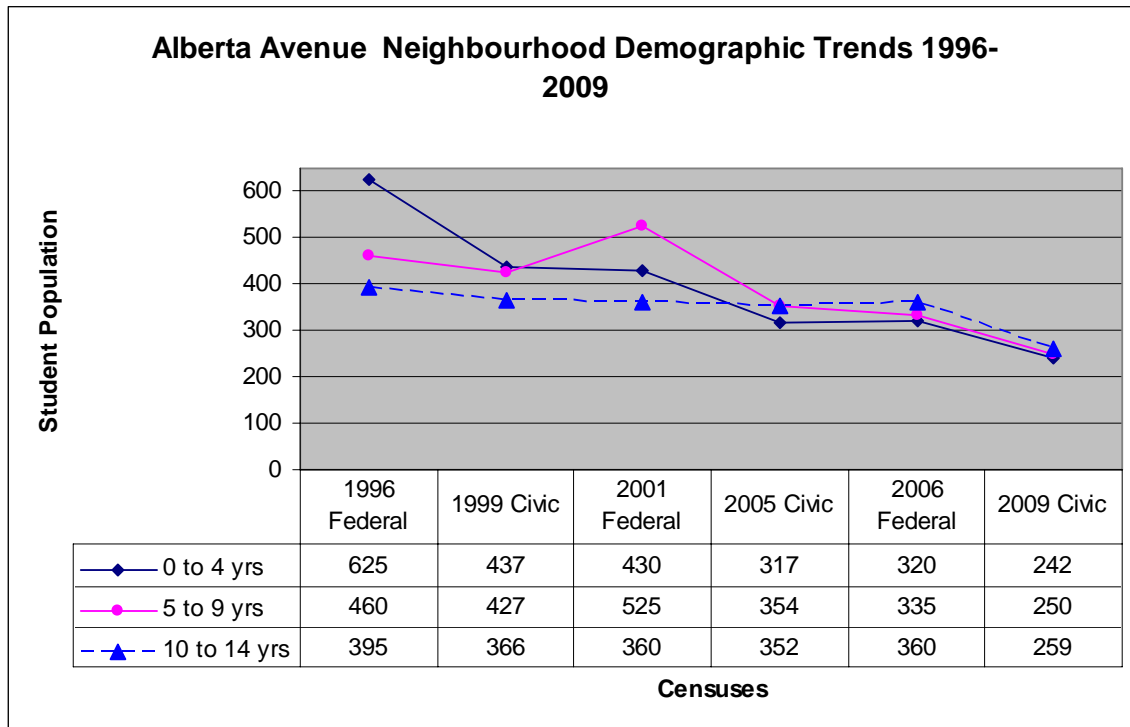
If this special school tax levy is supported by a majority of electors, it will result in an additional tax of approximately \$ _____ per year for a period of _____ year/years for a property valued at \$100 000 for tax purposes.
(amount) (number)

The Board of Trustees will present the question of a special school tax levy to its electors at the election for school trustees to be held on _____
(date of election)

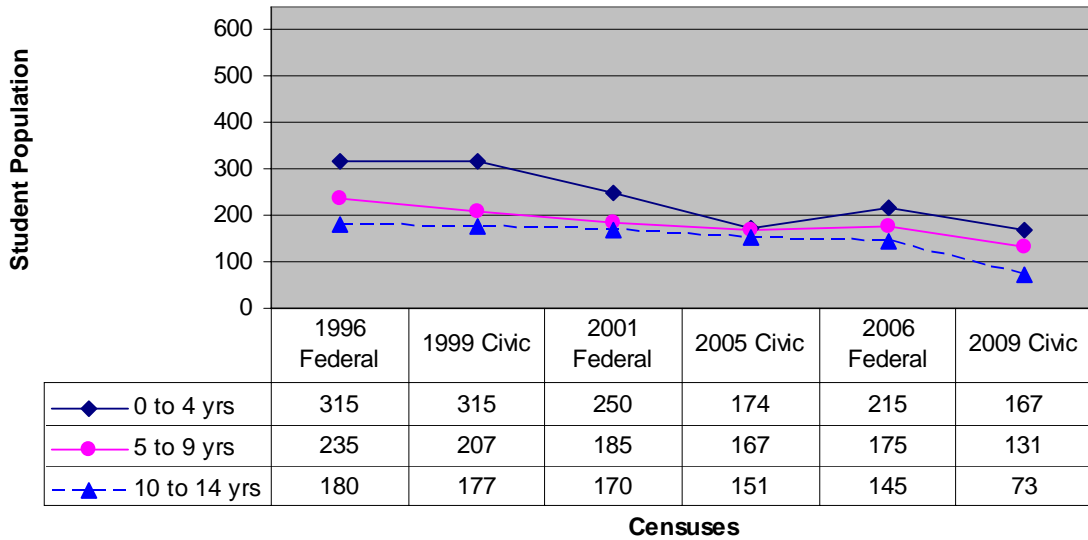
Secretary-Treasurer/Treasurer Name of School District or Division

Public Notice
271 (1) Subject to this Act, when public notice, other than notice of a public meeting under Section 269, is required to be given under this Act, the notice shall be given
(a) by posting it in 5 or more conspicuous places to which the public has normal and regular access, and
(b) by publishing it, at the same time the notice is posted, in a newspaper circulating within the district or division at least once a week for 2 weeks.
(2) A notice given under this section shall be in a form prescribed by the Minister.

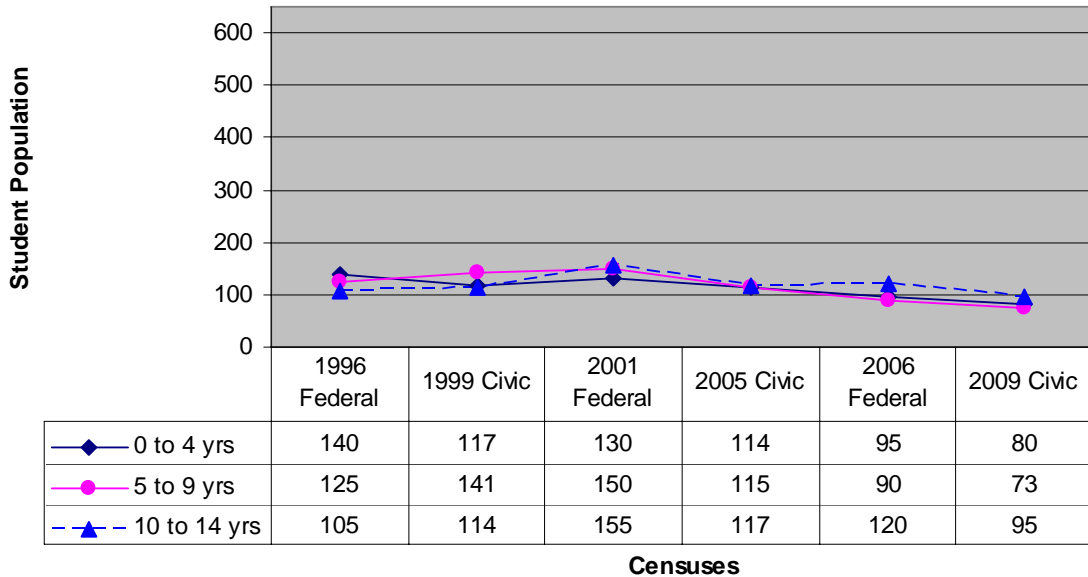
Neighbourhood Demographic Trends from 1996-2009 for City Centre Education Partnership Area



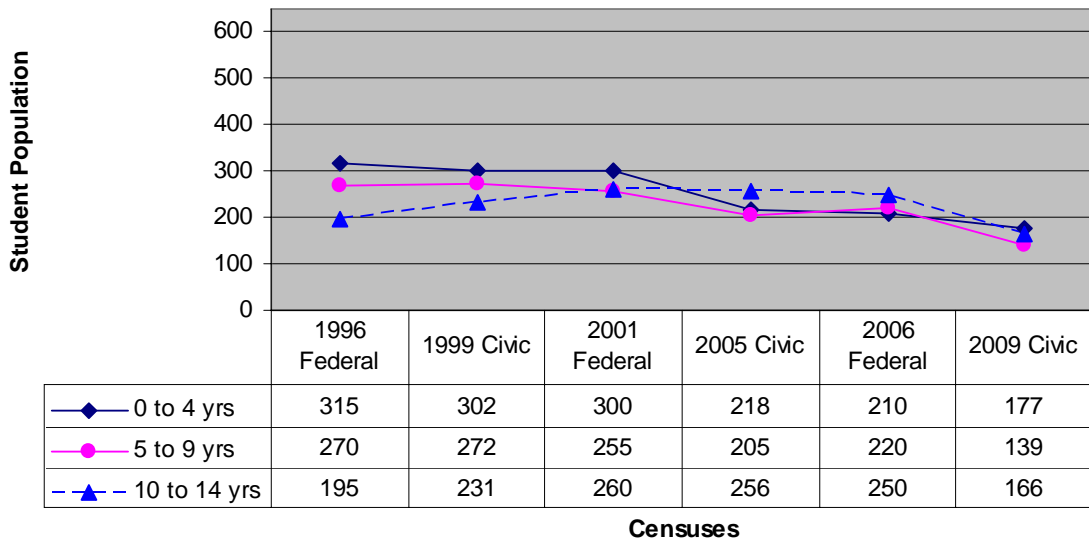
Central McDougall Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



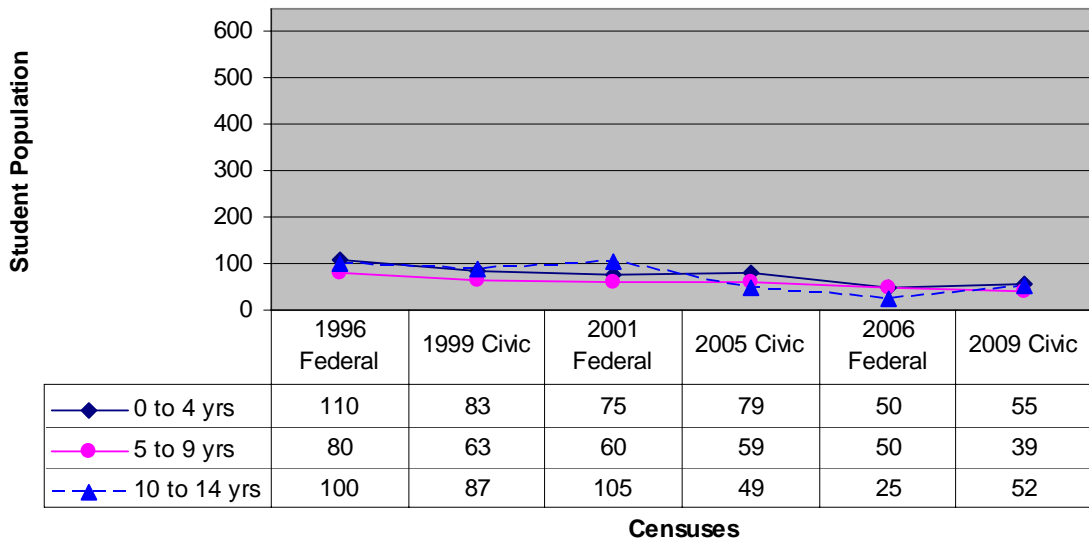
Delton Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



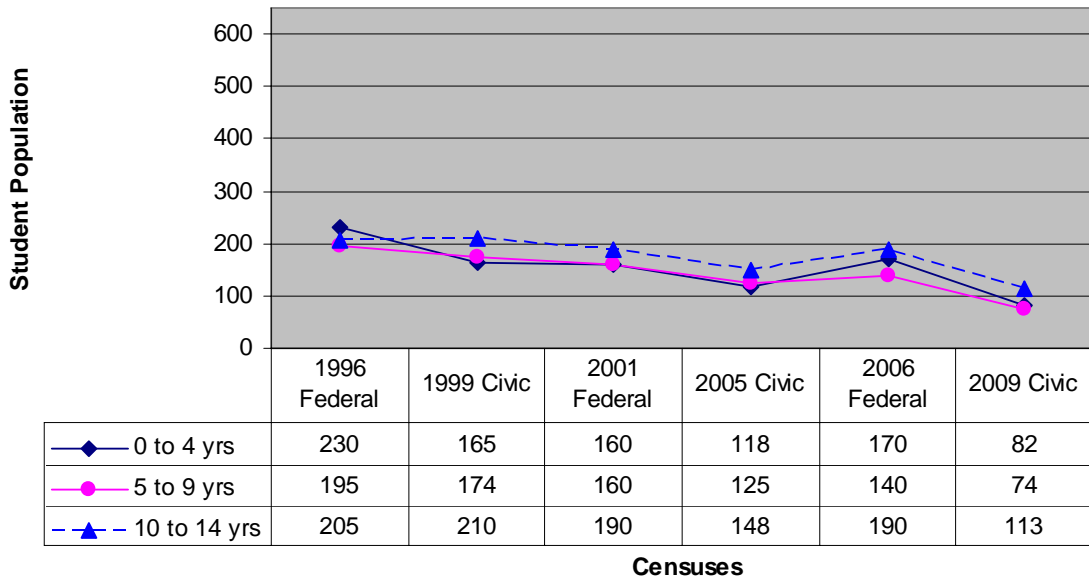
Eastwood Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



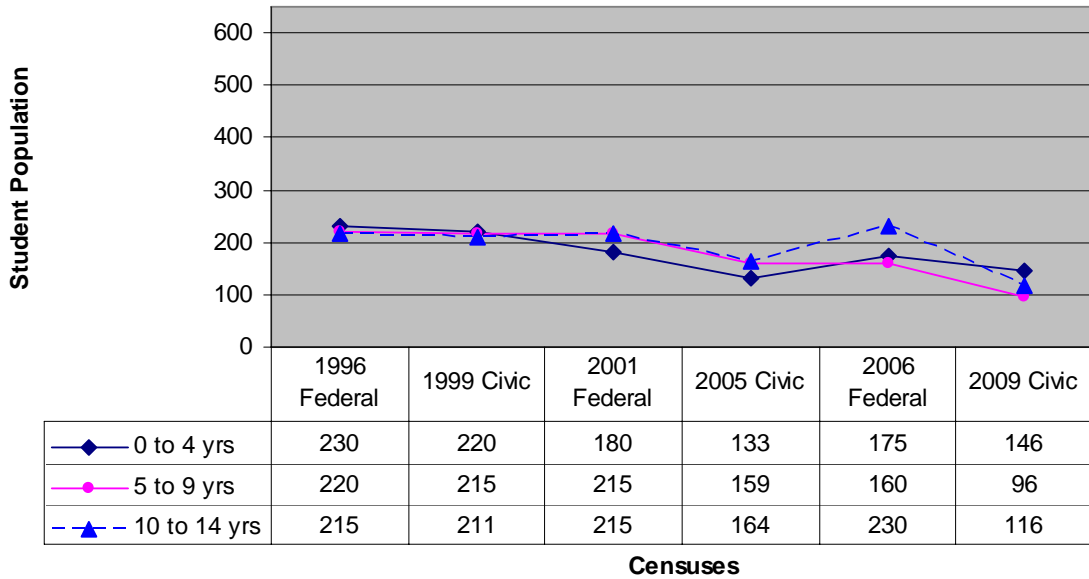
Elmwood Park Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996- 2009



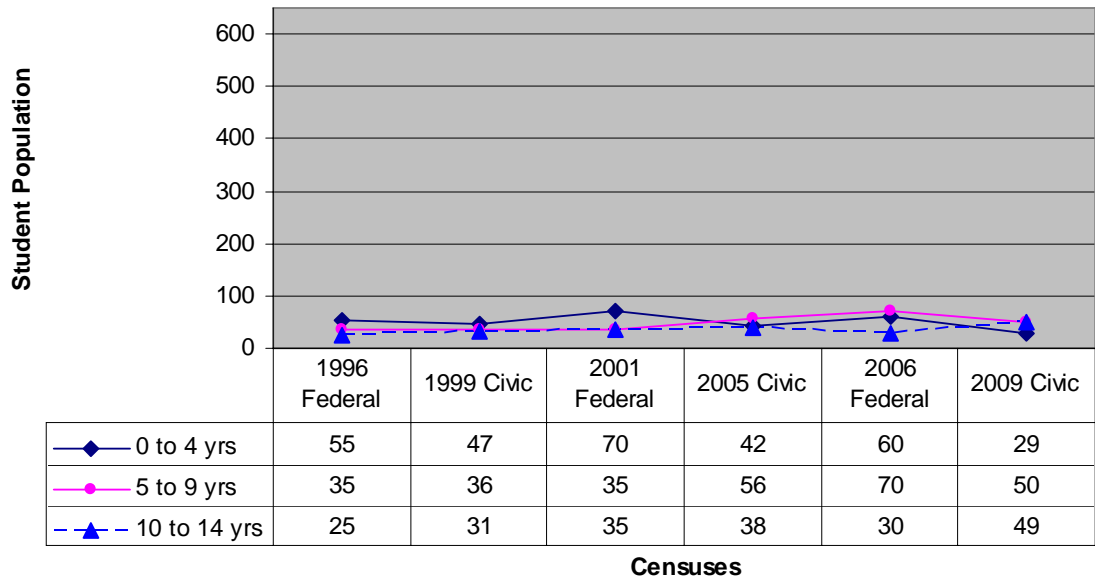
McCauley Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



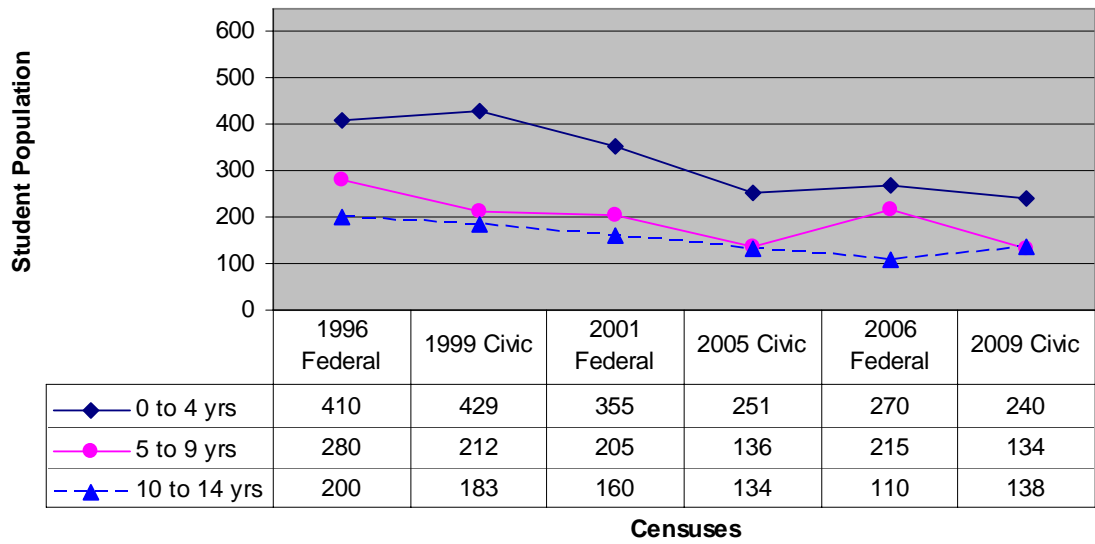
Parkdale Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



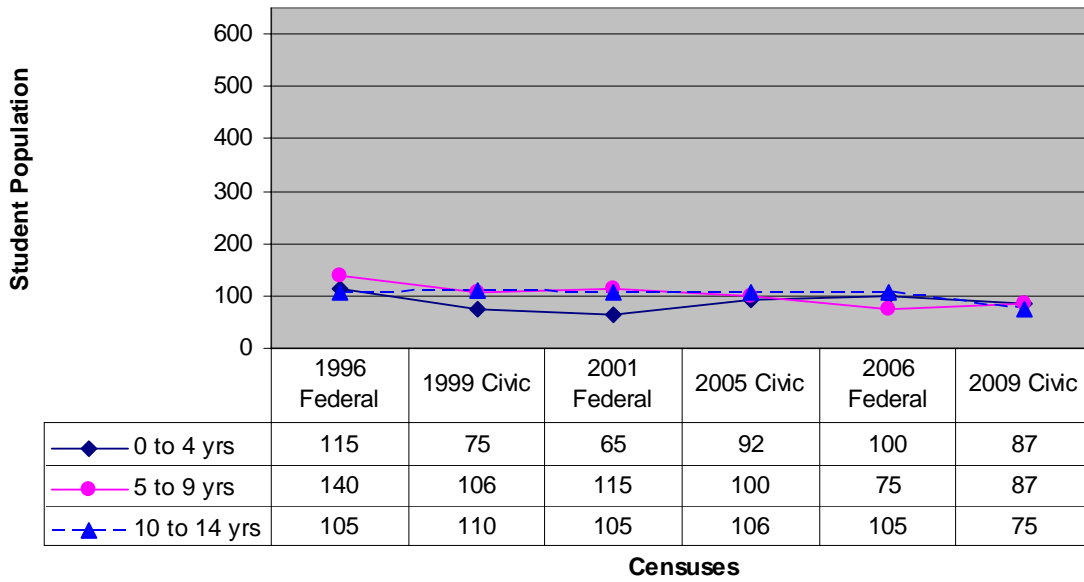
Prince Rupert Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



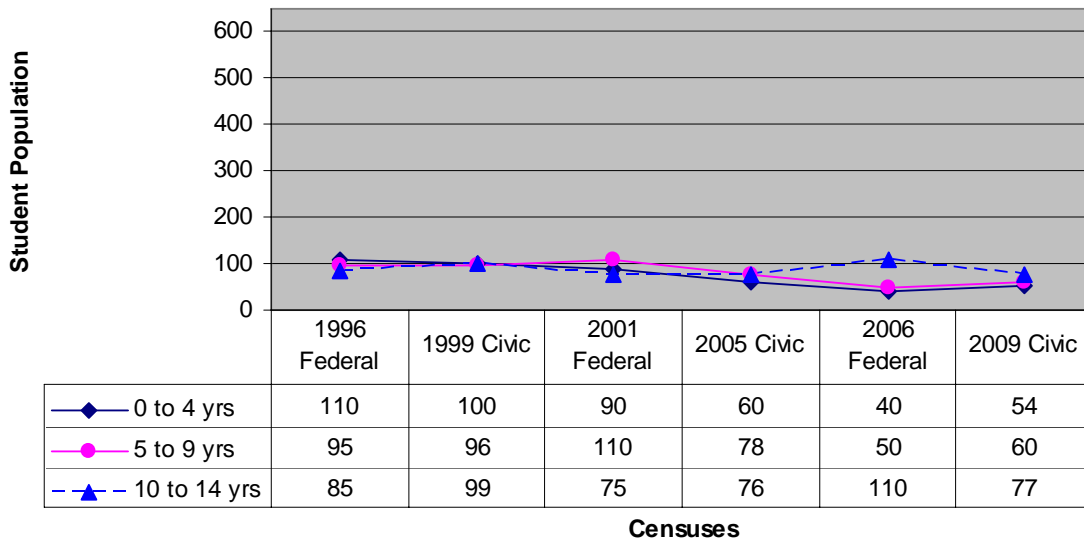
Queen Mary Park Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



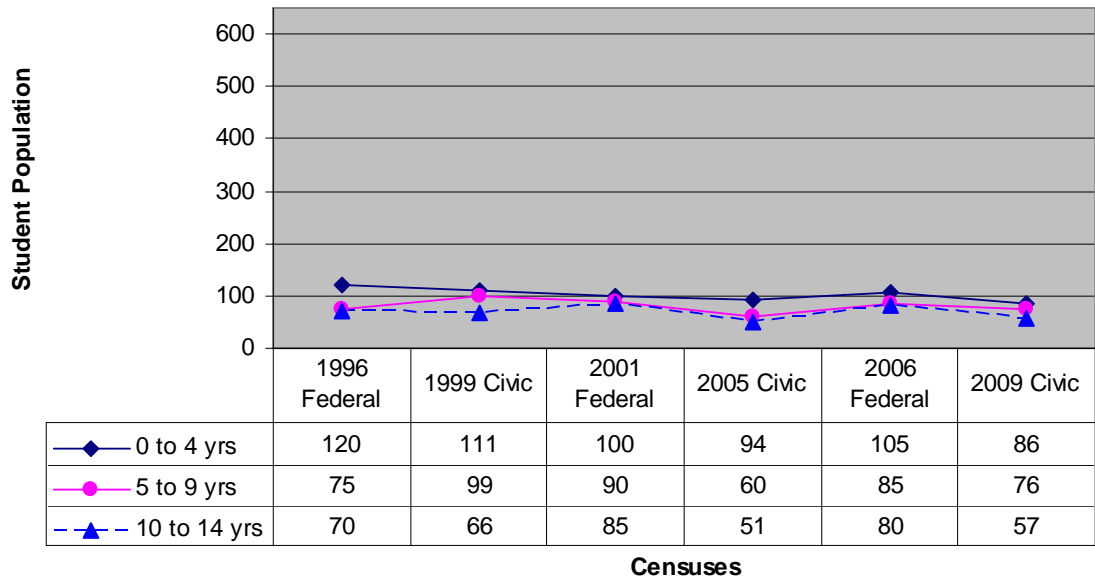
Riverdale Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



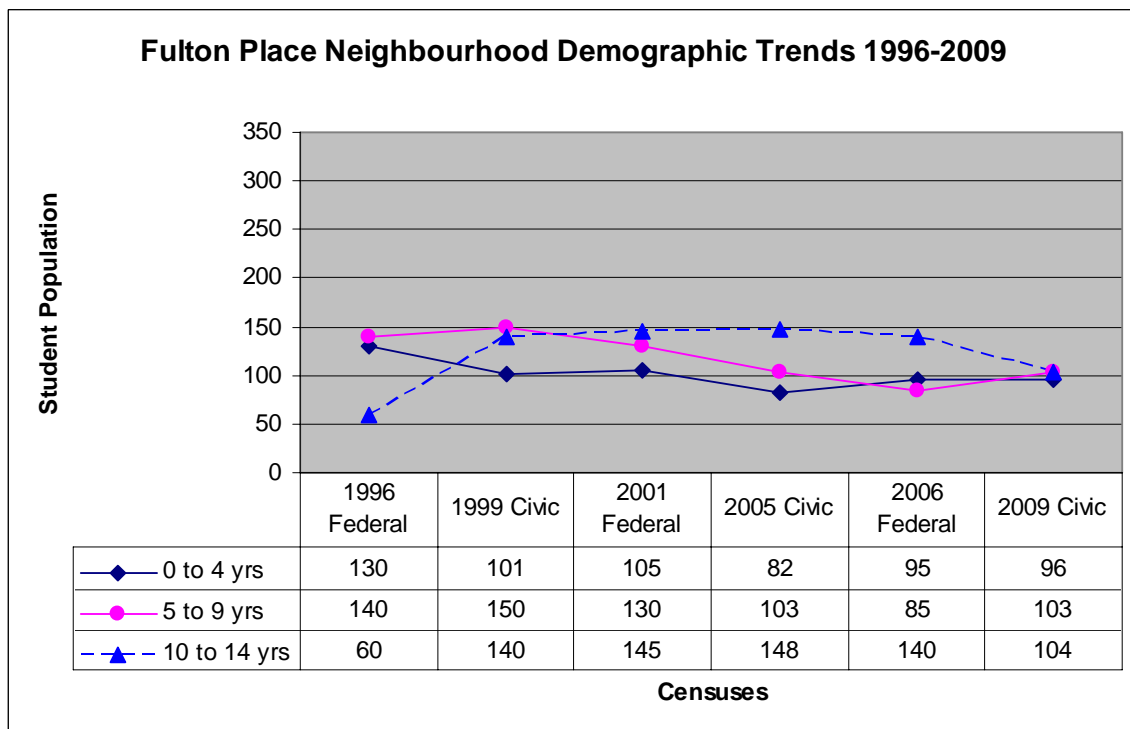
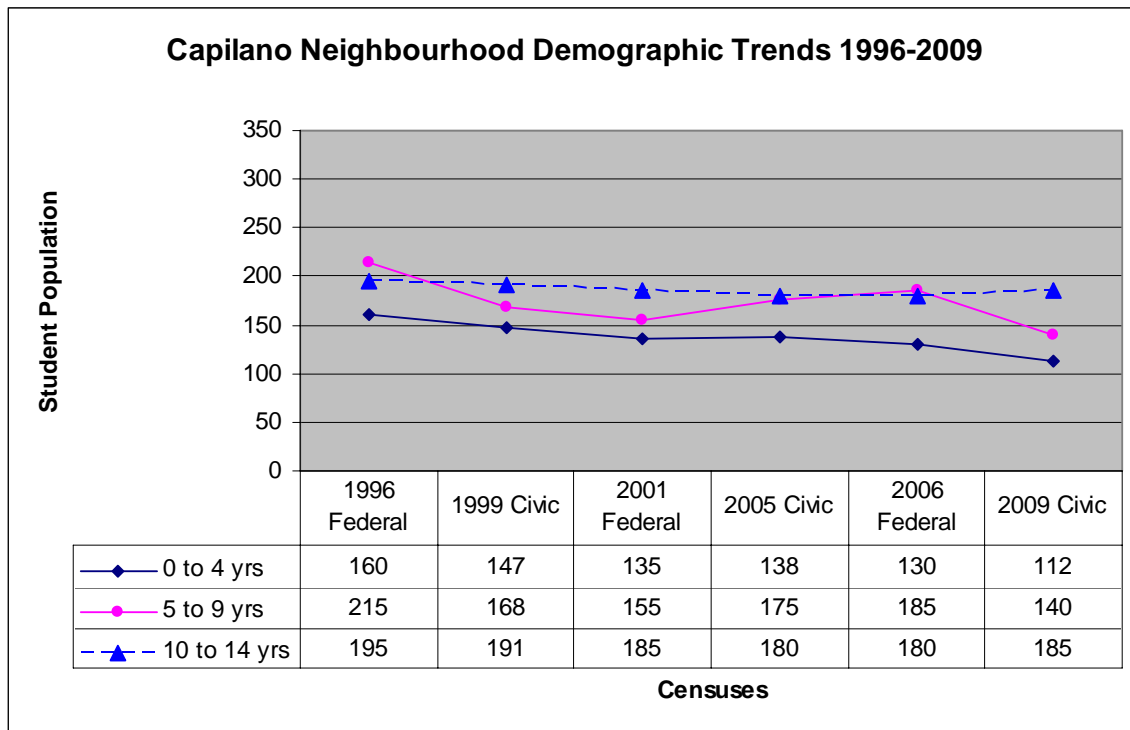
Spruce Avenue Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



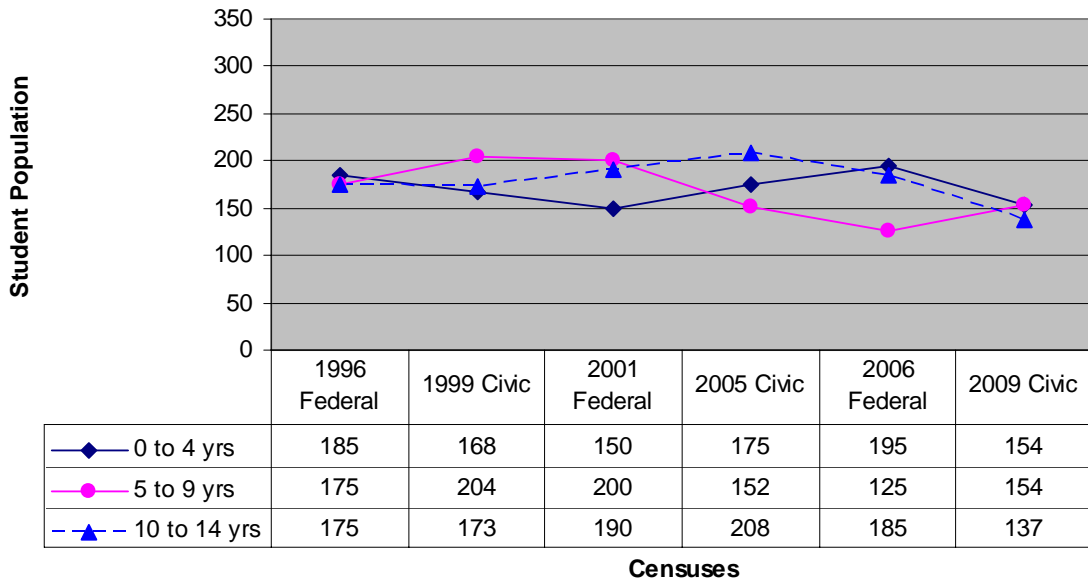
Westwood Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



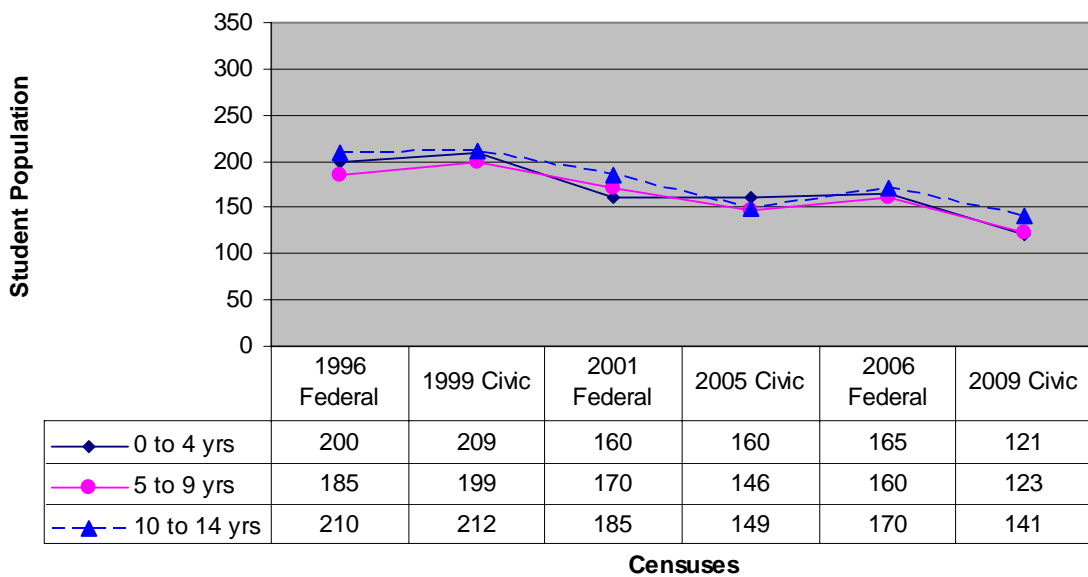
Neighbourhood Demographic Trends from 1996-2009 for Greater Hardisty Area



Gold Bar Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



Forest Heights Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009



Terrace Heights Neighbourhood Demographic Trends 1996-2009

