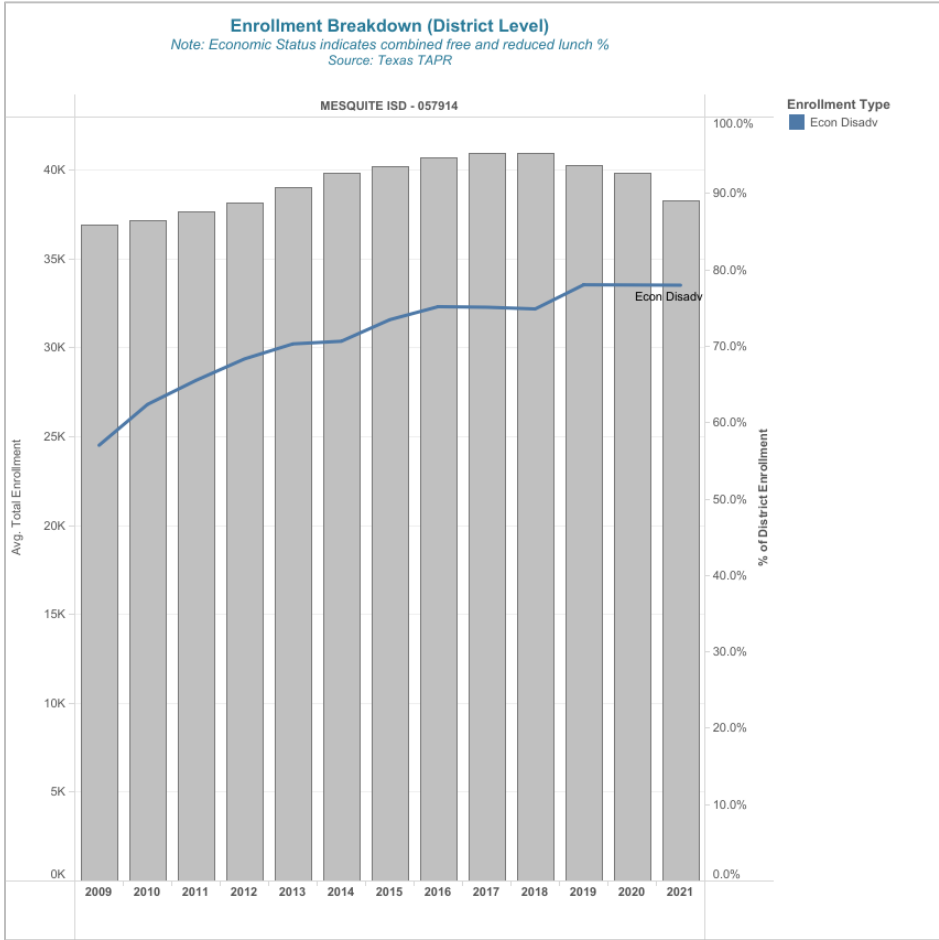


Enrollment and ESSER

A key first step in telling a district’s story and planning for coming school years is reviewing current enrollment and enrollment history. Historical perspective on enrollment numbers and student needs are critical data points that administrators can use to educate internal teams, school boards, and their communities.



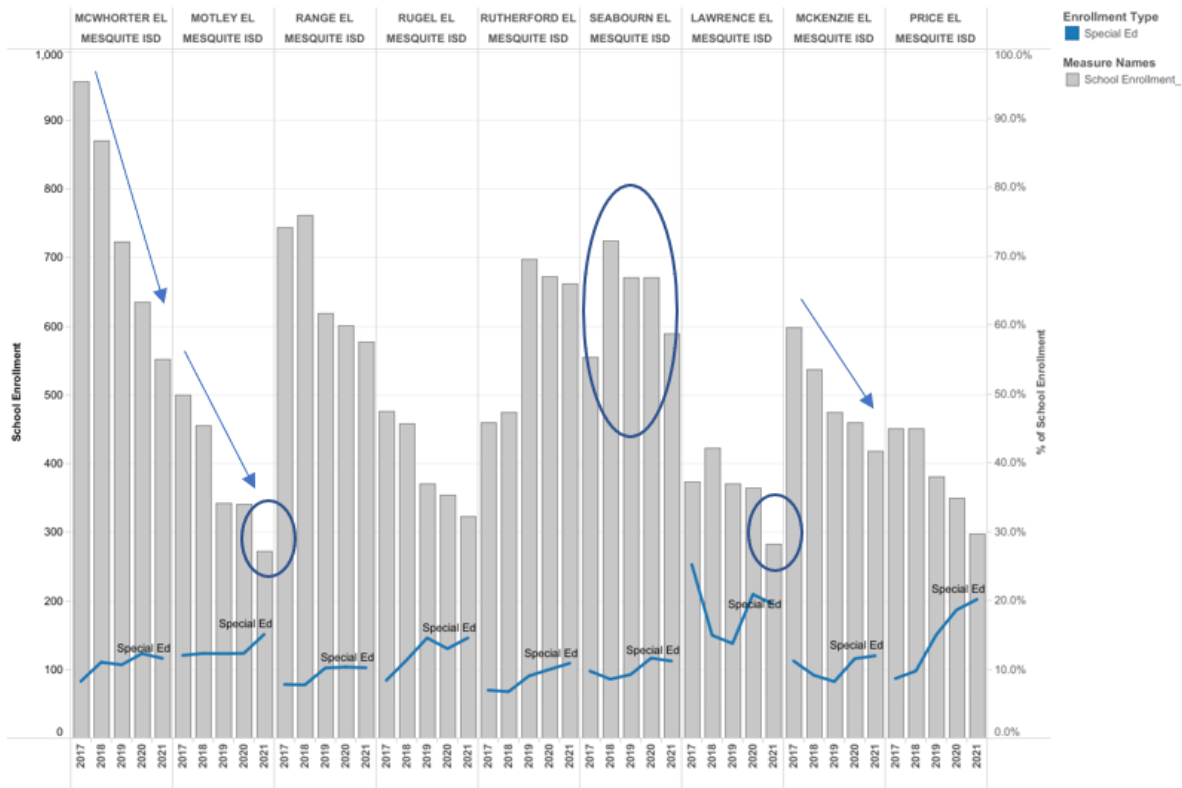
The example school district here experienced an enrollment decline in 2021, as did many districts around the country. While COVID-19 is likely to blame for the dip in 2021, the decline in enrollment actually began prior to 2021. The district will likely recover some of those losses, but to what degree? If you were to project enrollment in coming years, what impact should the community consider?

District enrollment changes are complicated and bring another new twist of complexity to the conversation, prompting question such as which schools within the district are seeing the biggest changes.

Below is a small subset of schools in a large suburban district.

Enrollment Breakdown (School Level)

Source: Texas TAPR



On the surface there are a several observations which might warrant additional consideration. Some suburban districts reach a point where there are fewer students in certain neighborhoods because more families without school age children or retirees choose to stay in that part of the community. As in the example above, a district in this scenario may see a steep decline in one or more elementary schools. Questions will likely begin to surface about staffing and budgeting concerns. In Florida, where funding is based on student type, it's also especially important to address student populations such as Special Ed. These groups will require special attention and professionals to deliver services.

When evaluating enrollment changes at your district, the two considerations that typically warrant the most focus are:

- **Changes in enrollment at the district level.** How much has your enrollment changed this year compared to prior years? This impacts state and federal funding. The ability to speak about enrollment trends and historical impact of changes for your district is critical to planning effectively for future revenues.
- **Changes in enrollment at the school level.** This impacts staffing and student teacher ratios, as well as distribution of special services. School-level discrepancies tend to be more common in larger districts but are easier to identify in smaller districts.

Analyzing your enrollment data early and often will help ensure your district is not only prepared to effectively communicate with stakeholders but is also prepared for the future.