



EXECUTIVE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
STAFF: BEN LEISHMAN & THOMAS YOUNG

MINIMUM SCHOOL PROGRAM ENROLLMENT GROWTH COST ESTIMATES

ISSUE BRIEF

SUMMARY

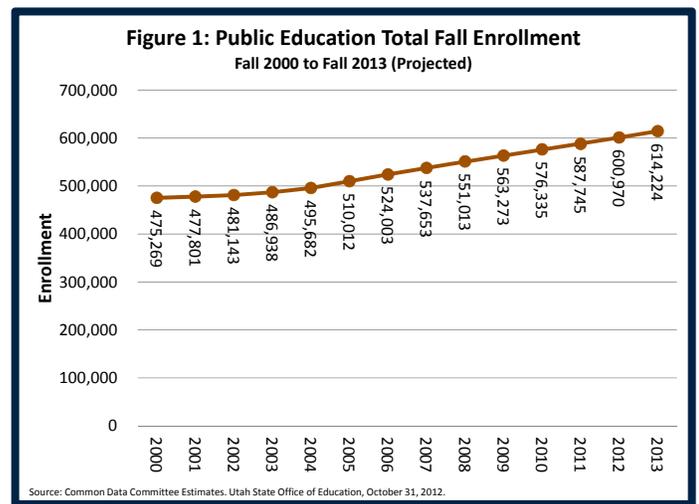
Increased student enrollment in Utah’s public schools results in additional Weighted Pupil Units (WPU) as required by certain statutory formulas. Each fall, public schools conduct an enrollment headcount. Using this base data, a consensus enrollment projection for the next fall is completed by the Common Data Committee (CDC). This brief highlights the consensus enrollment projections developed by the CDC and provides a range estimate on potential student enrollment growth costs in the coming budget year.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

The October student count determines a Local Education Agency’s (LEA) net student growth (positive or negative) for the current year and forms the basis for estimating student enrollments for the coming school year.

In October 2012, a total of 600,970 students enrolled in Utah’s public schools. This represents an increase of 13,225, or 2.3 percent, over fall 2011. Actual fall 2012 enrollment is 815 students higher than projected in fall 2011.

Figure 1 provides a history of total fall enrollment since fall 2000. Between fall 2000 and fall 2012, student enrollment in Utah’s public schools has increased by 125,701.



Fall 2013 Projection

The CDC includes representatives from the Utah State Office of Education, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, and the Legislative Fiscal Analyst. The CDC develops a consensus projection of total student enrollment for the coming school year. This enrollment count is used extensively in developing the coming year’s budget.

Common Data Committee projections show an estimated increase of 13,254 students in fall 2013. This is an increase of 2.2 percent, for a total estimated student enrollment of 614,224.

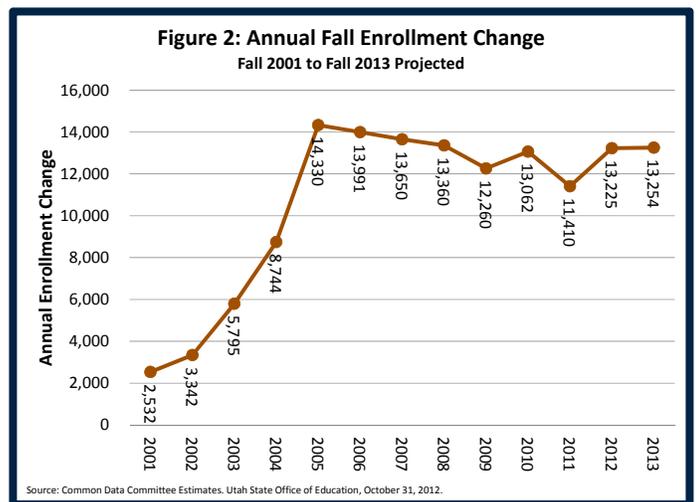
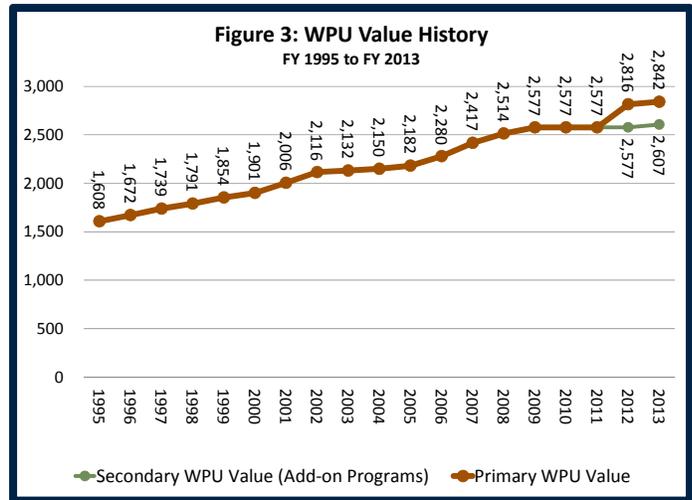


Figure 2 shows the annual change in fall enrollment since 2001. After an initial upswing in annual student growth peaking in fall 2005, the year-over-year change in fall enrollment has stabilized with a range of 12,000 to 14,000 new students each year. Projections conducted by the Utah State Office of Education in fall 2011 anticipate that student enrollment will continue this trend through 2017 then begin to slow.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH COST ESTIMATE

Growth in student enrollment results in additional Weighted Pupil Units (WPU) in the Basic School Program (BSP) as provided by statute. The BSP is the primary program in the Minimum School Program (MSP) and contains 12 categorical programs. The cost of each program is determined by the number of WPUs generated by LEAs multiplied by the WPU Value. Figure 3 provides a history of the WPU Value since 1995. Beginning in FY 2012, the Legislature established two WPU Values; the Primary WPU Value currently set at \$2,842, and the Secondary WPU Value applied to the Special Education Add-on and Career and Technical Education Add-on programs currently set at \$2,607.



Estimated FY 2014 Weighted Pupil Units

Additional WPUs increase the cost of the Basic School Program as each WPU receives funding based on the WPU Value established by the Legislature. Projections show that the 614,224 students anticipated to enroll Utah schools next fall will generate 802,015 WPUs. This is an increase of 19,998 WPUs over the 782,017 WPUs funded in the FY 2013 budget. Historically, the number of WPUs is approximately 1.3 times higher than total fall enrollment.

Estimated FY 2014 Cost

Preliminary estimates show student enrollment growth may cost an additional \$75 million in FY 2014. This amount includes the increased cost associated with additional WPUs and other program adjustments as specified by statute. An additional \$30 million is required to fund a statutory rate change for the Voted and Board Leeway programs.