

TRENTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS: 2022-2023 - STUDENT ENROLLMENT 22.23 & BEYOND

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Trenton Public Schools: State of the Schools

2023 & Beyond

- I. **INTRO/BACKGROUND.** As we begin 2023 and look ahead to the future, I feel compelled to reach out to our community and share a concern that has weighed heavily on my mind and heart since I became the Interim Superintendent in July of 2020. During the fall of 2020, it became apparent that our enrollment was going to be significantly less than the previous year. When we completed our Fall count, there were 142 less students enrolled for the 2020-21 school year.

This prompted a process of analysis related to enrollment data. Though we have seen increases in each of the last two years, our district has experienced a trend of declining enrollment over several decades. Sharing this information with our community is vital to the practice of being transparent and working together towards resolution. Please review the information and understand that it is a summary of trends and data over time.

- II. **2022-23.**

Trenton Public Schools began the year with roughly 2533 in our database in late August, 2022 (prior to the start of the school year). We also knew that we would continue to have adds/drops throughout the first month. In the end, we exceeded our preliminary estimates from last year by 36 students. Though the district total settled at 2492, this resulted in 34 more students than last year and illustrates two years of growth despite the overall trending decline that dates back to 2014 (the one exception was 2018). Since 2008, we have approximately 400 fewer students at TPS. Though the decline has slowed over the last two years, we still have approximately 55 (-2.2%) less students than in 2019 (the school year that the pandemic began). For reference, see Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1 (Enrollment 2008-2022)

DISTRICT SUMMARY															
Fall, Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
ES	1085	1080	1009	1068	1068	1048	1053	1070	1063	1072	1080	1058	1126	1206	1216
MS	514	505	554	595	597	594	594	621	640	668	659	685	670	679	664
THS	893	873	842	884	920	921	941	974	982	959	925	904	962	985	994
Totals	2492*	2458*	2405*	2547	2585	2563	2588	2665	2685	2699	2664	2647	2758	2870	2874
Change	34	53	-142	-38	22	-25	-77	-20	-14	35	17	-111	-112	-4	185
Increase/Decrease from previous year															
%	1.47%	2.16%	-5.60%	-1.50%	1%	-1.00%	-2.90%	-0.70%	-0.50%	1.30%	0.60%	-4.00%	-3.90%	-0.10%	4.00%
						Y5's began									
		SOC: 324	13%	2168						Since 2008		-13%			
	*does not include DHH			DHH: 33 partial FTE		2022									
				DHH: 35 partial FTE		2021									
	#s were reconfigured due to inconsistent Y5 inclusion & DHH inclusion Y5 = 2017-18														

III. **WAYNE COUNTY 2002- 2022.**

It is important to note that this trend is not unique to Trenton Public Schools. Since 2002, enrollment numbers of eligible school aged children in **Wayne County** have dipped from just over 500,000 to just over 260,000 today (source: Wayne County Regional Educational Services Agency). For reference, neighboring districts have also experienced an overall decline in enrollment since 2015-16 (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 (Neighboring Communities Enrollment Decline Since 2015-16: Source Wayne RESA- 3/23)

Southgate	-22%
Taylor	-22%
Grosse Ile	-16%
Livonia	-9.2%
Trenton	-5.8%
Northville	-4.7%
Wyandotte	-4.8%

(During this same time, Gibraltar and Brownstown Woodhaven have gained +1.04% and +1.06% respectively)

Moreover, **Wayne County Charter Schools (Public School Academies) have also seen a 6.5%** decrease in enrollment since 2015-16.

In Detroit, which is not considered in the aforementioned report, enrollment decline continues to be a major issue. See here:

<https://www.wxyz.com/news/thousands-fewer-students-mean-millions-fewer-funding-dollars-for-dpscd>

IV. THE BIG PICTURE/STATE OF MICHIGAN (from Bridge Magazine 2.6.2023 - for the full report, click here: [Michigan loses 14K people a year to other states. It could be worse \(and has\)](#)

- ***Michigan has had a net loss of over 43,000 residents to other states since 2020, with Florida the biggest gainer***

- *But the rate of losses is slowing. Previous years have been far worse*
- *Half of the adults who leave have a college degree and the losses could hurt the state as it tries to grow economy*

Michigan has lost the equivalent of a standing-room only crowd at the Detroit Tigers' Comerica Park, 43,200 people, to other states since 2020, recent Census data shows. Believe it or not, that's relatively good news. The rate of migration to other states appears to be slowing, down to about 14,000 residents per year from 26,000 per year to 2010 to 2019, and 54,000 people per year from 2000 to 2009.

From Bridge Magazine - 5/16/2023: [Can Michigan defuse its population time bomb? See how far we fall short](#) **SHARE THIS:** [Share this article on Twitter](#) [Share this article on Facebook](#) [Share this article on LinkedIn](#) [Share this article via email](#) [Print this article](#) [Donate](#)

Overall, student pupil counts across the State are projected to continue to decline over the next few years. The state is projected to lose 5,283 students in the 2022-23 school year, 6,000 students in 2023-24, and 5,200 students in 2024-25 (Michigan Association of School Administrators, January 2023). During the most recent CREC (Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference), estimates of losses consisted of 6,200 students in the 2022-23 school year, 5,600 students in 2023-24, and 5,600 students in 2024-25 (May 2023).

Though there may be a plethora of reasons that provide reasons for this downturn, for schools, it simply means that there are fewer students and this means that there is less operating revenue. In a recent Parent Council meeting, members were surprised to hear that over 55,000 students “disappeared” in the state of Michigan during the pandemic. Though many have come back to their respective schools, many are still not accounted for. Link to U.S. Census/Michigan data:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/school-performance-supports/educational-supports/Tools-and-Resources/US-Census-Data> .

[Northern Michigan is no exception to the state's declining trend in student enrollment](#) (see below)

V. UNDERSTANDING PROPOSAL A from 1994

Having been hired as a full time teacher in 1994 (the year Proposal A was passed), I have always understood the implications of Proposal A. Proposal A significantly changed school funding - a fact that has gone relatively unnoticed for almost 30 years. The bottom line was that this legislation shifted the primary source of school funding from property taxes to the sales tax. To this day, many do not realize that the 33% increase to the sales tax was intended to go to public schools. In theory, the more spending in a vibrant economy, the better off schools would be. Consequently, schools in Michigan are funded through several revenue streams (see Table 1.3 below). There is also a small amount of revenue that comes from the Casino Tax, an Industrial Facilities Tax, and “other”.

Table 1.3 (School Funding in Michigan)

Sales Tax	46%
State Income Tax	21%
State Education Tax (6 mills)	15%
Lottery	7%
Use Tax	4%
Real Estate Transfer Tax	2.6%
Tobacco Tax	2.5%

Proposal A promised a minimum per pupil foundation allowance (today that amount is @\$9000 per student). To help understand this verbiage, simply imagine the various taxes being collected, “deposited” into the School Aid Fund, and then being distributed to districts based on the number of students that are enrolled within the district.

Proponents of Proposal A also shared that there would be lower property taxes and more school accountability. Upon reflection, obviously property taxes did not remain at lower levels and the Michigan Department of Education has remained steadfast in promoting various methods of school accountability, though there are often changes that create inconsistencies. Using the enrollment formula associated with Proposal A, Trenton Public Schools now operates with approximately \$3.6 million less dollars than in 2008. From an economic perspective, the dollar had an average inflation rate of 2.19% per year between 2008 and today, producing a cumulative price increase of 38.41%. This means that today's prices are 1.38 times as high as average prices since 2008, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer price index. To put that in a practical perspective, imagine trying to create a budget today with the wages that you made 17 years ago. This is the task that we have been confronted with for the last three years. - For more information related to Proposal A, please click here: [A Brief History of Proposal A](#)

VI. MISCONCEPTIONS.

Many times I am approached or observe conversations regarding the overcrowding at our elementary schools. The general impression is that we are growing. However, this is not true. Though we have had better numbers over the last several years, we need to remind ourselves that we were once a district with four elementary schools (**Taylor and Owen were closed in 2011 and 2007 respectively**). This was done after the district had hired an outside firm to conduct a demographic survey, gather data, and determine long term enrollment projections. It was determined that our enrollment would not be able to support keeping these buildings open. Currently, Trenton Public Schools subscribes to a plan that anticipates approximately 200 students per grade K-12. This goal was used to devise the plan for our 2018 bond. The belief was that we could sustain our economic standing by maintaining an entry of 200 students while roughly graduating that same number of students. Figure 1.4 reflects our numbers from 2021-22 and forecasts a natural progression without any consideration for any internal or external variables (see below in Section VIII).

VII. ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

(SEE TABLE 1.4 BELOW). The color coded chart below shows the actual number of students currently enrolled in each grade. If you follow the color across, you will see the natural projections of our overall population. If you look at the blue arrows, you will notice observable lower numbers in the Class of 2027 and the Class of 2030 (4th & 7th grade. Simple math shows that our current average number of students at THS is 218 per graduating year vs the 147 average of these two grades combined.

This difference alone equates to a differential of 71 students. In fiscal terms, this means a difference of about \$675,000. The final blue/red outlined arrow illustrates that Trenton High School could have potentially less than 700 students in the 2026-27 school year.

Table 1.4 (2021 - 2027 Enrollment Projections)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Y5s	34	20				
Kindergar	173	189	175	←		
1st Grade	164	180	189	175		
2nd Grade	181	167	180	189	175	
3rd Grade	171	192	167	180	189	175
4th Grade	150	177	192	167	180	189
5th Grade	173	160	177	192	167	180
	1046	1085	1080	903	711	544
6th Grade	173	186	160	177	192	167
7th Grade	143	183	186	160	177	192
8th Grade	189	145	183	186	160	177
	505	514	529	523	529	536
9th Grade	243	218	145	183	186	160
10th Grade	201	248	218	145	183	186
11th Grade	218	203	248	218	145	183
12th Grade	211	224	203	248	218	145
	873	893	814	794	732	674
TOTAL:		2492				

Class of 2027 and 2030 enrollment numbers are low.

2025-26 & 2026-27 are "red flag" years for THS; enrollment would be proportionately low in in grades 9-12.

ADDED "BALANCED" PERSPECTIVE. Table 1.5 reveals the essence of the declining enrollment perspective. As mentioned in the previous section, our goal is to eventually see grades with enrollment numbers closer to 200. **By examining the table below, you can see that there is an innate differential between our current kindergarten class and our Class of 2023 graduates of 35 less students.** If you reflect upon our current 2nd, 5th, and 8th grade numbers, the difference is even greater (167, 160, and 145).

Table 1.5 (Kindergarten vs. 12th Grade)

Kindergarten: 189	9th Grade: 218
1st Grade: 180	10th Grade: 248
2nd Grade: 167	11th Grade: 223
3rd Grade: 192	12th Grade: 224

VIII. TPS MOBILITY REPORT - STATUS OF STUDENTS COMING AND GOING

A common misconception is that Trenton Public Schools lose students to neighboring schools. Though this may have been true in the past, overall, we are gaining students from other districts as seen below in Table 1.6. Ultimately, Trenton Public Schools brings in more students than they lose. Taylor (+58), Lincoln Park (+29), and Woodhaven-Brownstown (+52) provide the greatest influx of students.

Table 1.6 (Incoming vs Outgoing Students)

5/15/2023 District Number: 82155

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Student Mobility Report - Incoming General Education FTEs by District of Residence Trenton Public Schools 82155 Supplemental 2023														
	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	Total
Airport Community Schools	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.97	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.97	0.00	1.00	1.00	10.94
Allen Park Public Schools	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	4.00
Crestwood School District	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Dearborn City School District	0.00	0.32	0.00	0.53	0.53	0.68	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	5.06
Dearborn Heights School District #7	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.84	0.00	0.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.75
Detroit Public Schools Community District	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.81	0.00	3.81
Ecorse Public Schools	0.00	0.19	0.00	0.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	1.10
Flat Rock Community Schools	2.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	4.84	1.00	3.69	2.49	2.91	6.97	4.00	4.00	3.00	39.90
Gibraltar School District	2.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.91	3.50	2.00	19.41
Grosse Ile Township Schools	2.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	4.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	12.00
Huron School District	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	2.84	5.00	6.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	23.84
Jefferson Schools (Monroe)	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	3.90
Lincoln Park, School District of the Cit	1.49	3.00	1.00	2.00	0.84	0.00	3.00	2.89	1.00	3.00	4.00	3.94	3.00	29.16
Livonia Public Schools School District	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Melvindale-North Allen Park Schools	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.84	0.00	0.92	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	3.76
Monroe Public Schools	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.97	0.00	1.00	1.00	3.97
River Rouge, School District of the City	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.94	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.94
Riverview Community School District	5.00	1.87	2.00	4.00	1.00	4.00	2.00	2.78	0.00	2.44	6.69	4.00	3.00	38.78
Romulus Community Schools	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.87	0.00	0.00	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.91	1.00	4.27
Roseville Community Schools	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Southgate Community School District	2.16	1.00	4.00	1.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.97	1.00	6.81	3.00	8.00	39.94
Taylor School District	6.00	5.30	3.84	3.00	1.00	4.94	2.00	2.00	1.00	6.00	5.94	8.00	8.98	58.00
Van Buren Public Schools	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
Woodhaven-Brownstown School District	5.00	4.19	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	5.75	3.91	2.84	4.00	7.00	7.00	51.69

Student Mobility Report - Incoming General Education FTEs by District of Residence Trenton Public Schools 82155 Supplemental 2023														
	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	Total
Wyandotte, School District of the City o	2.00	1.00	3.00	1.94	0.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	0.00	1.88	1.00	2.97	2.00	20.79
FTE Total	30.65	19.87	20.84	26.75	14.92	17.62	23.44	28.24	24.65	40.07	41.35	49.13	47.48	385.01

Student Mobility Report - Outgoing General Education FTEs by Educating District Trenton Public Schools 82155 Supplemental 2023														
	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	Total
Allen Park Public Schools	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
Covenant House Academy Central	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Creative Montessori Academy	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
Dearborn Heights School District #7	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Detroit Public Schools Community District	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00
Flat Rock Community Schools	0.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	1.17	0.00	3.98	3.64	2.00	4.98	2.00	26.77
Gibraltar School District	5.00	2.38	7.56	0.00	5.50	3.00	3.93	2.17	4.34	1.00	4.00	2.33	5.00	46.21
Grosse Ile Township Schools	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.93	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	0.97	0.00	1.00	3.00	0.00	11.90
Huron School District	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	1.64
Lincoln Park, School District of the Cit	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.13
Melvindale-North Allen Park Schools	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
River Heights Academy	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.94	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.94
Riverview Community School District	0.00	1.26	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.88	2.00	1.00	7.78	6.00	6.72	4.00	3.00	39.64
South Redford School District	0.80	1.14	0.96	1.14	0.64	0.99	0.52	1.40	0.38	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.00	8.18
Southgate Community School District	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.13	1.00	2.00	0.00	3.00	2.00	2.75	3.92	19.80
Summit Academy North	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	3.00
Taylor School District	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.44	0.00	0.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.97
Trillium Academy	0.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.86
Van Buren Public Schools	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Woodhaven-Brownstown School District	1.00	0.00	4.00	1.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	5.00	4.00	1.68	28.68
Wyandotte, School District of the City o	1.00	0.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	0.00	21.00
FTE Total	10.66	10.78	25.52	9.07	15.14	19.00	16.76	12.14	26.39	18.17	24.93	23.56	16.60	228.72

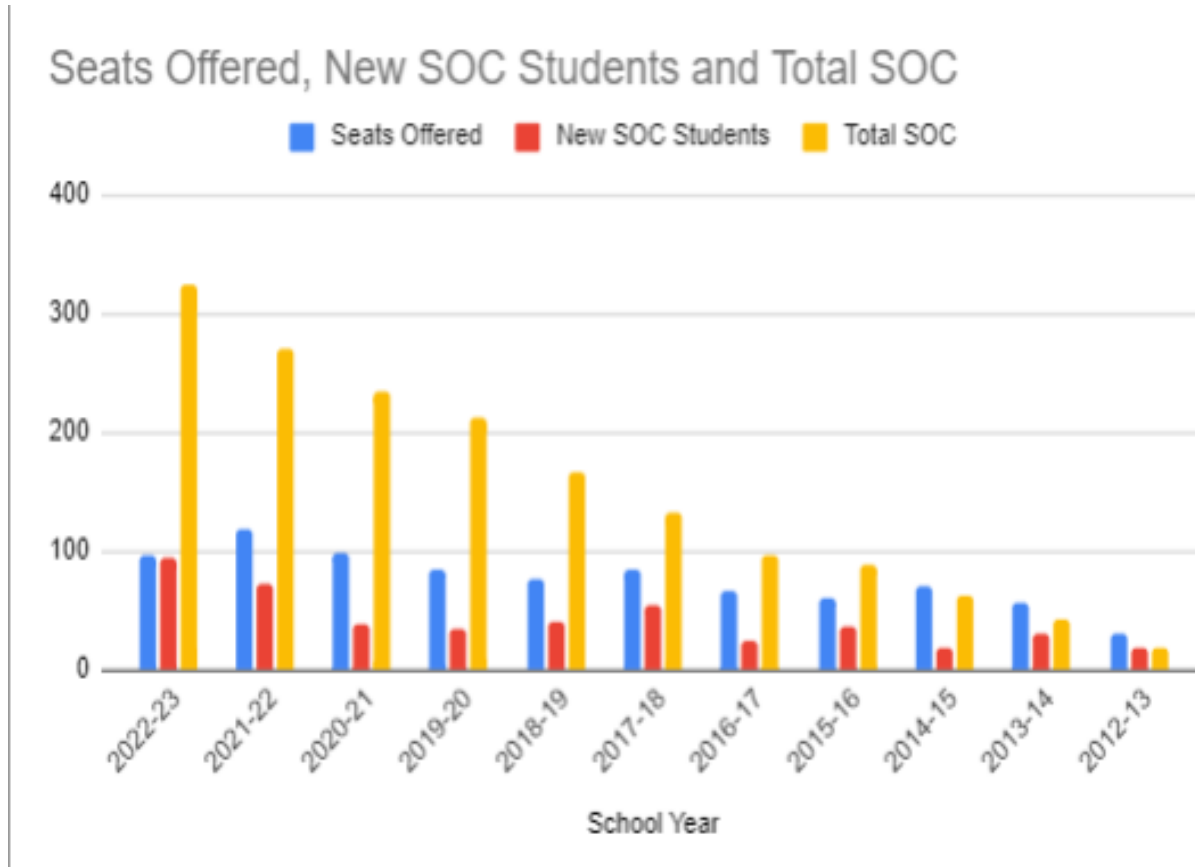
IX. DEMOGRAPHIC/COMMUNITY CYCLES.

Despite the grim numbers, it is not uncommon for a community to go through a cyclical process of residents growing older and moving on. Trenton has been no different. Despite the upturn in new families coming into our city, it has not innately resolved the problem of having less students. By examining Figure 1-1 above, you will see that our current enrollment reflects a rather significant number of Schools of Choice students. In fact, for our fall count, we had 324 students K-12. This practice began in 2012-13 when we took on our first 18 students. Today, 13% of our students come from neighboring districts. Without their attendance, we would have less programs, less resources, and less opportunities for our students. In Figure 1-7 & 1-8, you will see a gradual increase in SOC that has escalated over the last few years.

X. SCHOOL OF CHOICE ENROLLMENT.

Trenton Public Schools began accepting School of Choice students during the 2012.13 school year. Being a School of Choice district under the State School Aid Act MCL 388.1705c, Section 105c, Trenton Public Schools offers two calendar windows for enrollment and a set number of “seats offered”. Seats are limited based on the enrollment numbers in each grade. Thus, by examining the previously shared data, it would be a fair deduction to assume that we have many seats available for both of our current 5th and 8th grades. By examining the graph and table below, you can see the gradual ascent of School of Choice enrollment. We currently have 324 School of Choice students attending Trenton Public Schools. This equates to 13% of our current enrollment number. In fiscal terms, this equates to approximately \$2.97 million dollars for our annual operating budget.

Figure 1-7 (School of Choice Enrollment Data)



(continued on the next page)

Figure 1-8 (School of Choice Enrollment - Actual Numbers)

Year	Seats Offered	Students	Total
2022-23	96	95	324
2021-22	118	72	270
2020-21	98	38	234
2019-20	85	35	213
2018-19	77	40	167
2017-18	85	55	133
2016-17	67	24	96
2015-16	61	37	89
2014-15	70	18	62
2013-14	57	31	43
2012-13	30	18	18

KEY FOR TABLE:

Seats Offered = student applications available for that school year

Students = students accepted/enrolled

Total = accumulated SOC students k-12 enrolled in TPS

XI. FUTURE.

As we begin 2023 and look ahead, it is obvious that there are potential challenges, however, it is imperative that WE work collectively to keep our district strong. This means that a unified approach to problem solving and putting kids first is imperative to our decision making. In Trenton, we have always maintained a tradition of excellence and we must continue to provide our students with every opportunity to experience success.

XII. RIGHT NOW.

Currently, TPS leadership has continued to utilize opportunities that are available through grants and funding from the state and national government to provide additional support to our students. The concern from being awarded such funding is the sustainability of such programs and positions once the grant money has been used. Additionally, our enrollment has allowed us to maintain our current operations. Most recently, we learned that Trenton Public Schools qualified as an approved district for the U.S. Department of Energy's Renew America's Schools grant. Schools can now apply for the first round of the Renew America's Schools grant, up to \$80 million of the \$500 million program, to make energy improvements. Though these opportunities may not come to fruition or qualify as recurring revenue, we know that strategic planning is vital to our future. Moreover, we have aggressively promoted our district through media campaigns over the last two years (through various social media platforms), partnerships with our local newspapers, and advertisements/commercials on local television. Promoting a positive perspective of our district is also an important and vital part of our efforts to bring families to Trenton and correspondingly to Trenton Public Schools.

In closing, please feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas, or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Douglas Mentzer

Superintendent Mentzer