THE NAIS DEMOGRAPHIC CENTER
Metropolitan Area Reports

CBSA[1]: Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA[2]

Metropolitan Area Reports summarize key demographic changes for a specific geographic region, suggest strategic considerations for schools given these changes, and offer resources that can assist schools in dealing with an ever-changing marketplace. For specific demographic reports for your geographic region, please visit the NAIS Demographic Center at www.nais.org/go/demographics.

Key Findings

Increasing School Age Population

1. During 2000-2007, the metropolitan area of Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta reported a growing number of households with children of school age, from 607,337 to 698,763 (15.05 percent increase). This number is expected to continue to grow by 16.93 percent during the next five years, totaling 817,071 in 2012.
2. In addition, all school population groups are expected to grow during the next five years. After recording a growth rate of 23.31 percent during the period 2000-2007, the school population (between zero and 17 years) is projected to rise by 9.63 percent from 1,394,675 in 2007 to 1,528,952 in 2012.
3. By gender, the female population age zero to 17 years is expected to grow by 8.16 percent by the year 2012, from 668,934 to 723,545; while the male population in the same age group is predicted to grow by 10.03 percent from 721,488 in 2007 to 793,870 in 2012.

Rising Numbers of Younger and Older Children

4. By age and gender, the main growth rates are projected to be in the number of boys age zero to four years, from 212,456 in 2007 to 242,257 in 2012 (14.03 percent growth), and girls in the same age group from 196,400 in 2007 to 219,910 in 2012 (11.97 percent growth). Teenagers between 14 and 17 years old are also expected to record a significant increase during the same five-year period, especially in the case of boys, from 151,466 in 2007 to 167,456 in 2012 (10.56 percent growth).
5. Given the previous findings, the population in grades nine to 12 and the nursery or preschool population are expected to be the most affected with a increase of 14.17

[1] CBSAs are Core Based Statistical Areas, a new census geographic area stemming from the results of the Census 2000. CBSAs combine both Metropolitan Areas (formerly MSAs) and new Micropolitan Areas.
[2] This CBSA area includes the following counties: Barrow, GA 13013; Bartow, GA 13015; Butts, GA 13035; Carroll, GA 13045; Cherokee, GA 13057; Clayton, GA 13063; Cobb, GA 13067; Coweta, GA 13077; Dawson, GA 13085; DeKalb, GA 13089; Douglas, GA 13097; Fayette, GA 13113; Forsyth, GA 13117; Fulton, GA 13121; Gwinnett, GA 13135; Haralson, GA 13143; Heard, GA 13149; Henry, GA 13151; Jasper, GA 13159; Lamar, GA 13171; Meriwether, GA 13199; Newton, GA 13217; Paulding, GA 13223; Pickens, GA 13227; Pike, GA 13231; Rockdale, GA 13247; Spalding, GA 13255; and Walton, GA 13297.

percent and 13.36 percent, respectively, by the year 2012. When broken down by gender, the number of boys attending grades nine to 12 is projected to record the highest increase at 14.61 percent, from 165,377 in 2007 to 189,540 in 2012; followed by males in nursery or preschool at 14.35 percent growth, from 64,720 in 2007 to 74,010 in 2012. Also, the growth rate for girls attending grades nine to 12 is projected to reach 13.69 percent by 2012.

Significant Increase of Private School Enrollment

6. While population enrolled in private schools grew by more than 36 percent, from 125,949 in 2000 to 172,190 in 2007, public school enrollment recorded an increase of 29.32 percent during the same period, from 791,905 in 2000 to 1,024,074 in 2007. By the year 2012, both private and public enrollments are expected to continue growing at significant, but lower rates (10.85 percent and 11.78 percent, respectively).
7. By gender, during the period 2007 to 2012, male preprimary enrollment in private schools is anticipated to show the largest growth at 14.92 percent (from 36,033 in 2007 to 41,410 in 2012), followed by female preprimary enrollment at 12.85 percent, (from 33,310 in 2007 to 37,590 in 2012). The anticipated male and female enrollment growth rates for elementary and high school are 9.64 percent and 7.84 percent, respectively.

Increasing Numbers of Minority Population

8. By race and ethnicity, the principal changes in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta area are the increasing numbers of 'Other[3] population,' Hispanics, and Asians. Their numbers have expanded substantially during the years 2000-2007 at 45.88 percent, 45.56 percent, and 42.76 percent growth, respectively.
9. While the white population is expected to continue growing at a lower, but still significant rate of 9.48 percent by 2012, minority groups are predicted to record two-digit growth rates, especially the 'Other' population that is forecasted to grow from 288,158 in 2007 to 374,338 in 2012 (29.91 percent).
10. In the case of African Americans, their numbers are projected to increase from 1,437,525 in 2007 to 1,614,810 in 2012 (12.33 percent growth). This group is expected to continue representing the largest minority group in this area; however, its percentage over the total population is expected to remain at around 28 percent, a similar number to those recorded in 2000 and in 2007.

Considerable Growth of Affluent Families

11. The number of families with school age children and incomes of at least $100,000 per year is predicted to increase throughout 2012. In particular, families with children younger than five years old and incomes of $200,000+ are expected to increase from

[3] "Other race" includes all other responses not included in the "white," "black or African American," "American Indian and Alaska Native," "Asian," and "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" race categories. Respondents providing write-in entries such as multiracial, mixed, interracial, or a Hispanic/Latino group (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban) are included here.

13,064 in 2007 to 22,729 in 2012 (73.98 percent growth), followed by families with children between 14 and 17 years old and income of $200,000+, who are expected to grow from 9,293 in 2007 to 15,752 in 2012 (69.5 percent growth). However, and in spite of these growth rates, the largest group numerically is expected to be families with children younger than five years old and incomes between $100,000 and $199,999 (81,357 by 2012).

12. The number of African American households with incomes of at least $100,000 a year is projected to continue growing through 2012. In particular, households with an annual income between $125,000 and $149,999 are projected to record an increase of 88.2 percent, from 16,445 in 2007 to 30,949 in 2012. A similar trend is expected for Asian households with incomes of at least $100,000 a year. The highest growth rate is projected for Asian households with an annual income of $200,000+ at 168.12 percent, from 2,334 in 2007 to 6,258 in 2012.
13. Although their numbers are not that large, ‘Other households’ with annual incomes of at least $100,000 a year are also predicted to more than double their numbers by 2012, especially those households with incomes of $200,000+ a year, who are expected to more than triple their numbers, from 940 in 2007 to 3,365 in 2012 (257.98 percent growth).
14. Likewise, Hispanic households with annual incomes of at least $100,000 are forecasted to expand. For example, Hispanic families with annual incomes of $125,000 to $149,999 are projected to soar from 3,406 in 2007 to 8,086 in 2012 (137.4 percent growth).
15. In general, the number of households with home values of $500,000+ reported record growth numbers during the period 2000-2007. In particular, the number of households with homes valued between $750,000 and $999,999 increased by 1027.72 percent during this period. This positive trend is projected to continue through 2012. For instance, the number of owner households with homes valued between $500,000 and $749,999 is expected to increase from 52,703 in 2007 to 147,068 in 2012 (179.05 percent growth).

Rising Numbers of Population with Higher Education

16. The number of people older than 25 years of age who hold college degrees in this area increased by 27.99 percent, from 573,565 in 2000 to 734,107 in 2007. This number is expected to continue growing, yet at a lesser rate, by 2012 (12.29 percent growth). A similar pattern is observed for people older than 25 years old who hold graduate degrees. Their numbers increased from 277,604 in 2000 to 346,509 in 2007 (24.82 percent), and it is forecasted that their numbers will rise by 10.15 percent by the year 2012.

Strategic Considerations for Schools

Given the findings of this report, independent schools in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta metropolitan area need to consider what strategies they will implement now to ensure full classrooms in the years ahead. For example, this may mean further diversifying their enrollment in terms of gender, ethnicity, and income. Some of the questions that schools should consider are:

General Considerations

- Considering these demographic changes, on which areas does our school most need to focus?
- Have we benchmarked our school's admission statistics? How do they look in comparison to other schools in our community? Do we understand the strengths and weaknesses of our own numbers?
- How well do we know our market? Do we know who our competitors are (other independent schools, magnet schools, charter schools, Catholic schools, home schoolers, etc.)? How familiar are people in our community with our school mission and value proposition?
- If we have feeder schools, are we watching their enrollment changes to understand how our school could be impacted?

Responding to Increasing School Age Population

- Does our school have a waiting list? Is the school working at maximum enrollment capacity already? What do our admission statistics look like (inquiries, applications, acceptances, enrollees)? Are there changes that need our attention?
- If our school is in high demand, what tuition policy should it follow?
- What are the demographic changes in the geographic areas from which we recruit students? Are the statistics more favorable in surrounding areas from which we have not traditionally recruited students? Do we need to attract this population?
- What is the typical profile of families in our school? Do we know why are they enrolling their children in our school?

Responding to Racial/Ethnic Changes

- Given the demographic changes, what percentage of students of color should the school aim for? How do our diversity numbers compare to those of this geographic region?
- What are the key characteristics that parents of color are looking for in a school? Does the school highlight these characteristics in its messages?
- What communication channels should the school use to reach out to the people of color in its community? Should the school include other languages in its communications with parents?
- Do we know why families of color who can afford our tuitions are not enrolling their children in our schools? Do we know where these families are located?

Responding to Household Income Changes

- Do we need to attract more middle-class families? Can we increase financial aid or structure it to increase enrollment among middle-class families? If so, can richer families pay for higher tuitions?
- Are middle-class families aware of all the financing options offered to pursue an education in our school (need-based financial aid, merit awards, tuition payment plans, and tuition loan programs)?
- Are our students' grandparents nearby? What percentage of students have their tuitions paid by their grandparents? How can we involve grandparents in the life of the school?

Financial Considerations

- If our school is facing high demand, what financial planning do we need to do to ensure a sound use of the resources?
- Are there any building maintenance or improvements that are needed? Can we afford to offer better salaries or benefits? What major investment projects are needed?
- What are the best/most profitable fund-raising activities? Is our school relying mainly on tuition income as a source of revenues? Are there other opportunities for revenue enhancement (non-tuition options) that our school should implement?[4]
- Who are our best donors? What is their profile? Since we are dealing with different generations, do we understand how to attract them? Are they more responsive to mail or online solicitations?
- What types of causes are our donors more inclined to support? How should the school keep them informed about the use of charitable funds?

NAIS Resources that Can Help

1. **Trends** — To stay abreast of changing trends, in addition to the NAIS Demographic Center, school administrators can check the following websites: www.trendletter.com and/or www.hermangroup.com. Also, the *NAIS Opinion Leaders' Survey* (free to browse at http://www.nais.org/files/PDFs/OpinionLeadersSurveyJune05.pdf or buy in bulk to share) identifies what demographic, social, economic, political, scientific, and technological trends opinion leaders in education, business, and the media believe will have the greatest impact on independent education. This report also suggests actions that schools should consider now to successfully manage these important trends.

2. **Benchmarking** — To gather data and conduct benchmark analysis, schools can participate in the StatsOnline[5] annual survey (www.nais.org) that collects data on

[4] The 2006 NAIS Non-Tuition Survey presents alternative sources of revenue different from tuitions, annual/capital giving, and investments that many schools have in place to achieve the balance between operating expenses and affordability. http://www.nais.org/resources/seriesdoc.cfm?ItemNumber=148270.

admissions, annual giving, diversity, financial aid, financial operations, salaries, schools, students, staff, and tuition. Available tools include:

- ✓ Benchmarking tools to create custom groups and reports based upon any of the survey variables.
- ✓ Financing Schools Calculator to project budgets based on various preferred and possible scenarios to see the impact on the "bottom line" of changes to some of the variables.
- ✓ Executive Compensation Reports that you can provide to your board or compensation committee so they can either authorize or perform a comparative compensation study (of salary, other forms of compensation, and benefits) and create a documented "rebuttable presumption" of the reasonableness of the compensation (available only to heads and business managers).

3. **Market Research** — The report *Marketing Independent Schools to Generation X and Minority Parents* (free to download at www.nais.org/go/advocacy), provides information on the factors that are relevant to families of color and Generation X parents when selecting schools for their children. It also gives specific advice on which messages to consider when reaching out to particular groups of families. In addition, the *NAIS Public Opinion Poll* (free to download at www.nais.org/go/advocacy) provides information on characteristics the American public associates with a quality education and their perceptions of independent schools. It also includes implications and recommendations for ways schools can communicate with constituents about the value of independent education.

4. **Advocacy and Marketing** — NAIS has created several resources to help you in communicating with important constituents, such as prospective students and families, prospective teachers, the media, and policymakers. They can help you explain the value of independent education and of your school:
   - ✓ *Values Added: The Lifelong Returns of an Independent School Education* (free to download at www.nais.org/go/advocacy or order in bulk for distribution).
   - ✓ Admission and Marketing Tools (brochures, ad templates, video clips, etc. at www.nais.org/advocacy).
   - ✓ Communications Handbook (free to download at www.nais.org/go/advocacy)
   - ✓ Parent Admission Brochure (view a sample as a pdf or purchase copies from the online bookstore at http://transact.nais.org/Purchase/SearchCatalog.aspx).

[5] StatsOnline is available to the five key administrators at each participating school who are responsible for providing the statistical data each year. The five administrators include: head, business manager, director of admission, director of development, and director of financial aid.