

West Shore School District Enrollment Staffing and Accountability Review

Research Summary and Board and Community Action Guide

FORGE CHANGE

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Enrollment is broadly stable to slightly lower, teacher staffing is also stable, and the main questions are support staffing reductions, role shifts and uneven school outcomes.

Purpose

This independent public record review helps school board members and residents ask better questions about enrollment, staffing, budgets and student outcomes. It identifies patterns that warrant explanation; it does not determine that any position, program or expenditure is unnecessary.

Central question

Does the district have the right number and mix of people, in the right schools and programs, to meet student need at a sustainable cost?

Recommended next step

Request one reconciled position control file showing every employee and vacancy by job code, FTE, school, program, funding source and board approval date, then connect it to building schedules, class sections, caseloads and budget accounts.

Executive Summary

Measure	2019 20	2025 26	Change
Enrollment	7,731	7,511	-220 -2.8%
Classroom teachers	506	494	-12 -2.4%
All professional personnel	641	651	+10 +1.6%
Administrators	32	35	+3
Coordinated services	74	95	+21
Students per classroom teacher	15.3	15.2	-0.1

What the evidence says

- Enrollment declined 2.8 percent while classroom teachers declined 2.4 percent, leaving the broad ratio nearly unchanged.
- Coordinated services professionals increased from 74 to 95 while support staff headcount declined by 65; determine whether functions were shifted between categories.
- Building comparisons are affected by grade and facility reconfiguration and should not be treated as simple growth or decline.
- Charter enrollment is the largest share among these three districts and deserves program, cost and return trend analysis.

The final 2025 26 budget lists \$162.32 million in revenue and \$164.93 million in expenditures, a planned \$2.61 million use of fund balance. Total instruction is \$104.97 million and support services are \$46.93 million.

What the evidence does not say

A districtwide staffing ratio is not class size. It does not reveal schedules, planning periods, special education, interventions, electives, co teaching, split assignments, leave, vacancies or contracted services. Headcounts are not FTEs. PDE personnel categories can overlap, so category totals should not be added unless the district confirms the definitions.

Enrollment and Capacity

Enrollment changed from 7,731 in 2019 20 to 7,511 in 2025 26. PDE projects 7,375 students in 2034 35. Projections are planning estimates, not guarantees, and should be tested against births, housing, private and charter movement, and actual grade cohorts.

Year	Enrollment
2015 16	7,806
2019 20	7,731
2022 23	7,513
2025 26	7,511
2030 31 projected	7,498
2034 35 projected	7,375

Building level movement

School or category	2019 20	2025 26	Change
Cedar Cliff HS	1,290	1,324	+34
Red Land SHS	1,107	1,069	-38
Allen MS	533	236	-297
Crossroads MS	697	542	-155
New Cumberland MS	619	399	-220
Fairview Intermediate	not comparable	667	new configuration
Old Trail Intermediate	not comparable	529	new configuration

Where to dig further: monthly enrollment by grade and school, kindergarten registrations, withdrawals and destinations, resident charter students, housing permits, building capacity methodology, and any redistricting or grade configuration assumptions.

Professional and Support Staffing

Classroom staffing and peer context

At 15.20 students per classroom teacher, West Shore is toward the higher end of York County districts. Only Hanover, Northeastern York and Spring Grove report higher ratios. The broad ratio does not show excess teacher staffing.

Measure	2019 20	2025 26	Interpretation
Classroom teachers	506	494	Headcount, not confirmed FTE
Administrators	32	35	PDE category
Coordinated services	74	95	Includes specialized professional roles
All professional personnel	641	651	Distinct people reported by PDE

Support staffing

2019 20	2025 26	Observed change
240 full time and 99 part time	200 full time and 74 part time	Full time support declined by 40; combined headcount declined by 65. Instructional aides declined by 11 full time and other support by 24 full time and 29 part time.

Vacancy and retention signals

Classroom teacher same role retention: 91.8 percent. Five reported vacancies: three covered by long term substitutes and two listed as unstaffed.

Two reporting systems need reconciliation

The Act 35 file reports a budgeted professional complement of 608 with 8 vacant positions. The later professional personnel file reports 651 people. The 43 position difference should be reconciled by reporting date, FTE and category definitions.

Ask the district to supply a crosswalk rather than treating either public file as wrong. Differences can arise from reporting date, approved vacancies, leave, contractors, job category rules and headcount versus FTE.

Student Outcomes and Staffing Questions

The 2024 25 Future Ready PA measures provide context for staffing questions. They should be disaggregated by grade, course, subgroup and cohort before drawing conclusions about a program or employee group.

Measure	District signal and follow up
Math and Algebra	Results range from 34.1 percent at New Cumberland MS to 73.5 percent at Red Mill. New Cumberland, Allen, Cedar Cliff and Crossroads are below the 41.7 percent statewide comparison.
ELA and Literature	Hillside, Washington Heights, New Cumberland and Fairview are below the 49.9 percent statewide comparison; Old Trail is essentially at it.
Attendance	Cedar Cliff is 74.4 percent and Red Land 78.4 percent, both below the 79.6 percent statewide comparison. Most elementary schools are higher.
Graduation	Cedar Cliff is 90.9 percent and Red Land is 93.2 percent, both above the 88.0 percent statewide comparison.

How to use these results

Ask whether staffing additions or reductions were tied to an explicit student need, implementation plan and measurable target. Then review whether the relevant students received the service, whether schedules protected the service, and whether results improved over multiple years. One year of proficiency or growth data cannot establish causation.

Charter enrollment

565 resident charter students, about 7.0 percent of district plus charter enrollment.

School Board and Community Guide

Use the questions below in public meetings, committee sessions and budget workshops. Ask for the record at the same time. A clear question paired with a specific document is more likely to produce a verifiable answer.

Topic	Question to ask	Where to dig
Role shifts	Did work move from aides and support classifications into coordinated services or contracted services?	Position crosswalk, job descriptions, vendor contracts, vacancies and funding source by year.
Secondary math	What common patterns appear across New Cumberland, Allen, Cedar Cliff and Crossroads?	Course and grade results, PVAAS diagnostics, teacher assignment, intervention periods and section sizes.
Attendance	What is driving lower persistent attendance at the two high schools?	Chronic absence by grade and subgroup, attendance interventions, withdrawals and alternative placements.
Reconfiguration	How did grade and building changes affect staffing, transportation, capacity and outcomes?	Board approved reconfiguration plan, before and after staffing, routes, capacity and transition metrics.
Charter enrollment	Which grades, schools and programs have the greatest charter outflow, and what is the fiscal impact?	Resident charter roster, tuition payments, exit reasons and returning student data.

Questions every board member can ask before a staffing vote

- What student need and measurable result justify this position?
- Is this a new FTE, a replacement, a transfer, a reclassification or a restoration?
- Which school, program and budget function will carry the cost?
- Is the funding recurring, temporary, restricted or dependent on a grant?
- What are the class sizes, caseloads, course sections or service minutes before and after the change?
- What will the district stop, combine or redesign if enrollment or revenue assumptions change?
- When will the board receive a results check, and what evidence will be used?

Right to Know Action Plan

Start with records that already exist. Request electronic records in their native format, ask the agency to identify the records officer, and narrow date ranges or fields if the district raises burden concerns. Do not ask the district to create a new analysis.

1 Position control roster

The current position control roster and the June 30 2020 year end roster, including position ID, job title, PDE category, FTE, status, school or cost center, program, funding source, vacancy date and board approval date. Employee names may be redacted if necessary; retain position IDs.

2 Position history

Records showing positions created, eliminated, frozen, restored, reclassified or transferred from July 1 2019 through the present, including board agenda date and funding source.

3 Master schedules

Current master schedules for each secondary school, with course, section, assigned staff position, enrollment, room and meeting period; include cancelled or combined sections.

4 Elementary sections

Current elementary class section roster by school and grade showing section enrollment, teacher FTE and any co teaching or split grade designation.

5 Caseloads

Current caseload and service load reports by position for special education, counseling, psychology, nursing, social work, reading, math and English learner services, without student names.

6 Vacancy log

Vacancy tracking records from July 1 2024 to present showing position, FTE, school, posting date, coverage method, offer date and filled date.

7 Turnover

Exit and transfer records from July 1 2019 to present by year, position category, school and reason code, without employee names.

8 Budget staffing bridge

Workpapers that reconcile prior year staffing to the 2025 26 adopted staffing plan and budget, including salary and benefit assumptions by function and funding source.

9 Enrollment model

The current enrollment projection model, assumptions, consultant reports and actual versus projected enrollment by grade and school for the last five years.

10 Charter movement

Annual resident charter enrollment and tuition payment records by grade and charter school from 2019 20 through 2025 26, plus any de identified exit or return summaries.

Recommended request sequence

- 1 Reconcile:** Position roster, position history and vacancy log establish the staffing baseline.
- 2 Test deployment:** Schedules, sections and caseloads show where staff time reaches students.
- 3 Connect dollars:** Budget workpapers and contracts separate recurring, restricted and contracted costs.
- 4 Evaluate:** Enrollment, outcomes, retention and charter records connect resources to need and results.

Sources Methods and Limitations

Forge Change compared public Pennsylvania Department of Education files for 2019 20 and 2025 26 where available, reviewed 2024 25 Future Ready PA measures, and used the district budget source listed below. Percent changes are calculated from reported headcounts. Figures may be revised by the source agency.

- **Pennsylvania Department of Education enrollment files and projections:** <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/data-and-reporting/enrollment>
- **Pennsylvania Department of Education professional and support personnel files:** <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/data-and-reporting/school-staff/professional-and-support-personnel>
- **Future Ready PA Index data files:** <https://futurereadypa.org/Home/DataFiles>
- **Pennsylvania Office of Open Records:** <https://www.openrecords.pa.gov/>
- **West Shore 2025 26 budget:** <https://www.wssd.k12.pa.us/2025-2026Budget.aspx>

Limitations

- Public personnel files report people and categories, not a complete position level FTE ledger.
- Category definitions and report dates differ across PDE files; apparent discrepancies require district reconciliation.
- Enrollment projections are estimates and building comparisons can be affected by program or grade reconfiguration.
- State assessment results are contextual indicators, not proof that a staffing level caused an outcome.
- This is a research and accountability guide, not a financial audit, legal opinion or recommendation to remove staff.

Bottom line

Enrollment is broadly stable to slightly lower, teacher staffing is also stable, and the main questions are support staffing reductions, role shifts and uneven school outcomes.

The best next move is disciplined transparency: one position level staffing file, one clear staffing to budget bridge, and a recurring board dashboard that connects enrollment, sections, caseloads, vacancies, costs and student results.