



frontline
education



Navigating School Choice & Vouchers: What Texas Districts Need to Know

Date: 4/9/25

Navigating School Choice & Vouchers: What Texas Districts Need to Know

With Texas lawmakers advancing school voucher legislation, many district leaders are asking:

- What does this mean for our schools?
- How will funding and enrollment shift?
- And how can we plan for the future?

Learning Objectives

- Understand the nature of ESAs, including Texas proposals and programs outside Texas that have already been implemented.
- Identify and explore other school choice bills and current programs that have an impact on district operations.
- Pinpoint data items that districts should monitor as change occurs.
- How to use Frontline tools to track these data to benefit students, the district, and the community.

About the Facilitator

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Data & Analytics Team



About the Facilitator

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Sr. Advisor, Analytics

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Purpose of the Webinar

This webinar is intended to prepare school systems for changes that *could* occur due to proposed legislation. We recognize that there are a variety of opinions about this legislation, and we don't intend to address those opinions during this webinar. We look to what has happened in other states and what Frontline tools and resources are available to help you respond to any potential changes or current challenges.

Date: 4/9/25



AGENDA

- **ESA Legislation: Movement in Texas and Implementation in Other States**
- Other School Choice Legislation
- Identifying Important Data Markers
- Using Location Data to Get Students in Seats—to get there, stay there (and come back!)
- Modeling Financial Impact of Targeted Interventions using Financial Planning
- Communicating to your Board and Community
- Wrap-Up

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ESA Legislation: In Texas and Beyond

- Important to consider the timing of implementation and size of the program so that you can assess the likelihood and magnitude of the change that the policy can bring
- How many students could this possibly impact?
- What kinds of students would an ESA be available to?
- We have current proposals here in Texas and programs already implemented in other states to consider.

ESA Legislation: In Texas (As of April 8)

Program Characteristics	CSSB 2 (House Version)	CSSB 2 (Senate Version)
<p>Size of the ESA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$85% of the average state and local funding per student (~\$10k) • Students with disabilities eligible to receive up to \$30k • Homeschoolers eligible for \$2k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10,000 • \$11,500 for students with disabilities • \$2k-\$3 k for Homeschoolers
<p>Cap of the Number of Participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,000,000,000 appropriation for the biennium. • Up to 100,000 students, but likely much less because of size of sped ESA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,000,000,000 appropriation for the biennium. • Up to 100,000 students

ESA Legislation: In Texas (As of April 8)

Program Characteristics	CSSB 2 (House Version)	CSSB 2 (Senate Version)
<p>Eligibility of Participants</p> <p>For a family of four, the federal poverty level (FPL) is \$32,150; 200% = \$64,300; 500% = \$160,750</p>	<p>Prioritizations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students with a disability AND family income at or below 500% of the federal poverty level (FPL)* 2) 2) Students whose family income is at or below 200% of the FPL 3) 3. Students whose family income is between 200% and 500% of FPL 4) Students whose family income is above 500% of FPL; this category limited to 20% of total program <p>All students must be legal residents or citizens of the US</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 80% of funding goes to students who attended public school the previous year with a family income of 500% of the federal poverty level or have a disability • Other 20% for all remaining applicants, including those already homeschooled or in private school
<p>Other requirements</p>	<p>Annual norm-referenced testing for grades 3-12</p>	<p>Annual norm-referenced testing</p>

SB 2 Fiscal Note

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for SB2, As Engrossed: a negative impact of (\$1,008,850,431) through the biennium ending August 31, 2027.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

The bill would establish an Education Savings Account (ESA) program and would limit the program to funding available for this purpose. The Introduced versions of the 2026-27 General Appropriations Bill include \$1,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2027 from the General Revenue Fund for an ESA program, contingent upon enacting legislation. This analysis assumes that any costs related to implementing the provisions of the bill would have a fiscal year 2027 cost of \$1,000,000,000 in General Revenue Funds.

As of the fiscal note written April 2 would benefit an absolute maximum of 100,000 students in 2027 (the equivalent of 2% of students currently enrolled in public school in first biennium). There will be more than 98% of students currently enrolled in public school that will not be able to access an ESA because of the appropriations cap. By 2030, the absolute maximum number of students that would be eligible is about 350,000 (the equivalent of less than 7% of students currently enrolled in public school in first biennium).

ESA Legislation: In Texas

This back-of-the-napkin math does not take into account:

- The participation of students with special needs (the higher ESA amount for these students reduces the number of ESAs that could be issued)
- The participation of students already enrolled in private school (up to 20% of ESA awards) or participating in a non-accredited private school or homeschool (these accounts are only \$2,000)
- Implementation costs of the program—the EAO (education assistance organization) is allowed to retain some funding to run the program, therefore diminishing the funds left for issuing ESAs
- The possibility that the program is underenrolled.

ESA Legislation: Outside Texas

- States outside Texas have implemented voucher programs, and implementation takes time.
- According to Edchoice.org, there are 17 states with Education Savings Accounts Programs: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming

ESA Legislation: Outside Texas

States outside Texas have implemented voucher programs available for regular program students, and implementation takes time. Here are the ones underway that serve students outside of special education populations:

State	Year Implemented	Enrollment Cap	Number of Participating Students	Average Amount of ESA
Arizona	2011	None	83,032 (took 10 years to exceed 10,000 students)	\$9,572
Florida	2019	None	220,974 (17,100 in initial year)	\$8,100
Tennessee	2021	15,000	3,578	\$9,329
Indiana	2022	None	862	\$11,601
Iowa	2023	None	27,862	\$7,826
New Hampshire	2021	None	5,600	\$5,100
Utah	2024	None	10,000	\$8,000
West Virginia	2022	None	11,000	\$4,299

ESA Legislation: In Texas

Conclusion:

In the next 5 years far less than 7% of public school students will leave the public school system to take a voucher under current proposals.

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Other School Choice Legislation: In Texas

- **SB 686 by Senator Angela Paxton: Allows students to attend school in any district that had available seats, requiring districts to be open-enrollment beyond their boundaries**
- **This bill was passed by Senate and received by the House, as of April 8**
- **3% of students enjoy open-enrollment now in Texas**

<https://reason.org/open-enrollment/2024-public-schools-without-boundaries/>

Other School Choice Legislation: In Texas

After implementation of open-enrollment policies:

- Arizona (115,932, 11% of public school students participate)
- Florida (262,968, 9% of public school students participate)
- Wisconsin (71,489) 9% of public school students participate)

<https://reason.org/open-enrollment/2024-public-schools-without-boundaries/>

Other School Choice Legislation: In Texas

Challenges Faced by These Districts:

- Navigating Transportation
- Constant Enrollment Changes
- Staffing
- Program Participation Changes
- New State Reporting Changes Coming for 2025 for AZ

AGENDA

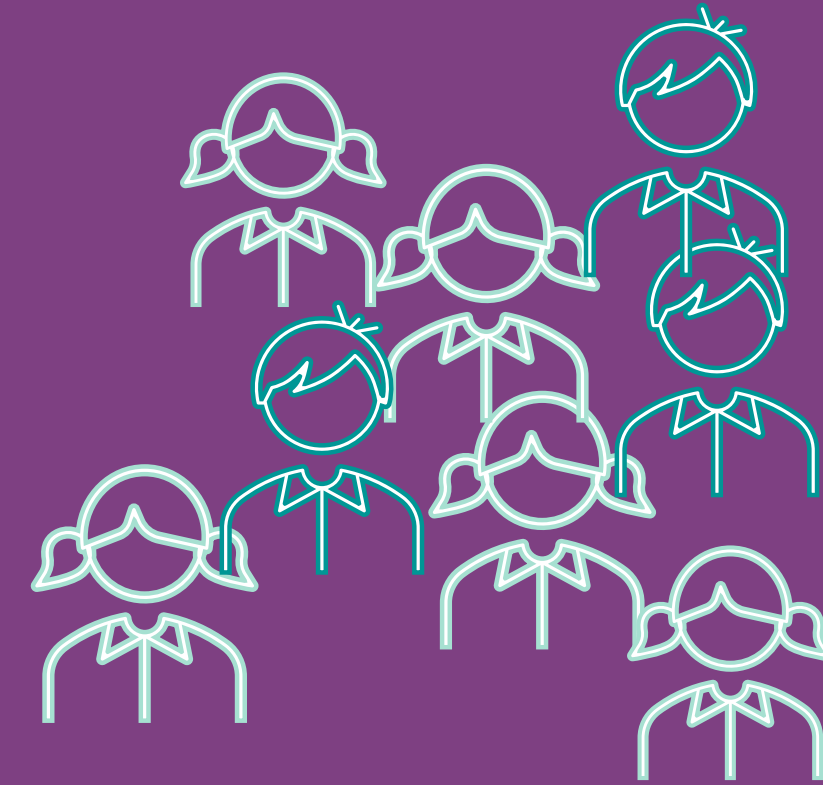
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Data Items to Monitor: Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing

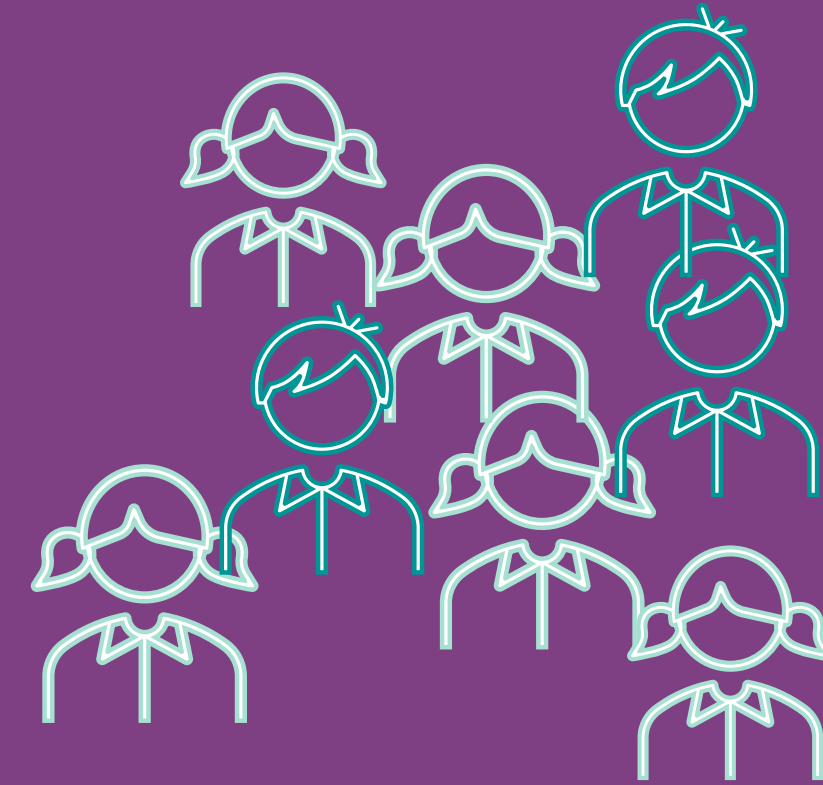
Monitor what you always have. Low enrollment and poor attendance of students who are not seeking private education remain your biggest threats to your budget and student academic success.

- Enrollment
- Attendance
- Leavers



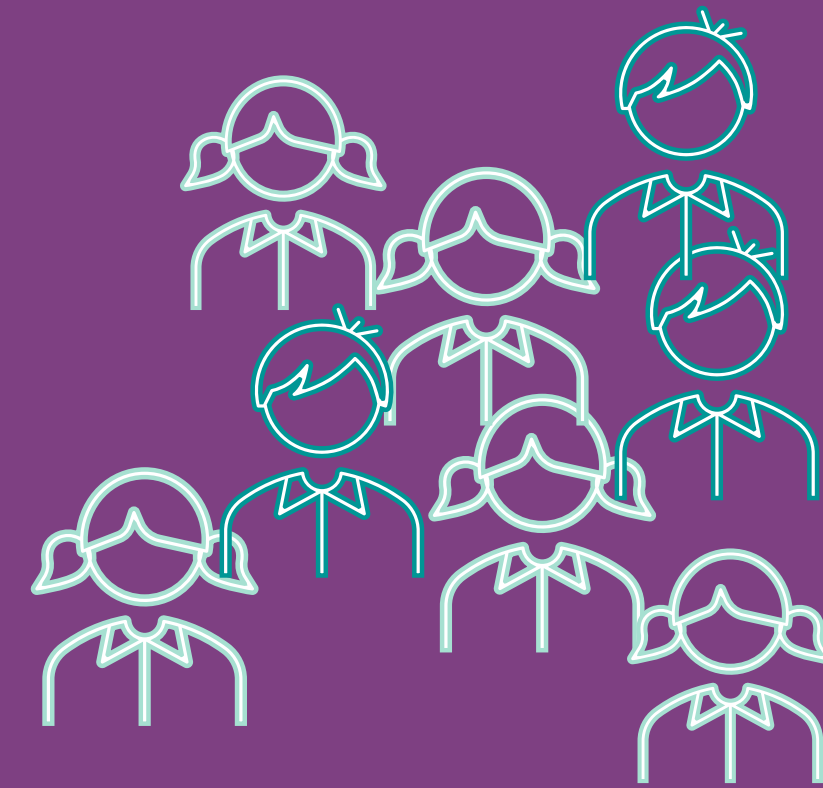
Data Items to Monitor: Enrollment

- 1st: Increase Enrollment because that's always a good idea!
 - Track where they are coming from (district/home address)
 - Monitor enrollment by general region (not just school)
 - Communicate with nearby school systems to help understand the shifts in enrollment in your region of the state



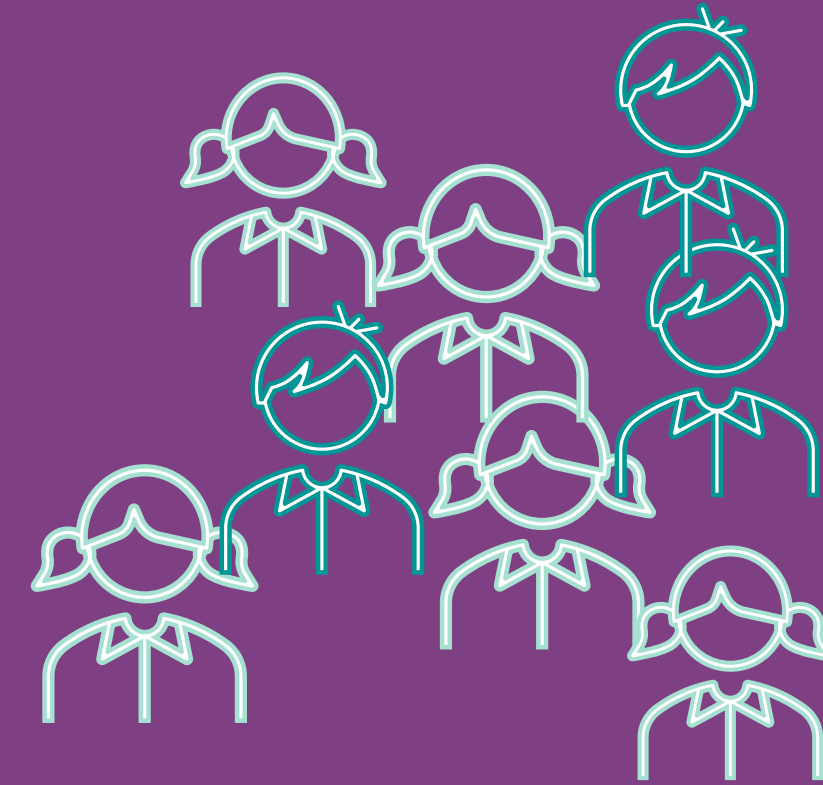
Data Items to Monitor: Attendance

- Study Attendance Calculations and Patterns
 - Identify by Region/Neighborhood/Area
 - Socio-economic status
- Identify Possibility of Partner Agencies to Help
 - Promote good attendance
 - Offer health services
- Send 'Nudge' Attendance Letters
- www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Todd-postcard-Nudge-research-publis-REL_2017252.pdf



How Attendance Impacts Funding

- Foundation School Program Funding (FSP) is made up of a series of allotments
- Enrollment and Attendance both determine the size of those allotments
- The majority of the allotments include Average Daily Attendance (ADA) as a variable
- Additional multipliers or “weights” are applied to the ADA to determine each specific allotment



Basic Allotment Per Student ADA

The basic allotment Per student ADA = \$6,160.
Unchanged since 2019-20 (despite inflation)

For each student in average daily attendance (ADA), not including the time students spend each day in special education programs in an instructional arrangement other than mainstream or career and technology education programs, for which an additional allotment is made under Subchapter C, a district is entitled to an allotment equal to the lesser of \$6,160

TEC, §48.051(a)

School Year	Basic Allotment
2009-2010	\$4,765
2010-2011	\$4,765
2011-2012	\$4,765
2012-2013	\$4,765
2013-2014	\$4,950
2014-2015	\$5,040
2015-2016	\$5,140
2016-2017	\$5,140
2017-2018	\$5,140
2018-2019	\$5,140
2019-2020	\$6,160
2020-2021	\$6,160
2021-2022	\$6,160
2022-2023	\$6,160
2023-2024	\$6,160
2024-2025	\$6,160

<https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/state-funding/state-funding-manuals/basic-allotment-one-pager.pdf>

Attendance Based Allotments

- Regular Program Allotment: no weight
- Small and Mid-sized Allotment: 0.000025 to 0.0004 depending on size of district
- Bilingual/English as Second Lang: .1, .15 or .05
- Compensatory Ed: based on five tiers, 0.225 to 0.275*
- Early Education: .1
- Gifted/Talented: .07
- Pregnancy Related Services: 2.41
- Public Education Grant: .1
- Dropout Recovery and Residential Facility Placement Allotment: \$275 per ADA
- New Instructional Facilities Allotment: \$1,000 per student or depending on appropriation
- School Safety Allotment: \$10 per ADA



*Funding is based on a student who is educationally disadvantaged and resides in an economically disadvantage census block group.

How Attendance Impacts Funding

Allotments based on FTEs (hourly attendance rather than daily attendance)

- Special Ed: 1.15 to 5.0
- Career and Tech Ed: 1.1 to 1.47 and

Other Important Details

- Districts must offer at least 75,600 minutes of instruction per track
- Funding is calculated by 6-weeks, regardless of how your district has your grading/progress periods defined.



How Funding is Calculated



Total days present in 1 st six weeks/	days taught in 1 st six weeks
Total days present in 2 nd six weeks/	days taught in 2 nd six weeks
Total days present in 3 rd six weeks/	days taught in 3 rd six weeks
Total days present in 4 th six weeks/	days taught in 4 th six weeks
Total days present in 5 th six weeks/	days taught in 5 th six weeks
Total days present in 6 th six weeks/	days taught in 6 th six weeks
= Result/6 = ADA Amount	

Calculation Example

Single student with only 2 absences per six weeks period.

28 [30 days-2 absences] present in 1 st six weeks/	30 days taught in 1 st six weeks	= .93
+ 23 present in 1 st six weeks/	25 days taught in 1 st six weeks	= .92
+ 26 days present in 2 nd six weeks/	28 days taught in 2 nd six weeks	= .93
+ 32 days present in 3 rd six weeks/	34 days taught in 3 rd six weeks	=.94
+ 30 days present in 4 th six weeks/	32 days taught in 4 th six weeks	=.94
Total days present in 6th six weeks/	days taught in 6th six weeks	=.93
$5.59 = 5.59/6 = .93$ ADA		$\$6,160 * .93 = \$5,728$



Calculation Examples

- Must use TEA calculation as shown on the previous slide.
- **Cannot** use straight calculation such as
- **180 days – 12 absences = 168 days. 168 x 34.22 per day = \$5,748.96 per day**
- **2 days worth of absences for every student in a 10,000 student district costs the district about \$210,000.**

Full Attendance	TEA Calculation	Straight Calculation
\$6,160	\$5,728	\$5,748.96
	(\$432)	(\$411)

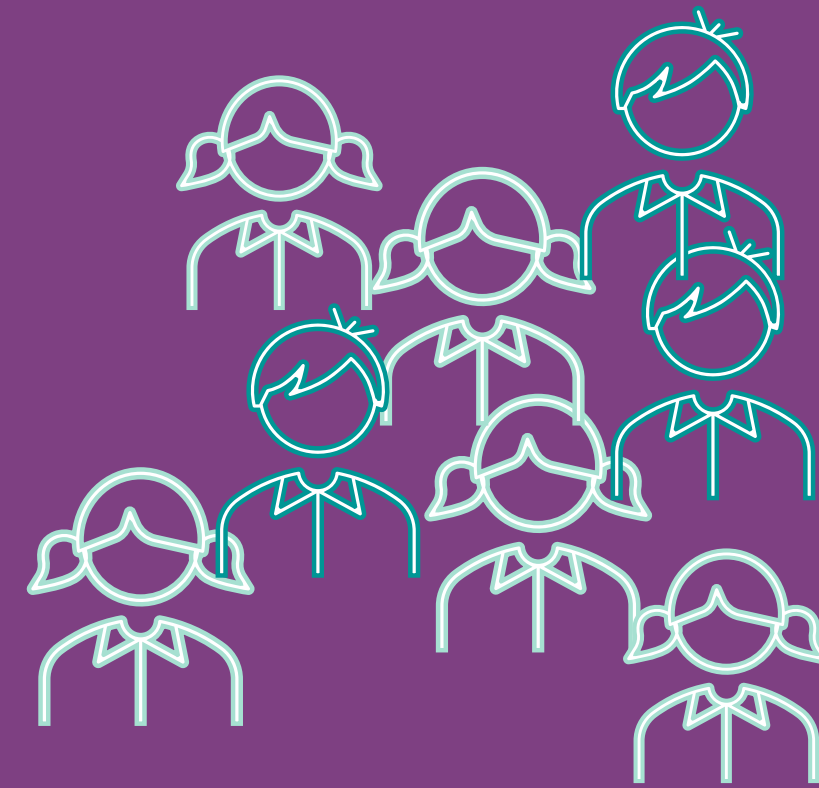
Data Items to Monitor: Leavers

Think outside the PEIMS term “Leaver” who has been historically focused on grades 7-12 and priority to ‘dropout’ status for accountability:

A student who was served in grades 7-12 during the prior school year but does not enroll in the district during the school-start window of the current year

Instead, focus on

- All students from all grade levels
- Why left – add context for withdrawal reason
- Where went (create unique codes)
- Use ‘description’ fields to add helpful comments



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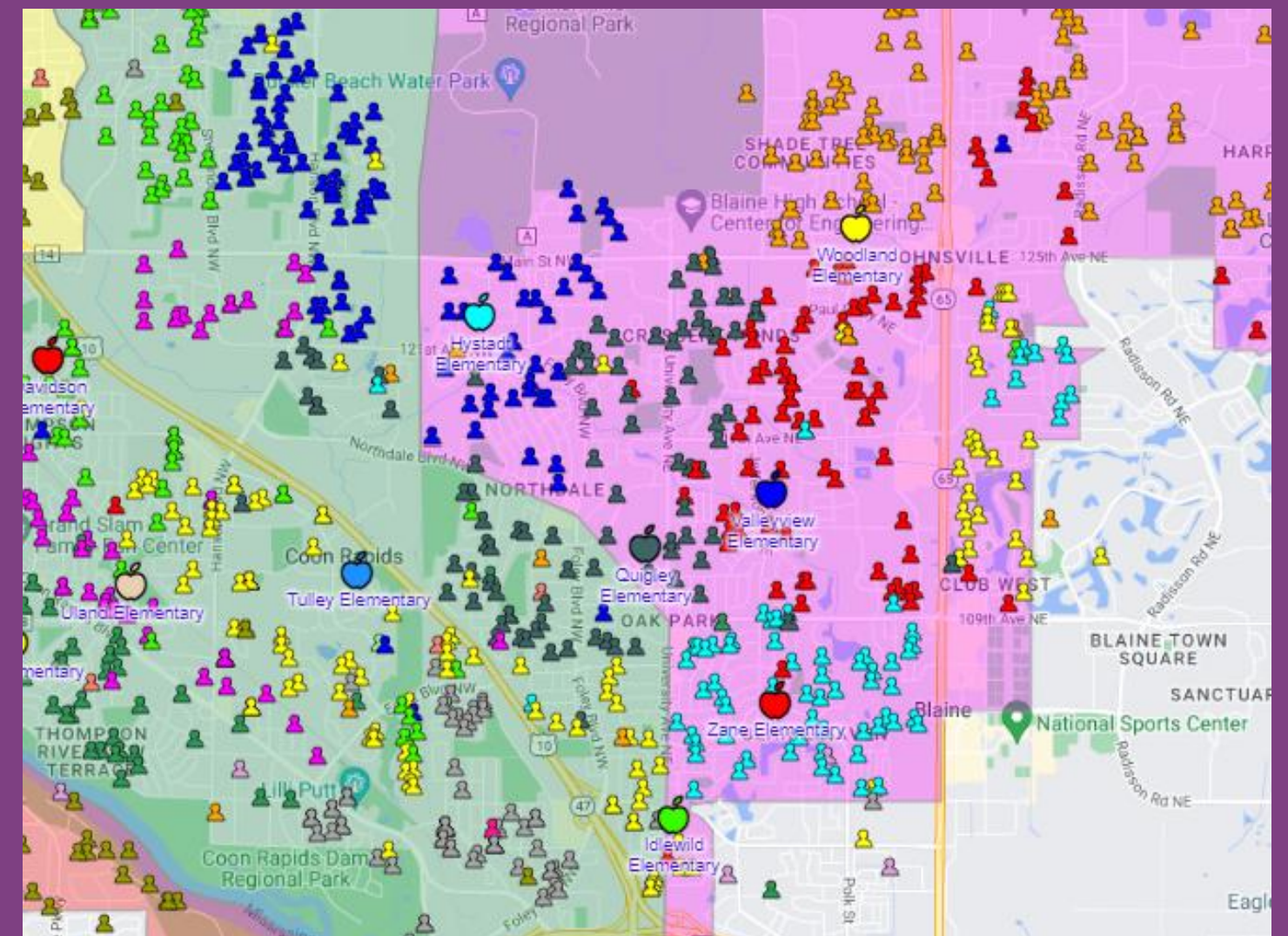
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Benefit of Using Geo-Visual Student Data

Low enrollment and attendance isn't necessarily a school/campus problem, it's a **district** problem.

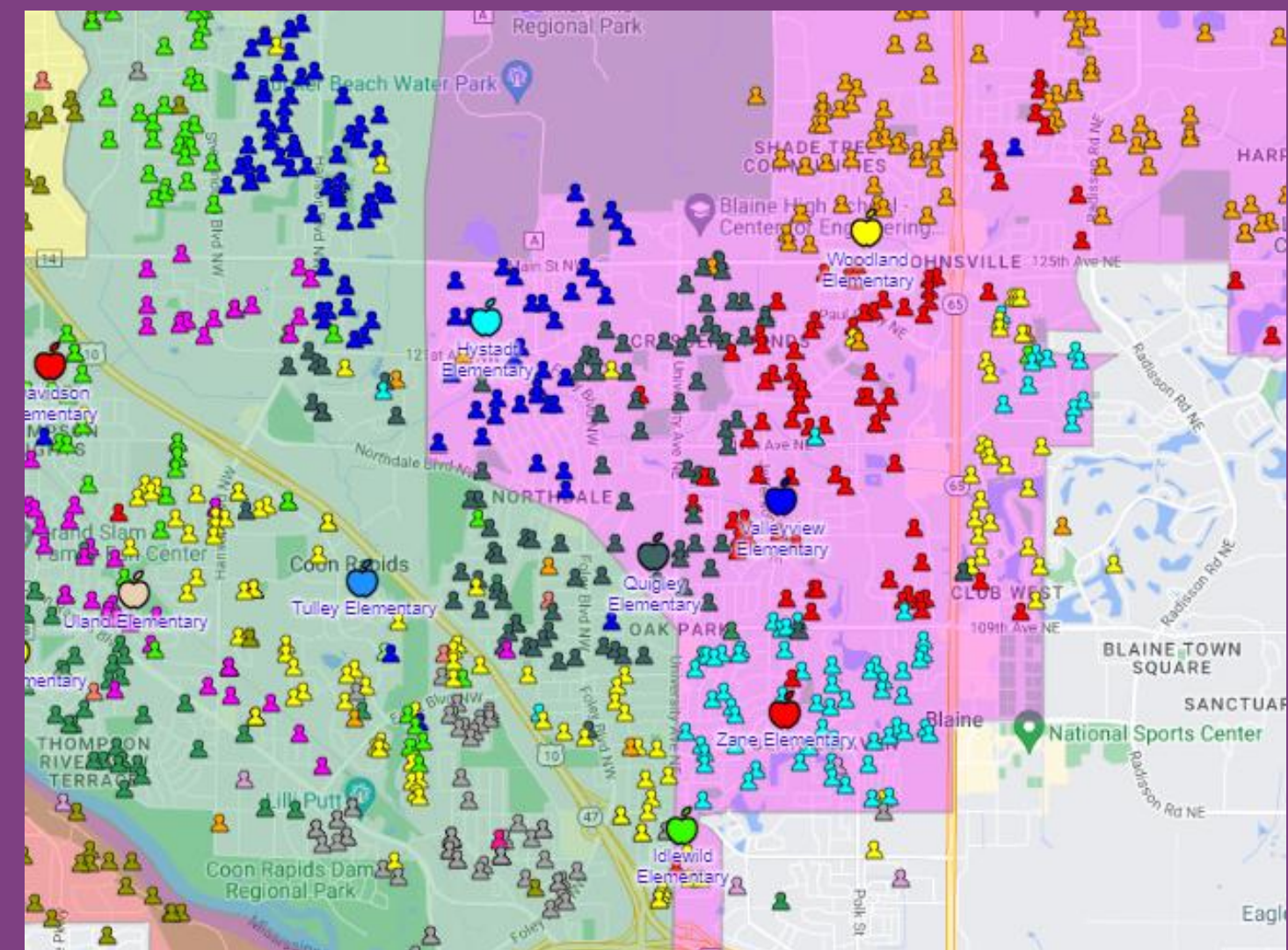
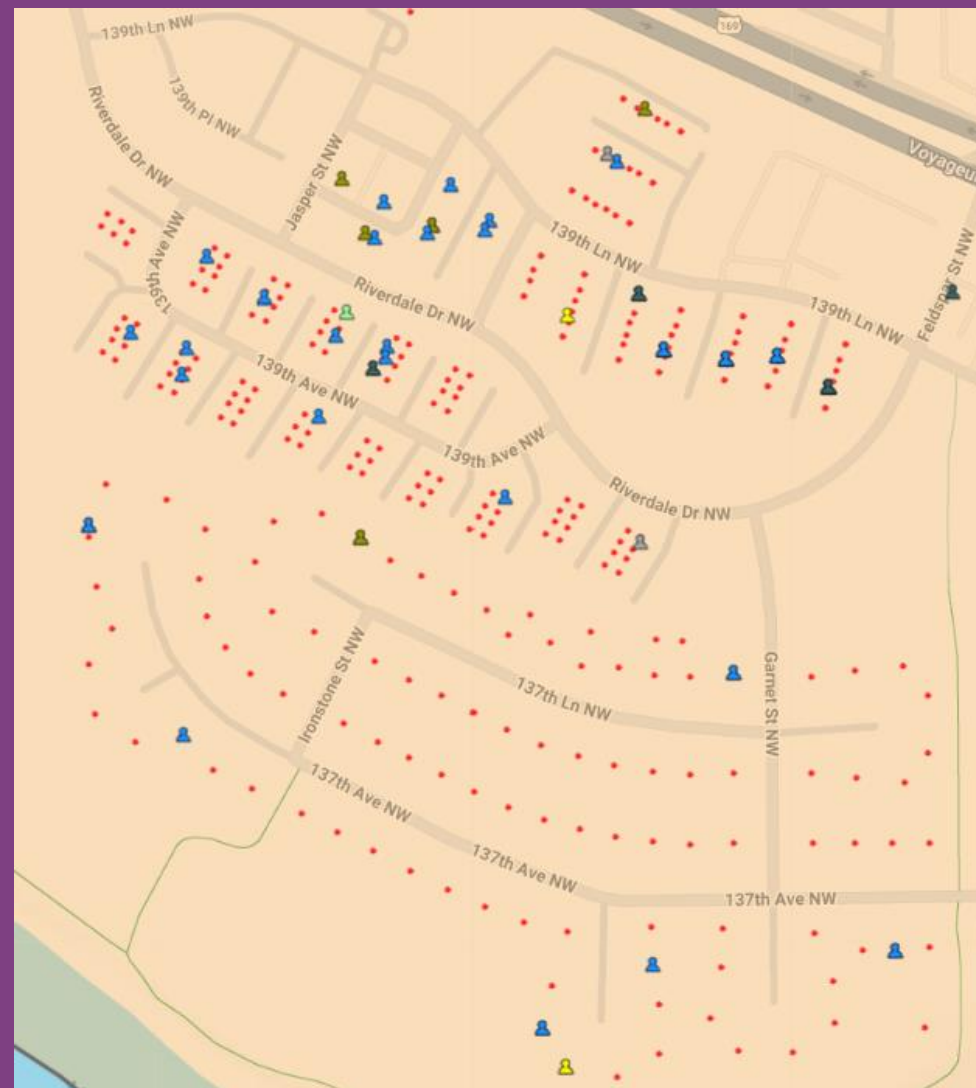
Solely focusing on improvements by campus is not the most efficient form of resource allocation.

Knowing the trends and activities of an area is more valuable than efforts made by school of enrollment.



Enrollment Improvement Using Geo-Visual Student Data

- No funding if student is not enrolled.
- Better than Using a 'List from the SIS' of Leavers (regardless of grade level).
- Pocket Areas of Withdrawn Students.
- Identification of Areas of Competition for Student Enrollment.
- Use Parcel data for recruitment
- Block Walks, Flyers, Etc. to promote 'We Want You (Back!)

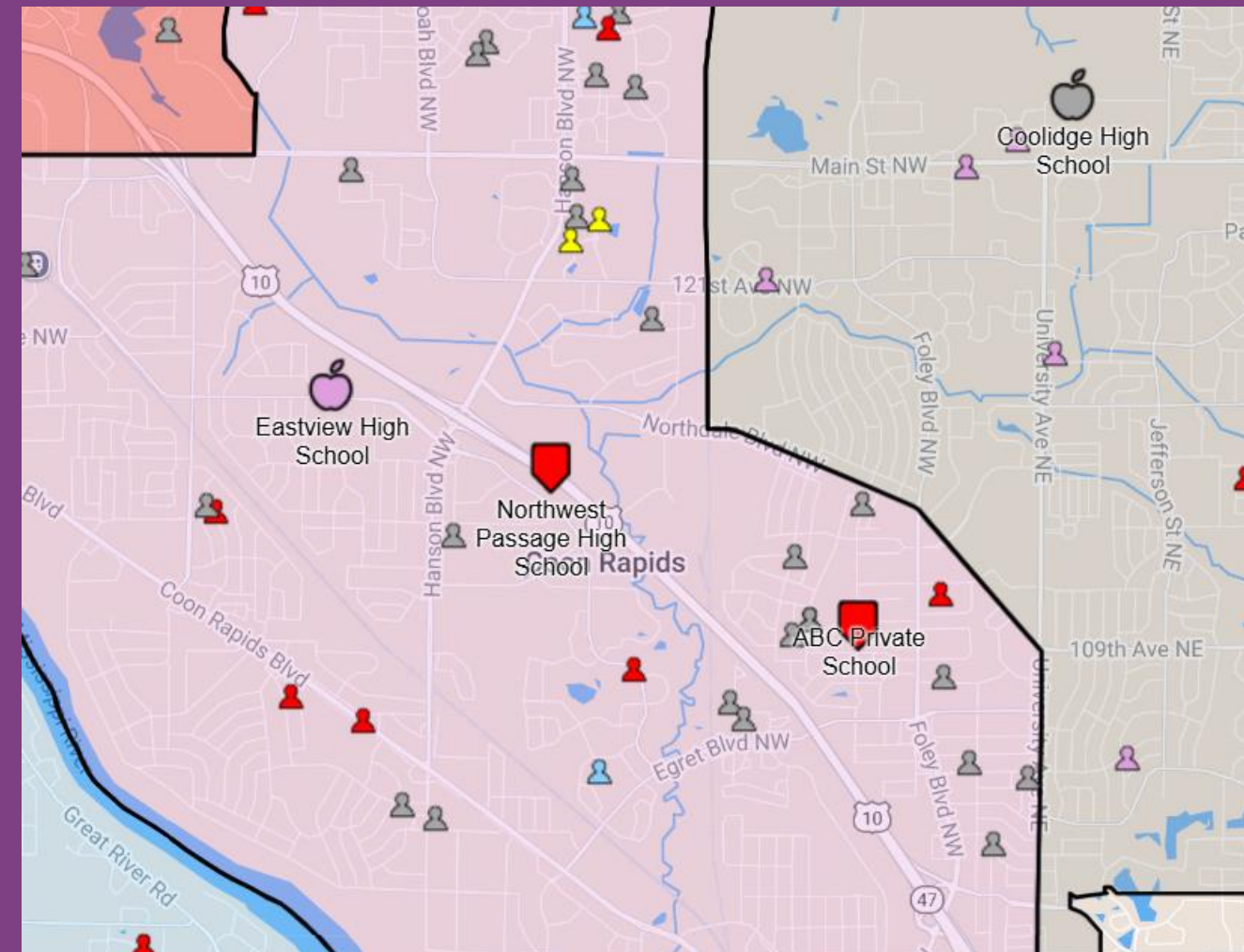


Geo-Visualizing Leavers

Current and Prior Year Withdrawn Students

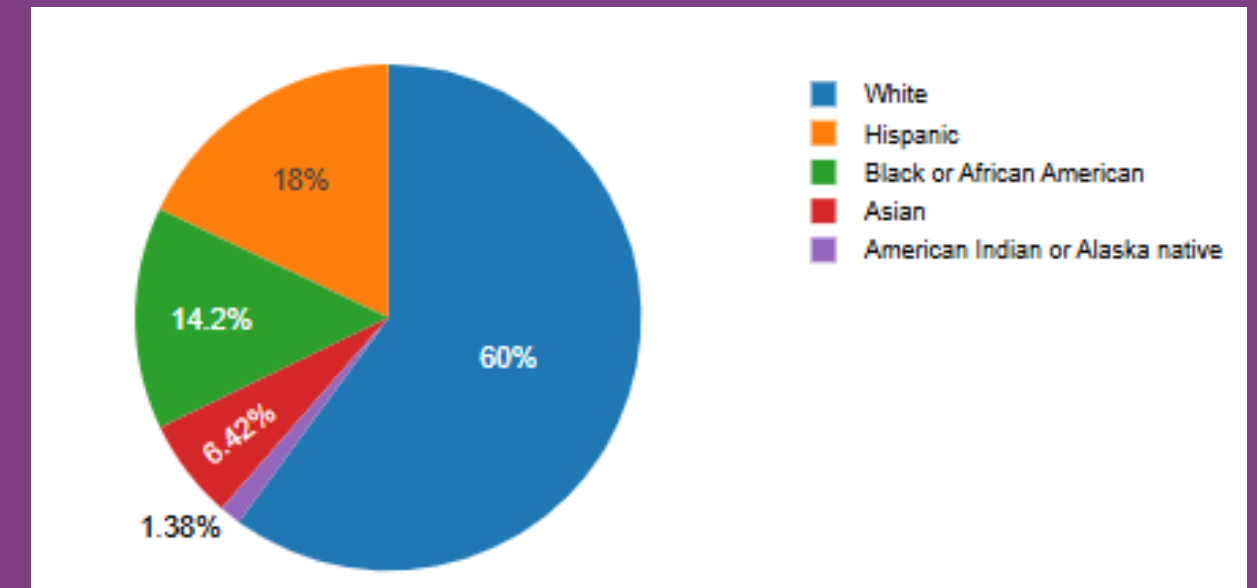
At a minimum, track ALL students who left for other public, private, charter, or home school reasons.

leavers_exit_reason_desc	Count
86 GED outside Texas	1
24 College, Pursue Degree	2
66 Removed by CPS	2
85 Grad outside TX-Return-Left	2
GED completion, documented	2
89 Incarcerated as adult	3
87 Enroll In Univ HS Diploma Pgm	4
83 Administrative Withdrawal	70
60 Home Schooling	199
16 Return to Home Country	336
81 Enroll In TX Private School	567
82 Enroll in Sch Outside Texas	680
Enr in Austin Area Charter	1054
98 Other,reason unknown/not list	5125



Absence Statistics

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 13 percent of all students are chronically absent.



This includes:

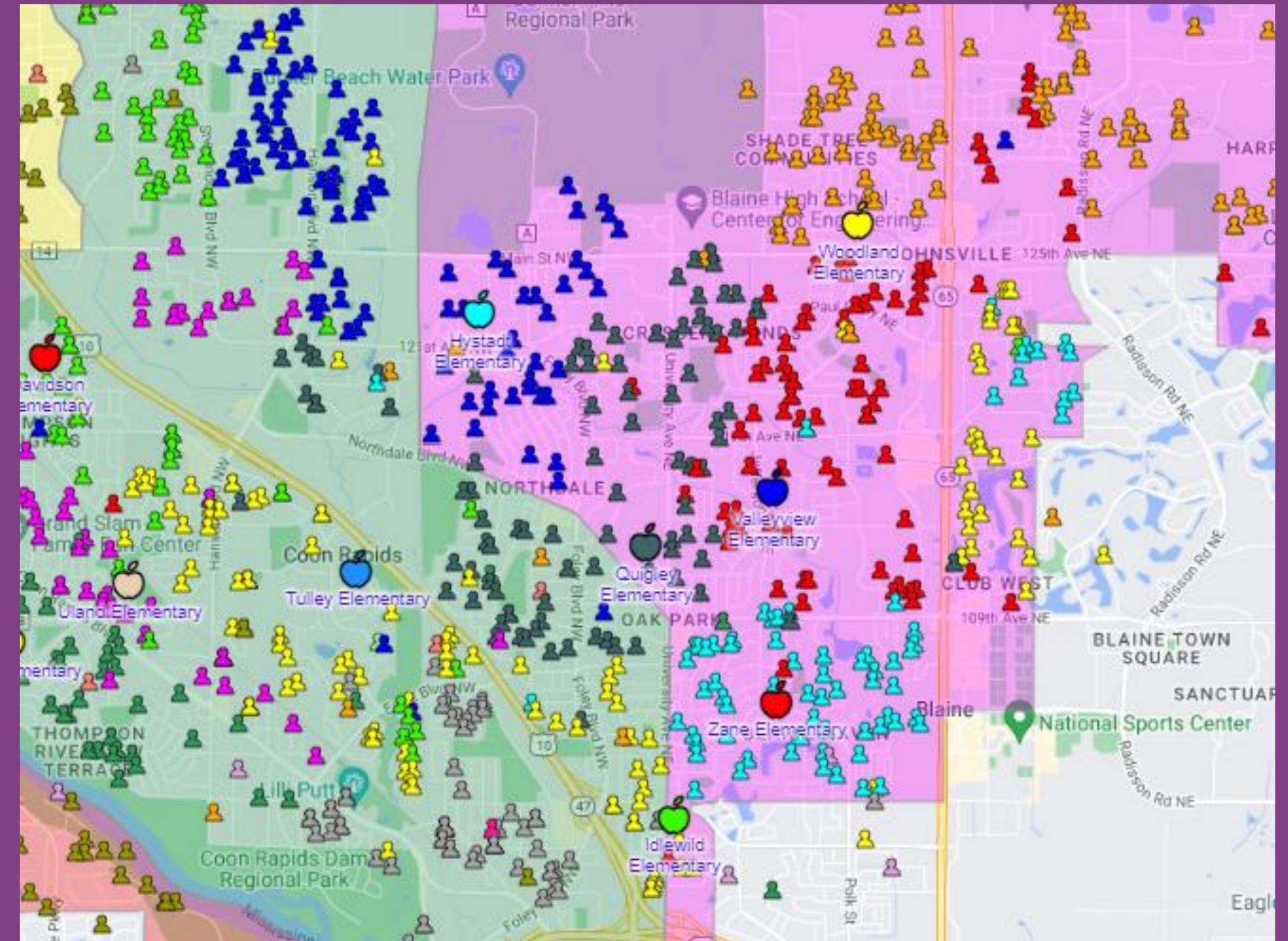
- 18 percent of all high school students
- 22 percent of black and 20 percent of Latino high school students
- 20 percent of all English learner high school students
- 11 percent of all elementary school students (black elementary school students are 1.4 times more likely to be chronically absent than white elementary school students)

Attendance Improvement Using Geo-Visual Student Data

- Better than Using a 'List from SIS'.
- Allows to Focus on Areas of Need.
- No funding if student doesn't attend.

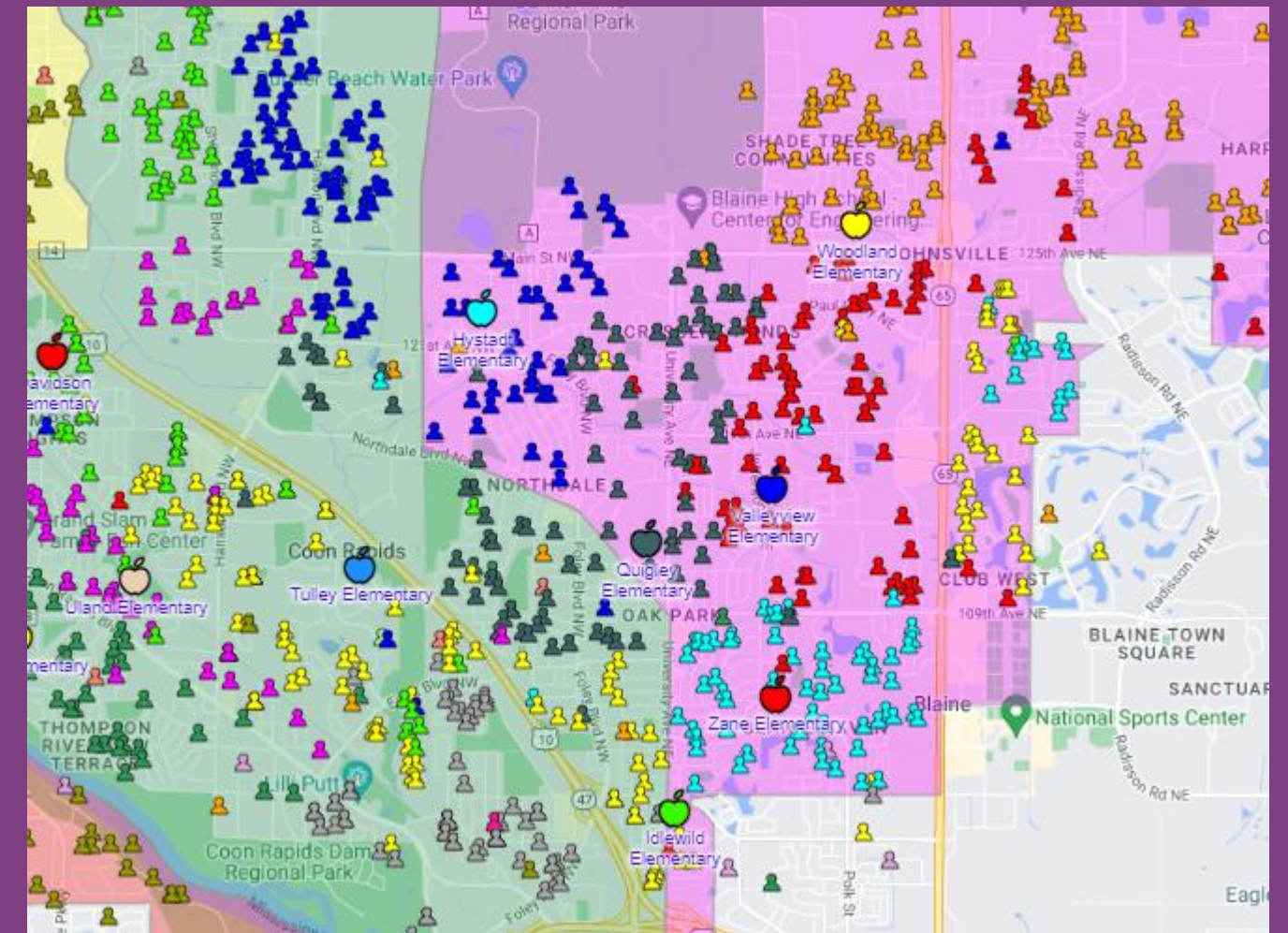
Race	Count	%
American Indian or Alaska native	165	1.38%
Asian	766	6.42%
Black or African American	1692	14.19%
Hispanic	2142	17.96%
White	7161	60.05%

Ethnicity	Count	%
Hispanic	2142	17.96%
Non-Hispanic	9784	82.04%

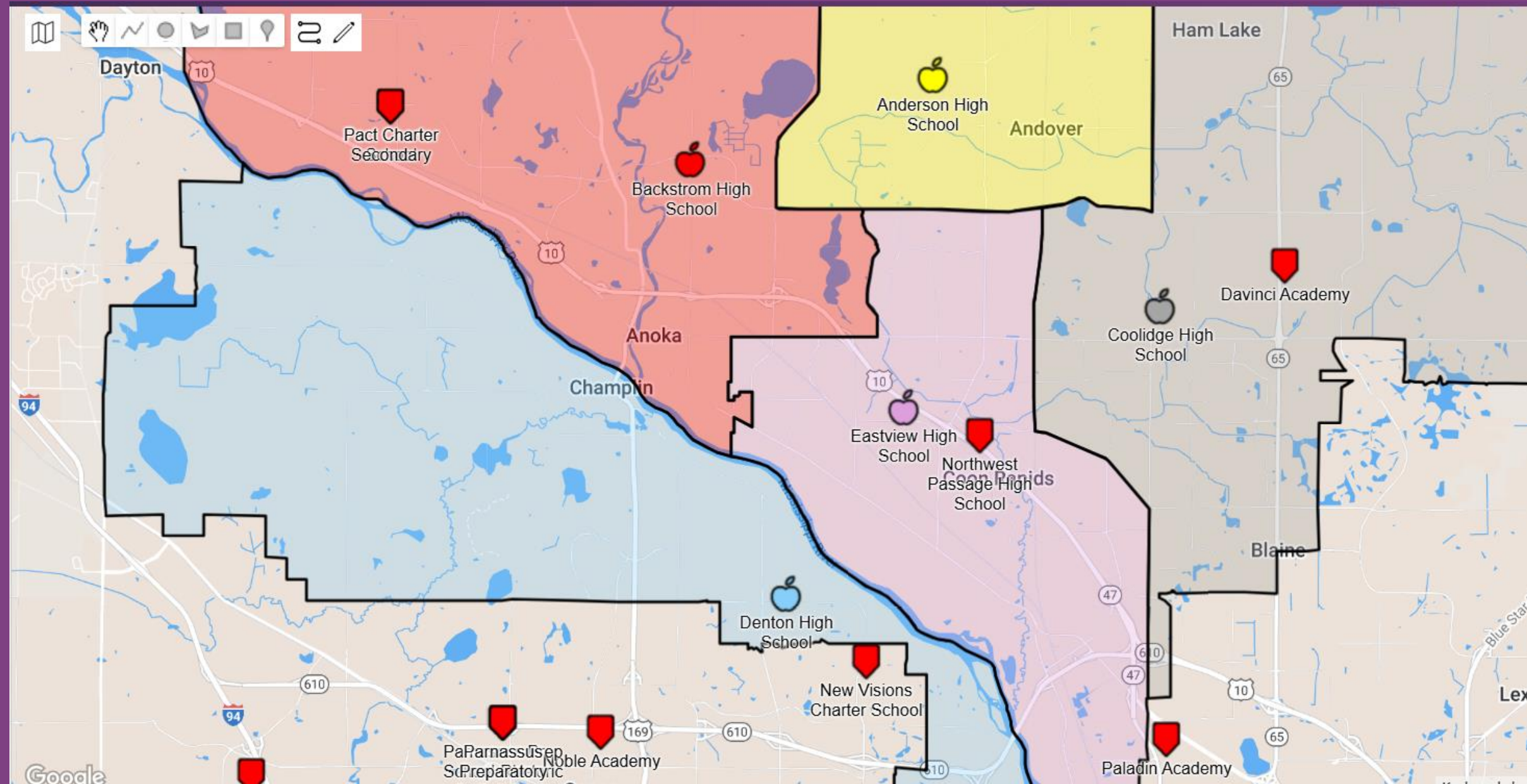


Attendance Improvement Using Geo-Visual Student Data

- Data Points:
 - Language (Home)
 - Geographic Location
 - School
 - Grade Level
 - Other Demographics
 - Attendance Rate/Absence Count
- Allows to Focus on Areas of Need
- Helps you to Communicate More Effectively



Visualize Charter/Private/Public School Locations



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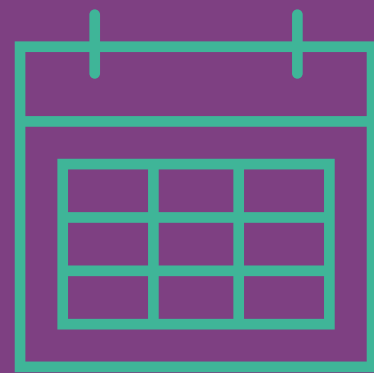
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Leveraging Attendance Calculations to Your Advantage

- Shorter six weeks means each absence costs you more.
- Longer six-weeks means each absence costs the district less



Leveraging Attendance Calculations to Your Advantage

- On average, the last six-weeks of each semester is poorly attended.
- The first and second six weeks typically have better attendance.
- Be sure your business manager gets to participate in the Academic Calendar Planning Committee to avoid having short grading periods during seasons that are more prone to absences.



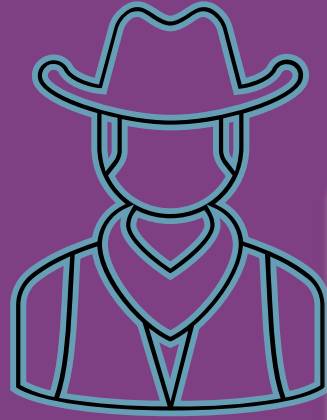
Leveraging Attendance Calculations to Your Advantage

During the times of the year when your attendance matters most or when your attendance is particularly poor, consider how to improve your attendance through targeted interventions



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Forecasting Impact of Targeted Interventions

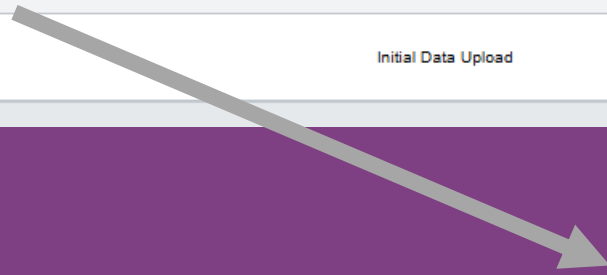


Foundation School Funding	2023-24 Total	2024-25 Total
FSP share of Tier One	0	0
Tier Two	4,216,501	0
Other Programs	16,997,312	9,213,376
Total FSP (Net of ASF and recapture net)	21,213,813	9,213,376
Funding Summary	2023-24 Total	2024-25 Total
199 / 5812 FSP (less ASF and Recapture net)	21,213,813	9,213,376
199 / 5811 Available School Fund	4,775,815	6,925,290
Total State Aid	25,989,628	16,138,667
Net Recapture	8,705,727	8,179,199

Use your favorite template (e.g. Frontline's Texas Revenue Calculator housed in Financial Planning) to Project Revenues based on Different Attendance Scenarios

Forecasting Impact of Targeted Interventions

<input type="checkbox"/>	Decrease ADA by 5%		Catherine Knepp	09/24/24 04:04	09/24/24 04:04	▼
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase ADA by 5%	Initial Data Upload	Christopher Mai	03/20/24 02:26	09/24/24 04:04	▼



Decrease ADA by 5%

Increase ADA by 5%

Input different attendance assumptions to generate and compare differing revenue estimates

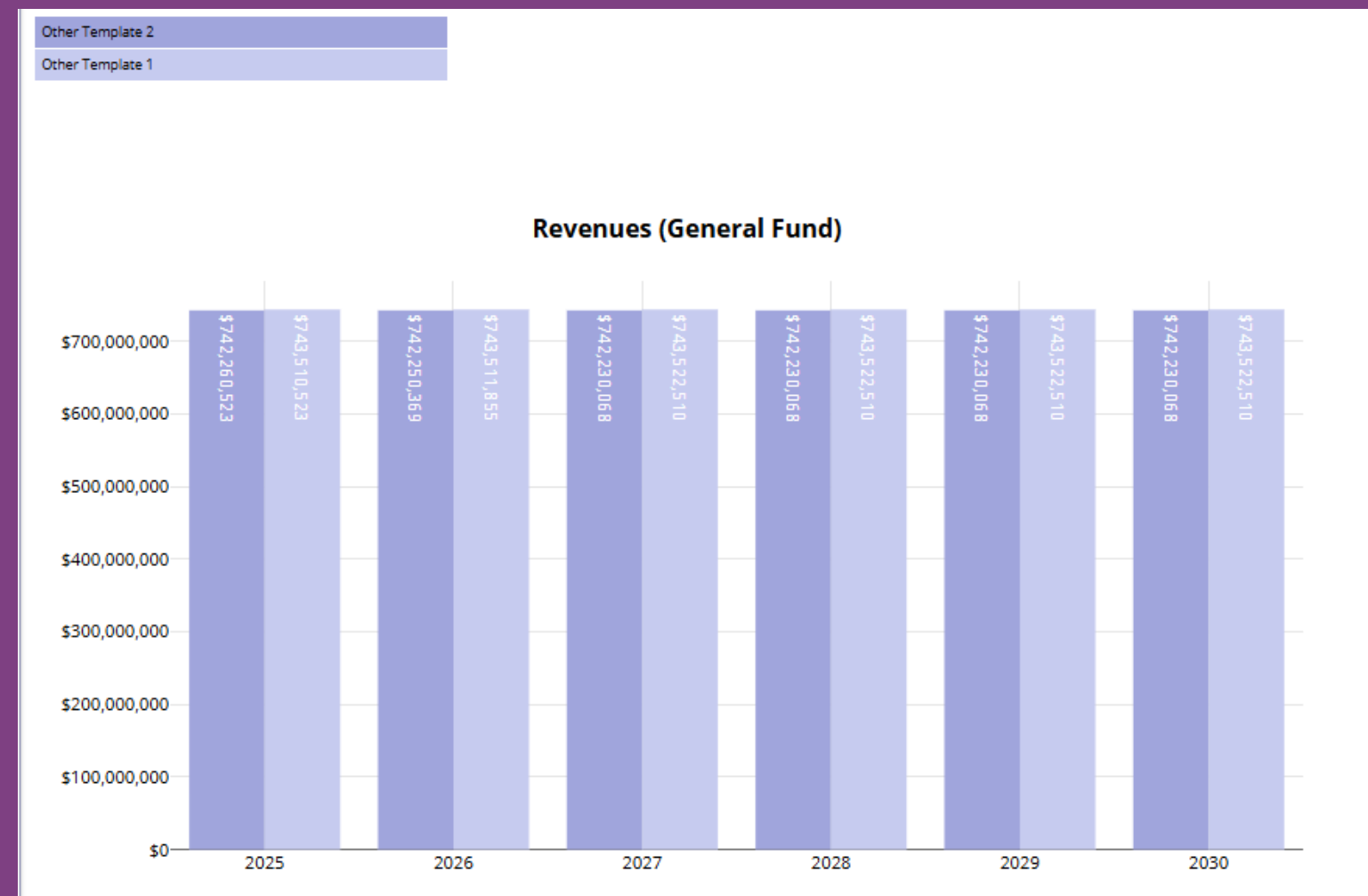
Enter Special Education FTI	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Homebound (code 01)	0	0	0	0	0
Hospital Class (code 02)	0	0	0	0	0
Speech Therapy (code 00)	2	3	2	3	4
Resource Room (code 41, 42)	23	23	24	27	44
Self Contained (codes 43 - 45)	6	4	6	5	5
Off Home Campus (codes 91-92)	7	7	7	5	4
Vocational Adjustment (code 93)	0	0	0	0	0
State Schools (code 30)	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Public Contracts	0	0	0	0	0

Activate

Forecasting Impact of Targeted Interventions

Decrease ADA by 5%

Increase ADA by 5%



Input different attendance assumptions to generate and compare differing revenue estimates

Forecasting Impact of Targeted Interventions

Financial Planning Analytics

← Back to Scenarios

Scenario: Click Here to Start Plan Assumptions Rev

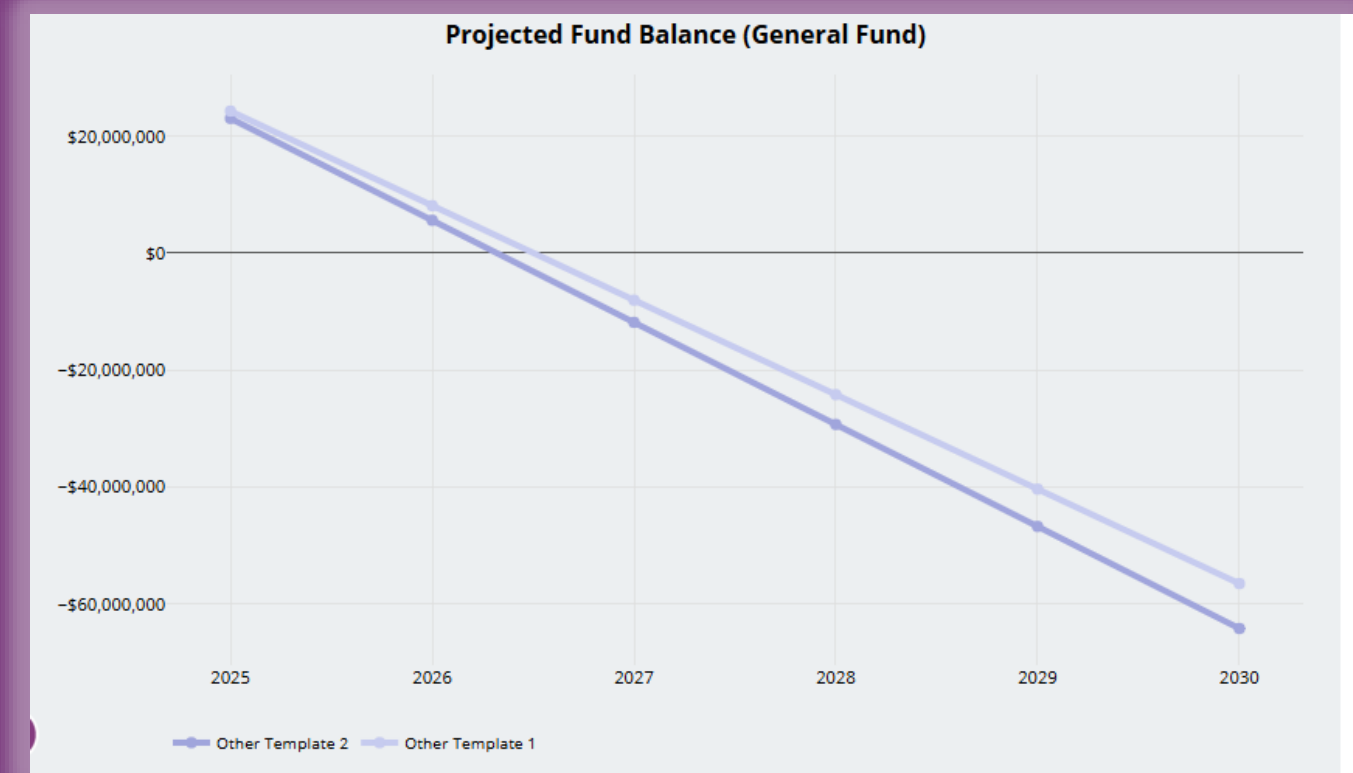
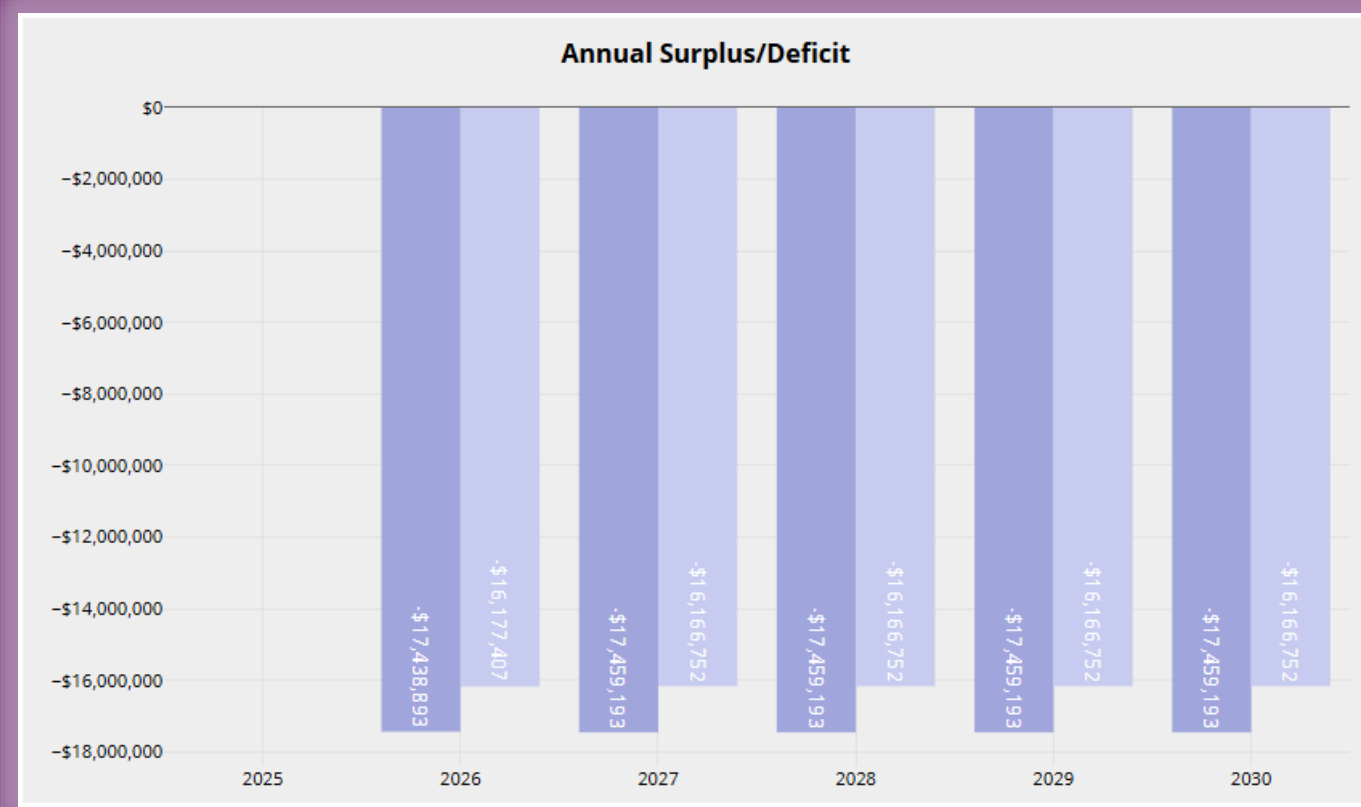
Revenues

		2024	2025	
-	Object Level 3	Current	%	Projected
Revenues ▶		\$261,629,7...	0.00%	\$261,629,732 ▶
5711 Taxes, Current Year Levy ▶		\$22,158,579 ▶	0.00%	\$22,158,579 ▶
5712 Taxes, Prior Years ▶		\$970,000 ▶	0.00%	\$970,000 ▶
5719 Penalties, Interest, and Other Tax Revenues ▶		\$0 ▶	0.00%	\$0 ▶
5739 Tuition and Fees from Local Sources ▶		\$0 ▶	0.00%	\$0 ▶
5811 Per Capita Apportionment ▶		\$4,784,181 ▶	0.00%	\$4,784,181 ▶
5812 Fsp Formula Foundation ▶		\$113,971,4... ▶	0.00%	\$113,971,454 ▶
{Others} ▶		\$119,745,5... ▶	0.00%	\$119,745,518 ▶

Connect your revenue estimates to the impact on your overall budget and financial forecast.

Forecasting Impact of Targeted Interventions

Forecast impact on fund balance and the overall 5-year forecast and use these projections to motivate campus leaders to make increasing attendance a



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Communicating to Your Board and Community

Describe how your school district's mission statement gives you direction in the midst of change.

Community members want to feel confident that you will continue to do your job and pursue excellence in delivering education to their students no matter the circumstances.

Get your community excited about choosing your school and attending each and every day

Communicating to Your Board and Community

Strategies for Involving Your Community in Increasing Attendance:

Establish Attendance procedures that allow for following up with families with students with weak attendance

Minimize obstacles to attendance and create fun incentives for campuses to increase attendance

Be Mindful of Transportation Routes

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THANK YOU!

Please contact us if you have any questions or would like us to chat with others in your school system.

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Resources and References

Student Attendance Accounting Handbook:

<https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/financial-compliance/saah/2425-saah-adopted.pdf>

Attendance Works Tips for Effectiveness:

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<https://www.nassp.org/publication/principal-leadership/volume-17-2016-2017/principal-leadership-december-2016/10-high-yield-actions-to-improve-student-attendance/>

Navigate Life Texas :

<https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/en/education-schools/texas-90-attendance-and-truancy-rules>

EdChoice School Choice in America Dashboard:

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