

# **BCTF Research Report**

Part of the BCTF Information Handbook

SECTION IV  
2005-SD-02

## **British Columbia school-age-population projections, to 2013**

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June 2005

According to BC STATS (Ministry of Management Services), the population of British Columbia is getting larger and older, and between 2001 and 2031 will have increased by almost 36%. However, the population of school-age British Columbians will follow a quite different pattern: “The population of school age (5–17 years) will decline slightly over the next 10 years or so, but then will begin a slow increase up to current levels by 2031.” (*British Columbia population projections*, accessed on the BC STATS web site at <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/Project/P30BCIntro.pdf>, on June 13, 2005.)

Projections of public-school-aged headcount enrolments by district are available for a 17-year period (1997 to 2013). According to this source (Ministry of Education Standard Report 1558B, *Projection report public school aged headcount* (excludes adults), June 15, 2004), the public-school-age population will decrease slowly over the projection period. Between 2004 and 2013 there will be a 6.8% decrease.

See the tables on the following pages for details.

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RT05-0028  
June 2005

**Table 1: Provincial public-school-age population projections (headcount)**  
(2004 and subsequent years are forecast)

	Elementary Headcount	Year-over-year % Change Elementary	Secondary Headcount	Year-over-year % Change Secondary	Total School Age	Year-over-year # Change	Year-over-year % Change Total
1997	359,863		247,618		607,481		
1998	355,265	-1.3%	251,316	1.5%	606,581	-900	-0.15%
1999	354,998	-0.1%	251,167	-0.1%	606,165	-416	-0.07%
2000	352,089	-0.8%	250,251	-0.4%	602,340	-3,825	-0.63%
2001	348,545	-1.0%	249,946	-0.1%	598,491	-3,849	-0.64%
2002	341,201	-2.1%	248,632	-0.5%	589,833	-8,658	-1.45%
2003	334,754	-1.9%	248,003	-0.3%	582,757	-7,076	-1.20%
2004	329,583	-1.5%	247,890	0.0%	577,473	-5,284	-0.91%
2005	324,286	-1.6%	248,320	0.2%	572,606	-4,867	-0.84%
2006	319,312	-1.5%	248,250	0.0%	567,562	-5,044	-0.88%
2007	314,745	-1.4%	247,842	-0.2%	562,587	-4,975	-0.88%
2008	310,303	-1.4%	247,340	-0.2%	557,643	-4,944	-0.88%
2009	306,402	-1.3%	246,153	-0.5%	552,555	-5,088	-0.91%
2010	304,830	-0.5%	243,129	-1.2%	547,959	-4,596	-0.83%
2011	304,782	0.0%	239,388	-1.5%	544,170	-3,789	-0.69%
2012	305,764	0.3%	235,187	-1.8%	540,951	-3,219	-0.59%
2013	307,799	0.7%	230,377	-2.0%	538,176	-2,775	-0.51%

Note: Excludes home school and adult students.

Source: MoE SR 1558B, June 15, 2004.

Secondary enrolments will decrease by 7.1% between 2004 and 2013, and elementary enrolments by 6.6% over the period.

District data show that there are wide variations in projected changes, with eight districts (see Table 2) expected to show increases, ranging from 1% (Haida Gwaii-Queen Charlotte) to over 20% (Stikine).

**Table 2: Districts expected to show increases in public-school-age population, for 2004 and 2013**

Dist #	District	2004 projection	2013 projection	% change
50	Haida Gwaii-Queen Charlotte	831	839	1.0%
75	Mission	7,314	7,476	2.2%
34	Abbotsford	19,556	20,236	3.5%
36	Surrey	62,582	65,345	4.4%
41	Burnaby	24,853	26,356	6.0%
40	New Westminster	6,123	6,772	10.6%
93	Francophone Education Authority	3,214	3,567	11.0%
87	Stikine	302	363	20.2%

Source: Source: MoE SR 1558B, June 15, 2004.

As shown in Table 3, enrolments in 52 of the 60 districts in the province are projected to decline. Southeast Kootenay is expected to experience the largest decrease, of 24.5%, from 2004 to 2013. Saanich (-24.1%), Kootenay-Columbia (-23.6%), Alberni (-23.6%), Delta (-23.3%), Powell River (-22.2%), Nicola-Similkameen (-20.3%), and Campbell River (-20.3%) are also expected to experience 20% decreases.

**Table 3: Provincial public-school-age population projections (headcount), by district, for 2004 and 2013**

#	District	2004 projection	2013 projection	% change
5	Southeast Kootenay	5,981	4,515	-24.5%
6	Rocky Mountain	3,729	3,153	-15.4%
8	Kootenay Lake	5,783	5,071	-12.3%
10	Arrow Lakes	683	625	-8.5%
19	Revelstoke	1,374	1,265	-7.9%
20	Kootenay-Columbia	4,773	3,645	-23.6%
22	Vernon	9,264	8,747	-5.6%
23	Central Okanagan	22,001	21,593	-1.9%
27	Cariboo-Chilcotin	6,559	5,390	-17.8%
28	Quesnel	4,228	3,404	-19.5%
33	Chilliwack	12,451	12,398	-0.4%
34	Abbotsford	19,556	20,236	3.5%
35	Langley	19,423	18,678	-3.8%
36	Surrey	62,582	65,345	4.4%
37	Delta	16,833	12,919	-23.3%
38	Richmond	22,669	19,264	-15.0%
39	Vancouver	55,166	54,292	-1.6%
40	New Westminster	6,123	6,772	10.6%
41	Burnaby	24,853	26,356	6.0%
42	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	15,164	13,680	-9.8%
43	Coquitlam	31,692	30,261	-4.5%
44	North Vancouver	17,612	14,749	-16.3%
45	West Vancouver	6,120	5,069	-17.2%
46	Sunshine Coast	4,053	3,764	-7.1%
47	Powell River	2,690	2,092	-22.2%
48	Howe Sound	4,420	4,027	-8.9%
49	Central Coast	317	297	-6.3%
50	Haida Gwaii-Queen Charlotte	831	839	1.0%
51	Boundary	1,823	1,680	-7.8%
52	Prince Rupert	2,824	2,439	-13.6%
53	Okanagan Similkameen	2,851	2,585	-9.3%
54	Bulkley Valley	2,706	2,293	-15.3%
57	Prince George	16,011	13,244	-17.3%
58	Nicola-Similkameen	2,865	2,282	-20.3%
59	Peace River South	4,682	3,900	-16.7%
60	Peace River North	5,800	5,543	-4.4%
61	Greater Victoria	20,389	19,564	-4.0%
62	Sooke	8,894	8,083	-9.1%
63	Saanich	8,680	6,591	-24.1%
64	Gulf Islands	1,615	1,549	-4.1%

#	District	2004 projection	2013 projection	% change
67	Okanagan Skaha	7,164	6,428	-10.3%
68	Nanaimo-Ladysmith	15,735	15,050	-4.4%
69	Qualicum	5,120	4,871	-4.9%
70	Alberni	4,617	3,543	-23.3%
71	Comox Valley	9,338	7,775	-16.7%
72	Campbell River	6,278	5,003	-20.3%
73	Kamloops/Thompson	15,372	13,946	-9.3%
74	Gold Trail	1,943	1,764	-9.2%
75	Mission	7,314	7,476	2.2%
78	Fraser-Cascade	2,246	2,002	-10.9%
79	Cowichan Valley	9,462	8,047	-15.0%
81	Fort Nelson	1,201	1,050	-12.6%
82	Coast Mountains	6,309	5,423	-14.0%
83	North Okanagan-Shuswap	7,681	6,458	-15.9%
84	Vancouver Island West	507	447	-11.8%
85	Vancouver Island North	1,913	1,605	-16.1%
87	Stikine	302	363	20.2%
91	Nechako Lakes	5,208	4,583	-12.0%
92	Nisga'a	479	576	20.3%
93	Francophone Education Authority	3,214	3,567	11.0%
99	Province	577,473	538,176	-6.8%

Source: MoE SR 1558B, June 15, 2004.

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RT05-0028

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