

## East Troy Schools Experiencing Declining Enrollment

*Numbers reflect a two-decade trend for the district, leading to funding challenges*

EAST TROY, WI — The East Troy Community School District has 55 fewer students in grades prekindergarten through 12 compared to last school year, according to the official counts that took place September 20.

On the third Friday of each school year, all Wisconsin public school districts report their official student counts to the state Department of Public Instruction. In East Troy, 153 students graduated at the end of the 2018-19 school year, while 101 students enrolled in kindergarten in fall 2019.

In general, these numbers reflect a 20-year trend for the East Troy Community School District. In 2001, the district had 1,727 students enrolled. This school year's enrollment is at 1,571—representing a 9 percent decrease since 2001. This trend has taken place despite the district's addition of four-year-old kindergarten in 2007 - 2008, which currently serves about 90 children each school year.

Below is a summary of ETCSD's September student head count across its schools:

School Name	2018-19 School Year	2019-20 School Year
Little Prairie Primary School	380	389
Prairie View Elementary School	301	307
East Troy Middle School	359	324
East Troy High School	586	551
Total	1,626	1,571

According to Sarah Kemp, a researcher with the school enrollment projections program at the University of Wisconsin Applied Population Laboratory, "Over the past 13 years, the (WI State) enrollment decline in grades 4K-12 was 2%, while grades K-12 dropped by 5%. Elementary and middle school enrollment has fallen by 2%, while the greatest decline has occurred at the high school level, with more than a 10% decline in grades 9-12. The only group to see an enrollment increase since 2006 was grade 4K, which grew by 113%." - Source: Why More Wisconsin Schools Are Enrolling Fewer Students on <https://www.wiscontext.org>

Overall, these enrollment numbers have led to an additional shortfall of about \$286,000 for the 2019-20 school year. Although the district is temporarily addressing this budget issue, permanent reductions will be on the horizon for the 2020-21 budget to address ETCSD's future compounded deficit.

"Like many small, rural Wisconsin school districts, we are seeing our enrollment trend downward on a yearly basis here in East Troy," said Dr. Chris Hibner, ETCSD superintendent. "Due to the way the state provides funding to public schools, this means decreased revenue for the district. As we move forward, we must continue to look at all options for addressing these budgetary challenges."

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