Worcester School Boundary & Quadrant Alignment:

Community Forum #2 Doherty High School
Community Forum #3 North High School

April 15 & 27, 2026

Dillinger Research and Applied Data
Nick Stellitano, Katie Tartaglia, Renée Sullivan

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Who are we? DillingerRAD is a non-profit group from Connecticut. We help schools and state education groups with hard problems. We use data to make sure our solutions are fair, lasting, and support the community.

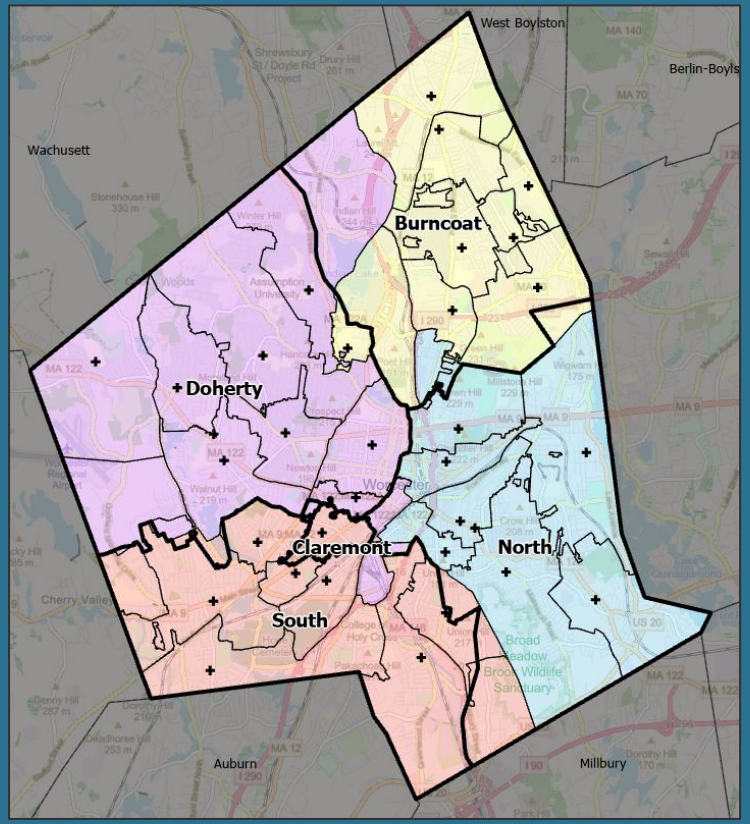
Why are we here? To help Worcester Public Schools improve the district's existing quadrant system, with a focus on elementary schools & more predictable student pathways.

District Improvement Goal #3

School Boundary & Quadrant Alignment

Complete and implement a realignment of school boundaries that ensures programming aligns with each building's capacity by June 2027*

**two-year goal with 2025-26 benchmarks included.*



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Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Project timeline, and Forum #1 feedback
3. Quadrant and zone data
4. Hearing from you: Community open input
5. Next steps

What is “realignment”?

The concept:

Realignment is about changing school zones to achieve a specific purpose

WPS’ Definition of Realignment:

We’re improving our existing quadrant system to better handle growth and overcrowding.

These updates will make school paths more predictable, ensuring every student has a clear, direct route from kindergarten through graduation and better access to preschool and specialized programs.

When: Implement changes for the 2027-28 school year

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Why is realignment right for WPS?

WPS' school boundaries and student pathways have grown in ways that don't always make sense for Worcester.

Realignment that meets current and future needs, will:

- ✓ Improve students' learning environment (classes wouldn't have too many or too few peers)
- ✓ Make students' path from elementary to middle to high school make sense (not bouncing from one quadrant to another without explanation)
- ✓ Help students get to school more smoothly and safely (improving bus routes and walking zones)

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What else is important to know?

- ✓ No anticipation of school closures
- ✓ Potential for transportation enhancements
- ✓ Data - qualitative and quantitative - will drive scenarios
- ✓ Community feedback is critical

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Key Stakeholders and Roles

- **Superintendent:** Goal Setting & Providing Vision
- **Working Group:** Advise new boundaries scenario development and stakeholder engagement approach, drawing on local context, school & neighborhood dynamics, identify district pain points, etc.
- **Dillinger:** Data analysis, facilitate community and stakeholder input, scenario development, summary presentations and reporting
- **Community Stakeholders:** Inform priorities, provide scenario feedback
- **School Committee:** Approval of recommendations after community feedback

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Current Working Group Members

As of 4/27/26

Name	Title
Sara Consalvo	Chief Financial & Operations Officer
Jessica Boss	Chief of Staff & Advancement
Michael Freeman	Administrative Director of Operations (Transportation)
Annaliese Estabrook	Transportation Router
Liam Young	Financial Analyst - Student Data & Building Capacity
Bob Walton	Director of Information Technology
Dan O'Brien	Chief Communications Officer
Patty Padilla	Director of Student Placement & Enrollment
Casey Starr	Director of Family & Community Engagement
Will Foley	Executive Director of Instruction & School Leadership - Burncoat
Ellen Kelley	Executive Director of Instruction & School Leadership - Doherty
Kareem Tatum	Executive Director of Instruction & School Leadership - North

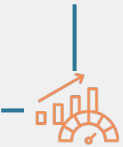
Name	Title
Chris Kursonis	Executive Director of Instruction & School Leadership - South
Triada Frangou-Apostolou	Director of Human Resources - Potential Staff Movement Impact
Tammy Murray or Designee	Designee from Special Education - Program Impact
Colleen Newell or Designee	Designee from Early Childhood - Program Impact
Matt Morse	Director of School Safety
Angel Carrasquillo	Transportation Supervisor
Anne Bureau	Program Director, Worcester Community Connections Coalition
Tiffany Lillie	Girls Inc. Worcester
Aislinn Doyle	Parent - Doherty
Parent - Burncoat	
Parent - South	
Parent - North	

Realignment typically occurs in three phases

Phase 1: Designing New Boundaries

Data collection & analysis, community and stakeholder engagement, School Committee presentations and voting

~1 year (Jan - Nov 2026)



Phase 2: Implementation Planning

Create a transition plan for students and families built off Phase 1's final decision.

~Concurrent with Phase 1



Phase 3: Implementation

Establish new bus routes, communication, etc.

Students begin at their newly-zoned schools: Expected for 2027-28 school year

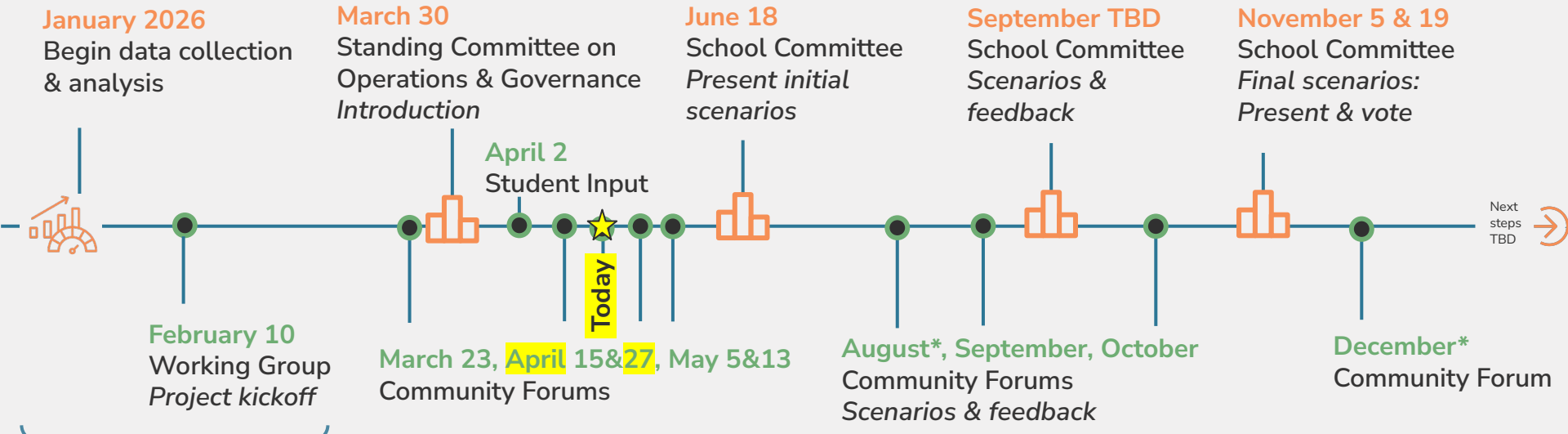
~6 months (Dec 2026 - Jun 2027)



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Timeline for Phases 1 & 2: Redesigning boundaries for WPS schools

WPS' realignment work *just started*, and School Committee will make a decision this fall.



Continue throughout project:

- Qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, including:
  - Geographic Analysis
  - Capacity & Utilization Analysis
  - Demographic Trends
- Realignment Working Group meetings

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* August and December Community Forums are Tentative

Community Forum #1 - What we heard and what we're doing

What we heard	What we're doing about it (In Progress)
Must include parents and student voice asap	Identifying Parent Representative to include in the Working Group
Strong desire for transparency - to see the data and understand the process	Regular website updates to include data and process, Community Forums #2 & 3 with enrollment & capacity data
Engage with community partners - opportunity to reach more representative population	Identifying Community Group Representative to include in the Working Group
Equity concerns; disproportionate impacts; inequitable representation in process	Better utilize ParentSquare as information/feedback channel which includes translation for parents and community. Continue to translate materials and provide translation services for forums. Regular updates to Wraparound Coordinators at each school.
Opportunities for better alignment and family support through bell schedules and Pre-K	Task Working Group to engage in identifying recommendations, as well as challenges for these opportunities

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Data Sequence

Community Forum feedback and survey results so far emphasize the importance of showing data.

Here is what you can expect to see at Forums:

- **In-Person: April 15 & 27**
  - Worcester city context
  - WPS trends
  - Data by Quadrant

- **Virtual: May 5 (English) & 13 (Spanish)**
  - School capacity and utilization
  - School level trends
  - Travel time

Updated 4/27/26 per community feedback

PDF of slides in English

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Worcester & WPS Statistics

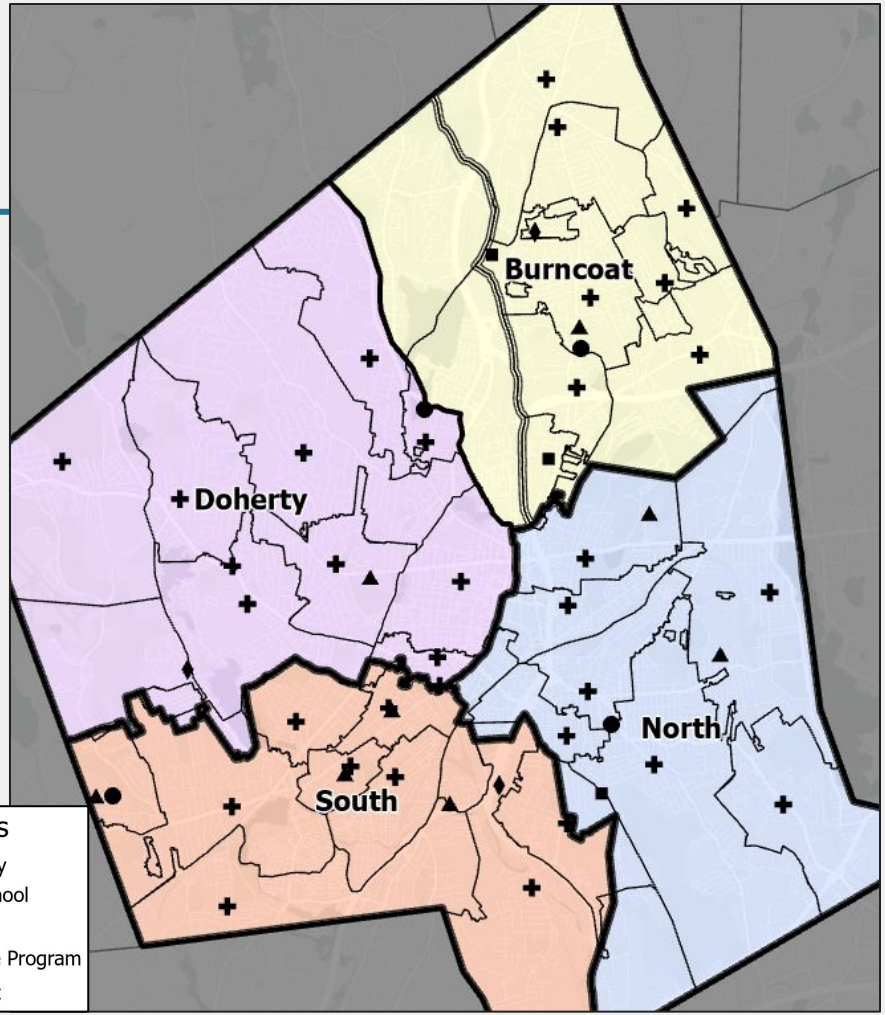
City

- 20% growth between 2000 and 2020; growth is spread across the city rather than concentrated in one area
- Projected future growth concentrated in older adult cohorts (50+)
- ~30% increase in Hispanic/Latino population over the past decade

District

- 33 Elementary Schools
- 4 Middle Schools
- 4 Comprensive High Schools
- 2 Grade 7-12 Schools
- 1 Technical High School
- 5 Alternative Schools
- 3 Head Start Programs

Data Source: City of Worcester Housing Production Plan FY 2026-2030 (JM Goldson LLC and RKG Associates); Spatial Boundaries and Locations (Frontline); School Data (WPS)



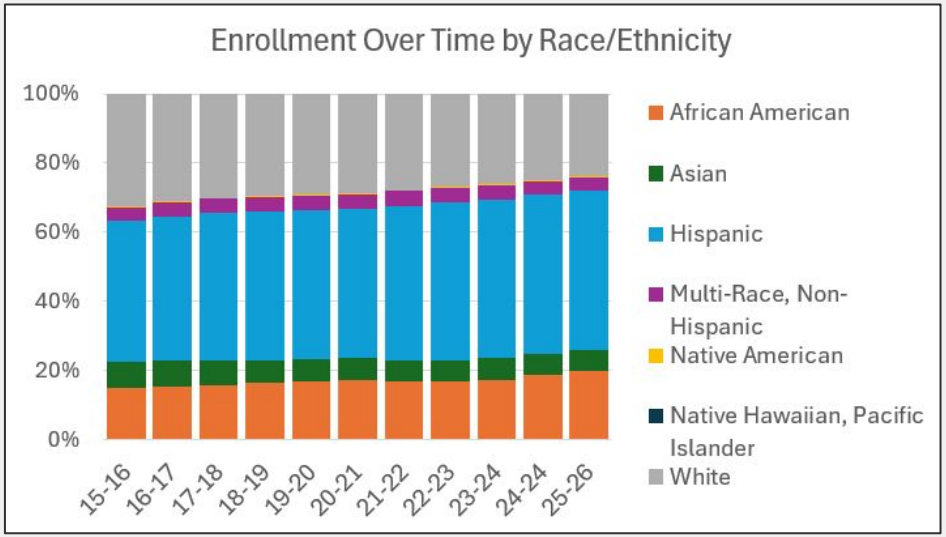
WPS Statistics

Current Students

- 24,677 PK-12 students
- 70% of students are designated as economically disadvantaged, a measure of poverty based on participation in state assistance programs*
- A notable share of students attend school outside their home quadrant (*excl. Special Ed students & students at Alternative or Magnet schools*):
  - Elementary: 20%**
  - Middle: 12%
  - High: 18%

Changes over the past decade***

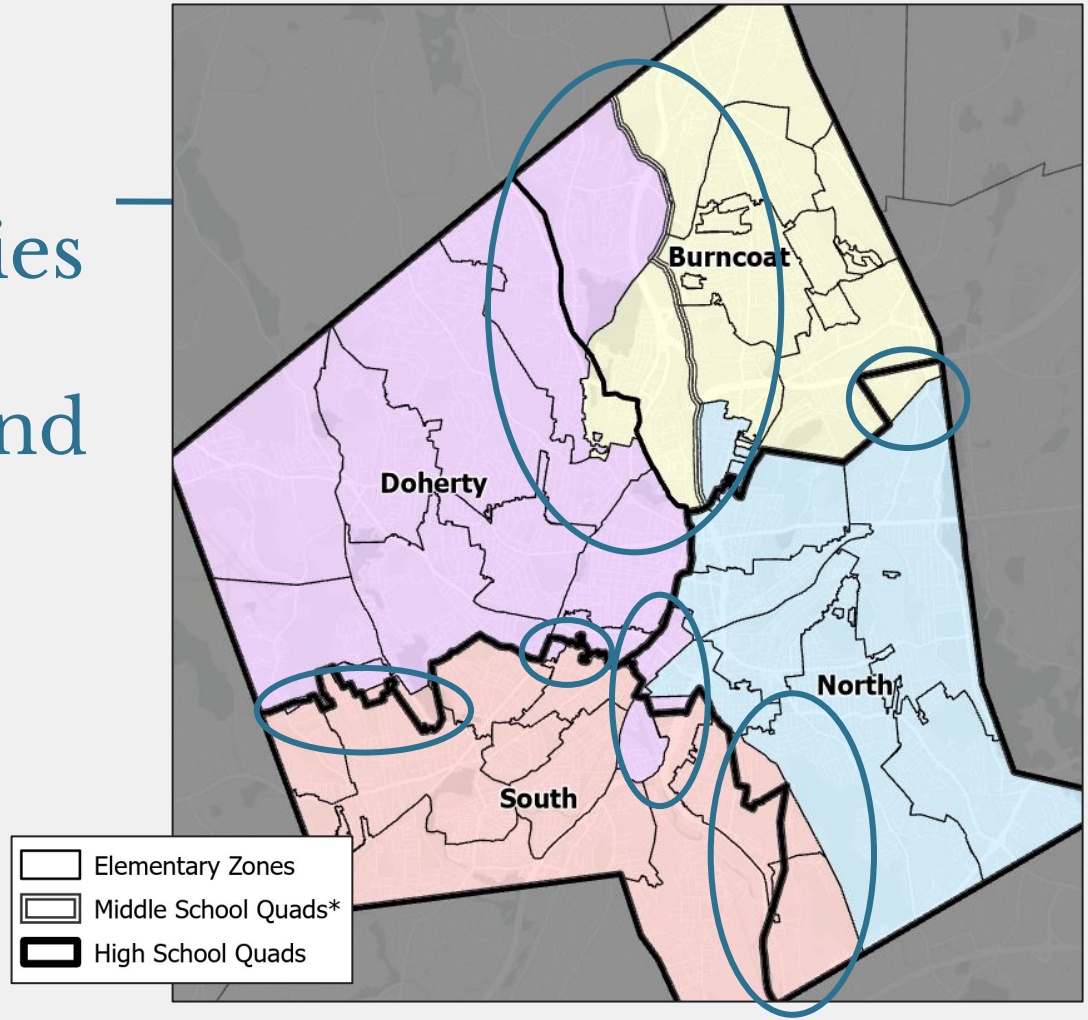
- 2.7% decline in enrollment
- 10% decline in Kindergarten
- 7% increase in Hispanic population
- 22% decrease in White population



Data Source: Student-level Data (WPS)
**Economically disadvantaged designation per DESE: students are identified based on participation in one or more state-administered programs, including SNAP, TAFDC, DCF foster care, and MassHealth (Medicaid).*
***Elementary % is based on Elementary attendance zones (i.e., more granular geographies), whereas Middle & High are based on respective quadrants*
****Averages were taken of school years SY15-16 through SY17-18 (early period) and SY23-24 through SY25-26 (recent period); % change reflects the difference between these two averaged periods*

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Elementary school boundaries don't always match middle and high school boundaries



Data Source: Spatial Boundaries and Locations (Frontline)

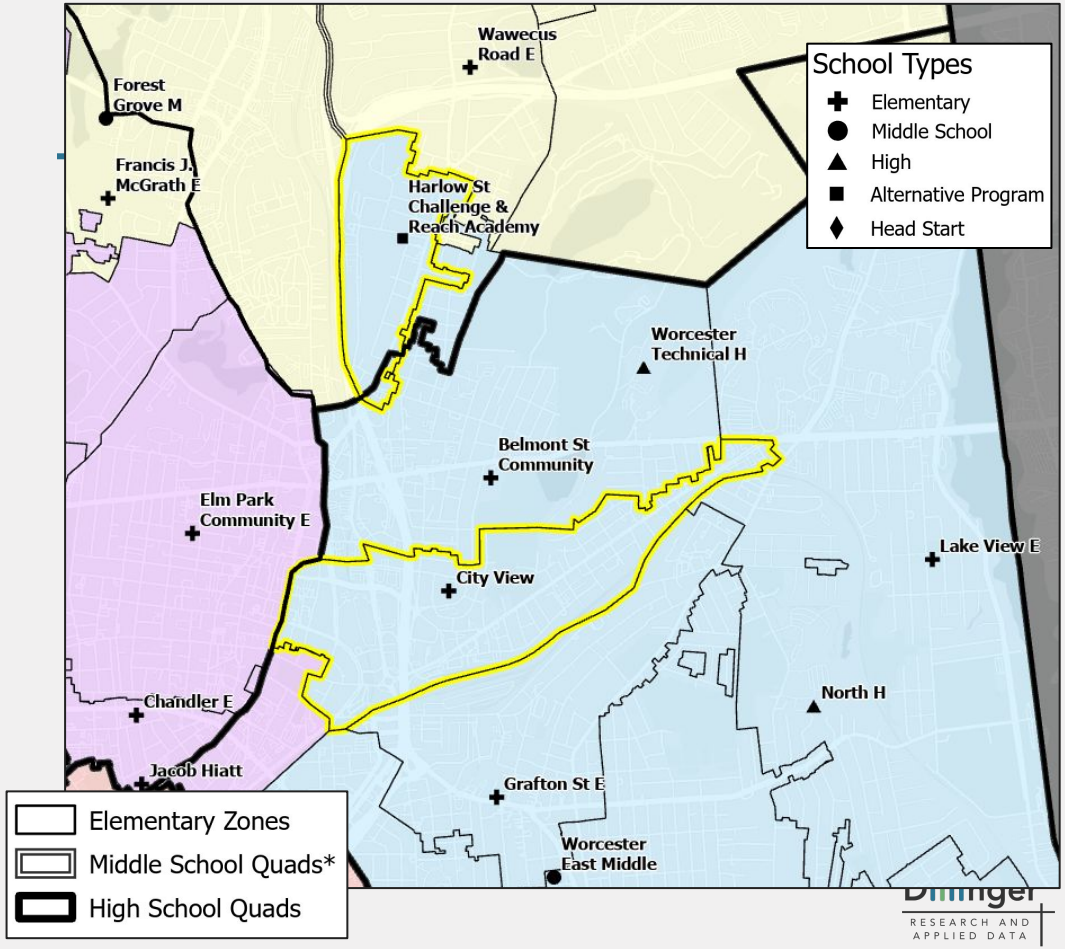
**Middle and High boundaries align except for Doherty / Burncoat border: Forest Grove Middle (Doherty) pushes into the Burncoat High quad*

Not all elementary school zones are one connected area

Example:
City View Elementary School (yellow highlighted zone)

Data Source: Spatial Boundaries and Locations (Frontline)

**Middle and High boundaries align except for Doherty / Burncoat border: Forest Grove Middle (Doherty) pushes into the Burncoat High quad*



Quadrant Statistics: Burncoat

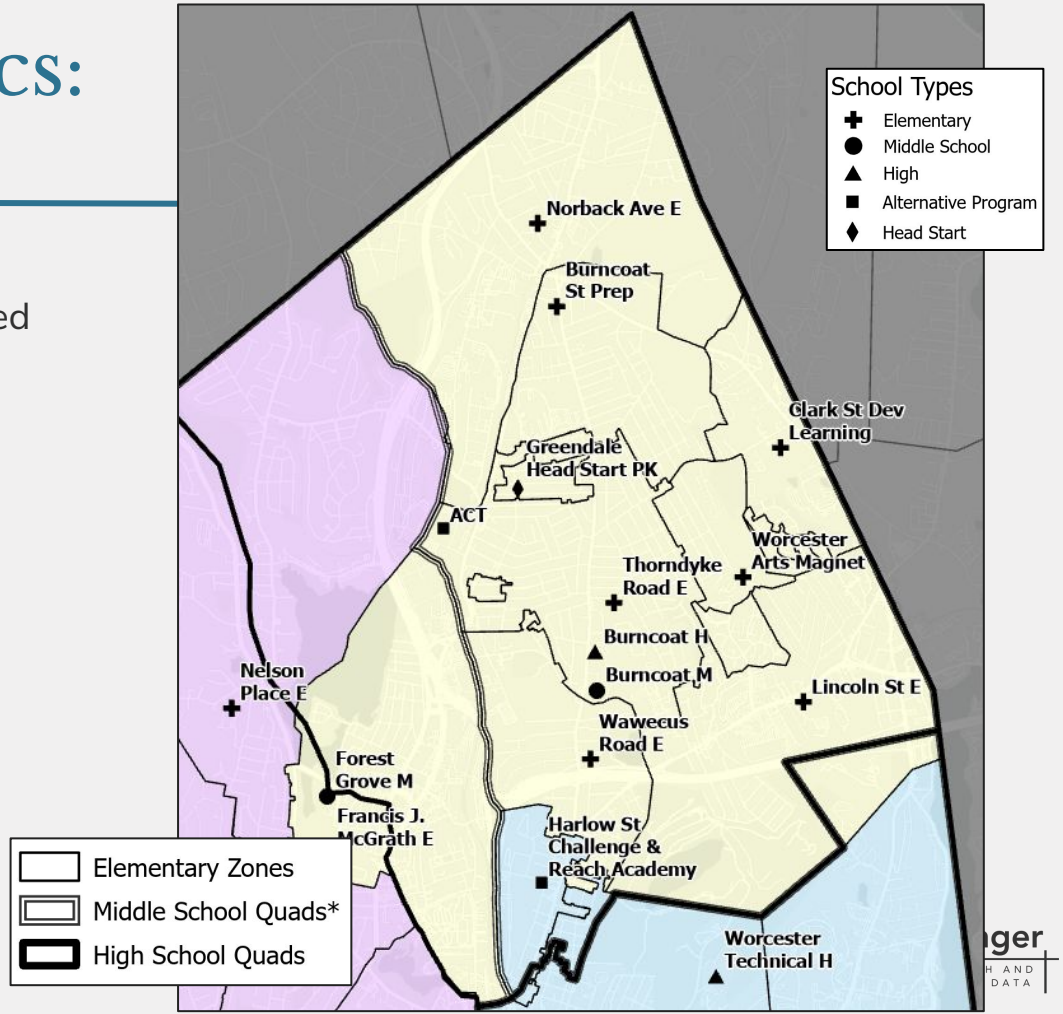
Quadrant

- 66% economically disadvantaged

School Type Breakdown

- 8 Elementary Schools
- 1 Middle School
- 1 Comprehensive High School
- 2 Alternative Schools
- 1 Head Start

Data Source: Spatial Boundaries and Locations (Frontline), Student-level Data (WPS)



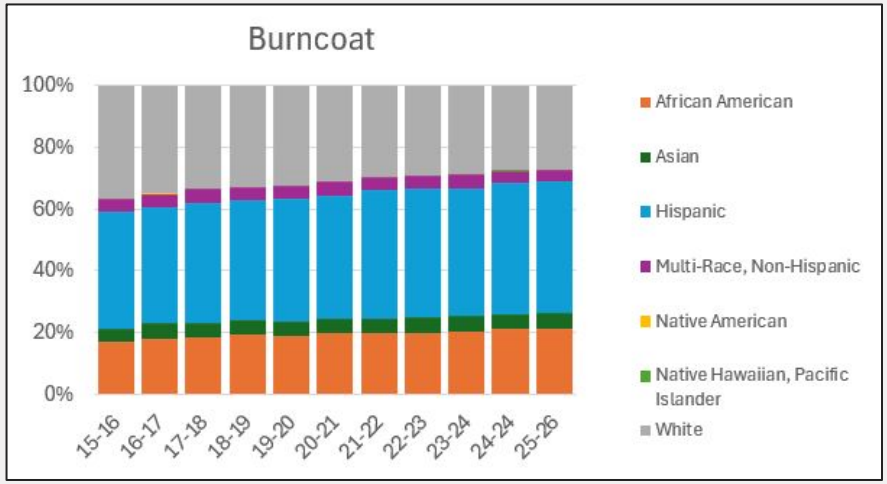
Quadrant Statistics: Burncoat

Current Students

- 4,645 students live in Burncoat
- % of Burncoat students attending school outside their home quadrant (*excl. Special Ed students & students at Alternative or Magnet schools*):
  - Elem: 23%*
  - Middle: 7%
  - High: 25%

Changes over the past decade**

- 7% decline in enrollment
- 20% decrease in Kindergarten (greatest decline across quadrants)
- 2% increase in Hispanic populations
- 26% decrease in White population
- 8% increase in African American population



Data Source: Student-level Data (WPS)

**Elementary % is based on Elementary attendance zones (i.e., more granular geoagrpahies), whereas Middle & High are based on respective quadrants*

***Averages were taken of school years SY15-16 through SY17-18 (early period) and SY23-24 through SY25-26 (recent period); % change reflects the difference between these two averaged periods*

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Quadrant Statistics: North

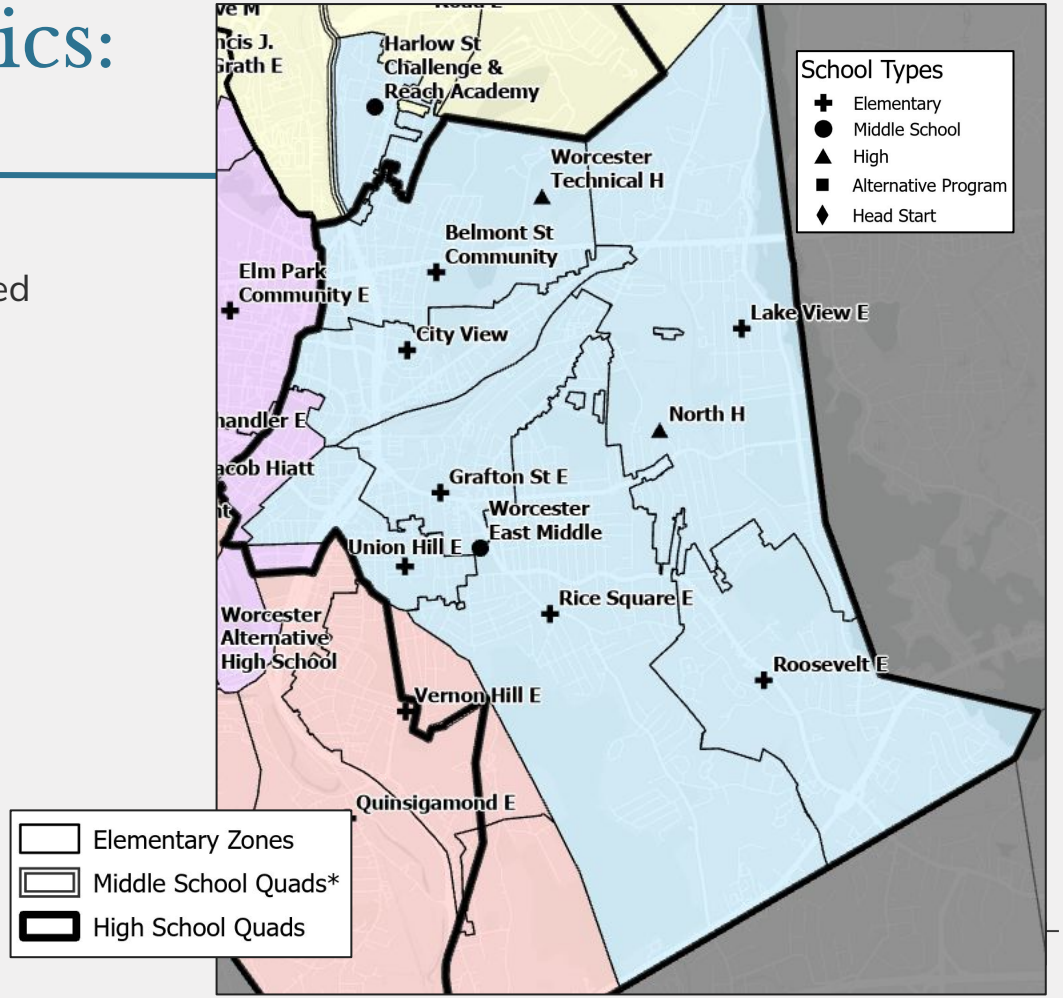
Quadrant

- 76% economically disadvantaged

School Type Breakdown

- 7 Elementary Schools
- 1 Middle School
- 1 Comprehensive High School
- 1 Technical High School
- 1 Alternative School
- 0 Head Start

Data Source: Spatial Boundaries and Locations (Frontline), Student-level Data (WPS)



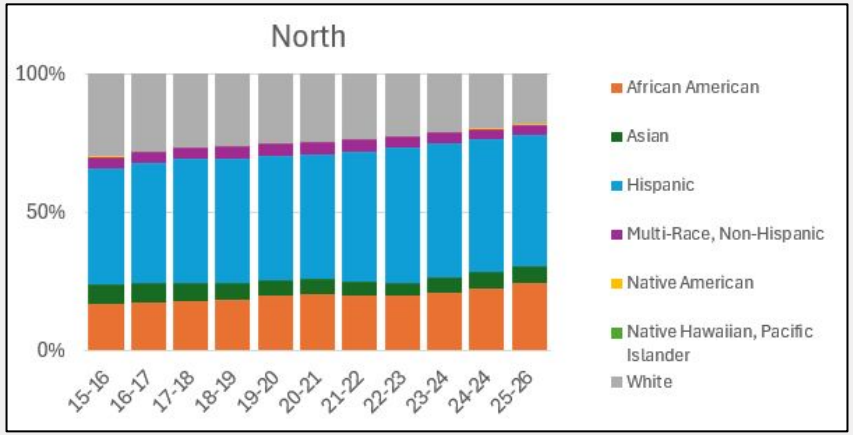
Quadrant Statistics: North

Current Students

- 6,715 students live in North
- % of North students attending school outside their home quadrant (*excl. Special Ed students & students at Alternative or Magnet schools*):
  - Elem: 24%*
  - Middle: 18%
  - High: 24%

Changes over the past decade**

- 0.4% overall decline in enrollment
- 7% decrease in Kindergarten
- 9% increase in Hispanic populations
- 31% decrease in White population
- 30% increase in African American population



Data Source: Student-level Data (WPS)

**Elementary % is based on Elementary attendance zones (i.e., more granular geoagrpahies), whereas Middle & High are based on respective quadrants*

***Averages were taken of school years SY15-16 through SY17-18 (early period) and SY23-24 through SY25-26 (recent period); % change reflects the difference between these two averaged periods*

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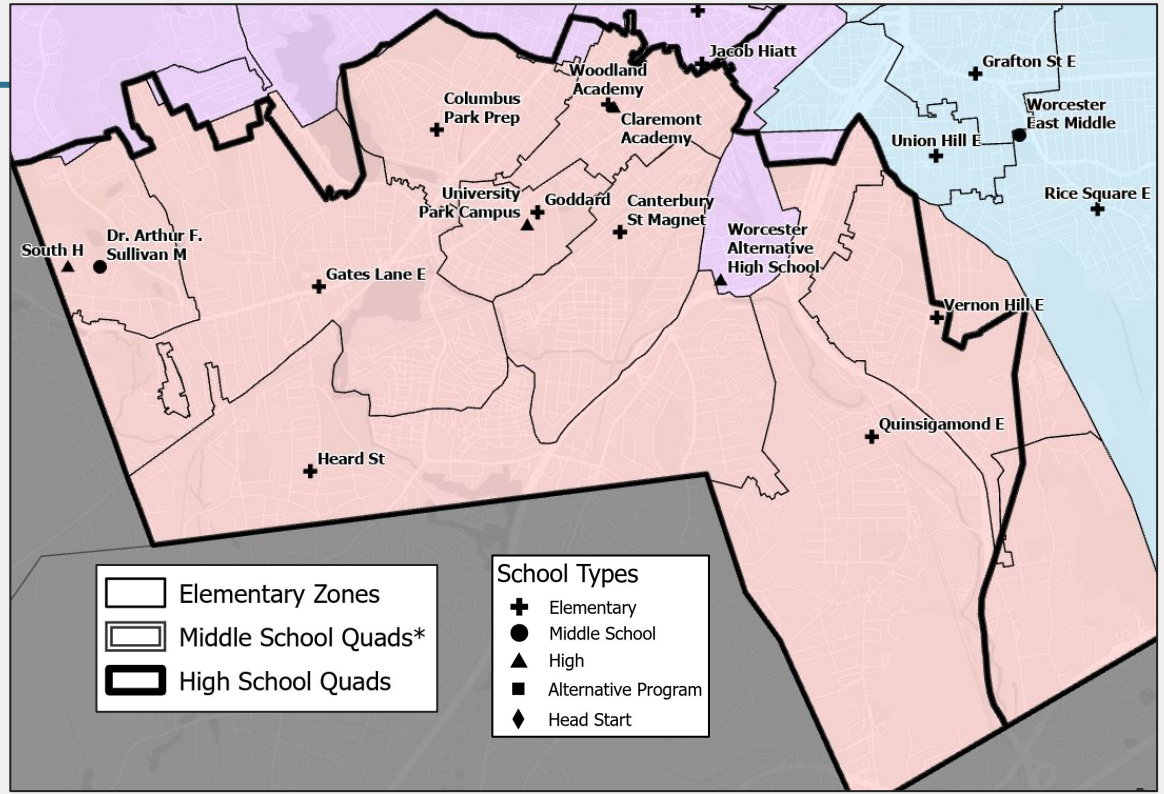
Quadrant Statistics: South

Quadrant

- 77% economically disadvantaged

School Type Breakdown

- 8 Elementary Schools
- 1 Middle School
- 1 Comprensive High School
- 2 Grade 7-12 Schools
- 2 Alternative Schools
- 1 Head Start



Data Source: Spatial Boundaries and Locations (Frontline), Student-level Data (WPS)

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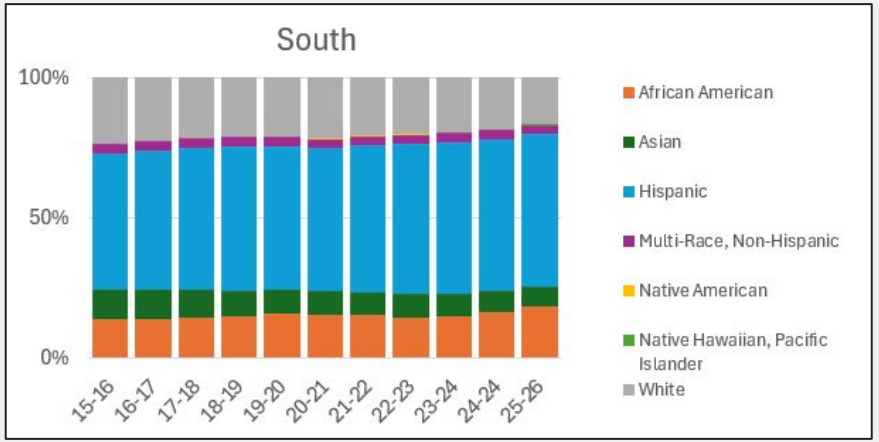
Quadrant Statistics: South

Current Students

- 7,390 students live in South
- % of South students attending school outside their home quadrant (*excl. Special Ed students & students at Alternative or Magnet schools*):
  - Elem: 16%*
  - Middle: 10%
  - High: 13%

Changes over the past decade**

- 5% overall decline in enrollment
- 12% decrease in Kindergarten
- 4% increase in Hispanic population
- 23% decrease in White population
- 31% decrease in Asian population



Data Source: Student-level Data (WPS)

**Elementary % is based on Elementary attendance zones (i.e., more granular geoagrpahies), whereas Middle & High are based on respective quadrants*

***Averages were taken of school years SY15-16 through SY17-18 (early period) and SY23-24 through SY25-26 (recent period); % change reflects the difference between these two averaged periods*

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Quadrant Statistics: Doherty

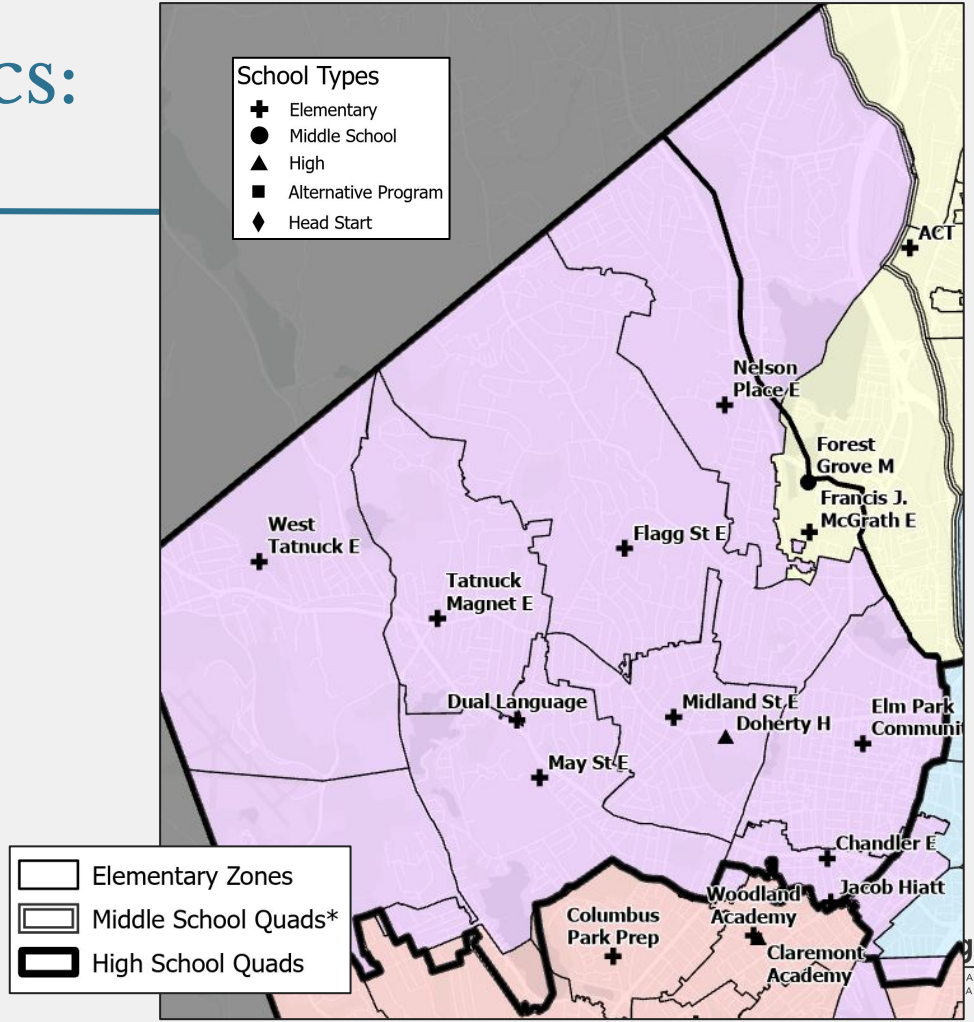
Quadrant

- 56% economically disadvantaged

School Type Breakdown

- 10 Elementary Schools
- 1 Middle School
- 1 High School
- 0 Alternative Schools
- 1 Head Start

Data Source: Spatial Boundaries and Locations (Frontline), Student-level Data (WPS)



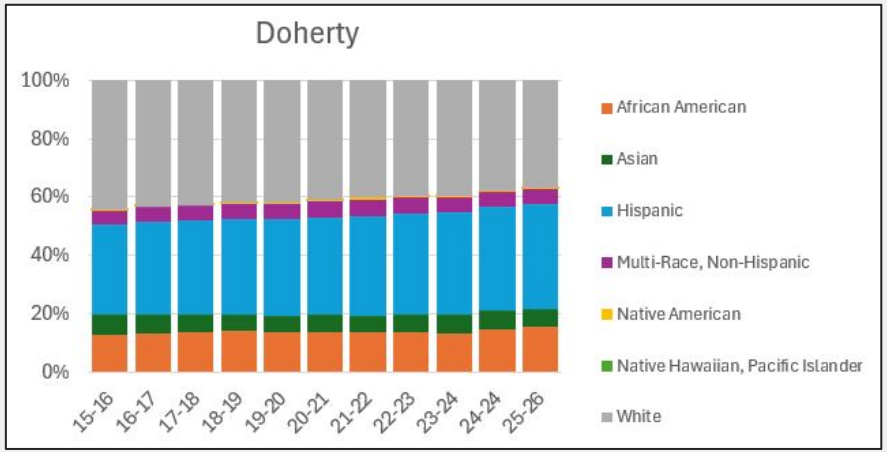
Quadrant Statistics: Doherty

Current Students

- 5,683 students live in Doherty
- % of Doherty students attending school outside their home quadrant (*excl. Special Ed students & students at Alternative or Magnet schools*):
  - Elem: 16%*
  - Middle: 12%
  - High: 14%

Changes over the past decade**

- 3% overall decline in enrollment
- 3% decrease in Kindergarten
- 9% increase in Hispanic populations
- 15% decrease in White population



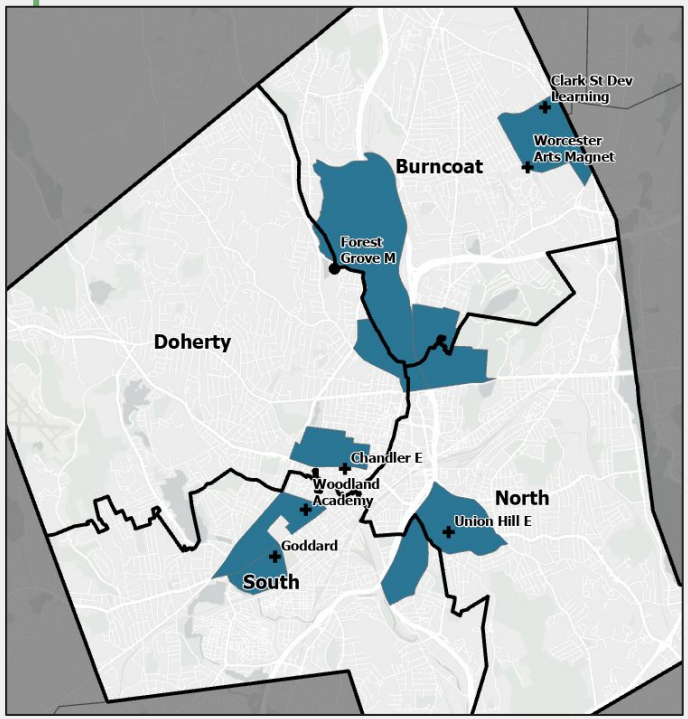
Data Source: Student-level Data (WPS)

**Elementary % is based on Elementary attendance zones (i.e., more granular geoagrpahies), whereas Middle & High are based on respective quadrants*

***Averages were taken of school years SY15-16 through SY17-18 (early period) and SY23-24 through SY25-26 (recent period); % change reflects the difference between these two averaged periods*

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Areas of the city with the largest decreases in enrollment (left) and largest growth (right)



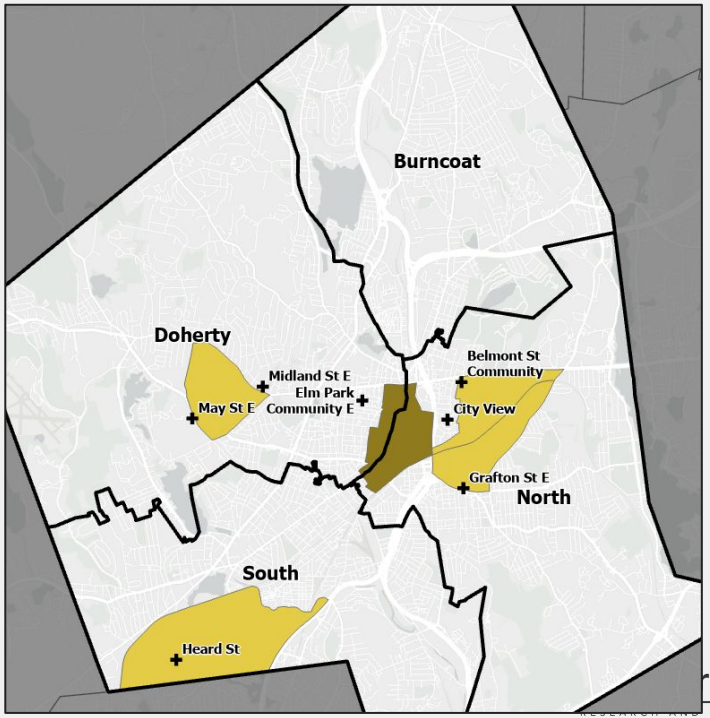
Census Tracts

Enrollment % Change

- -10 to -24% decrease
- 0 to -9% decrease
- 1 to 15% increase
- 16 to 30% increase
- 31 to 68% increase

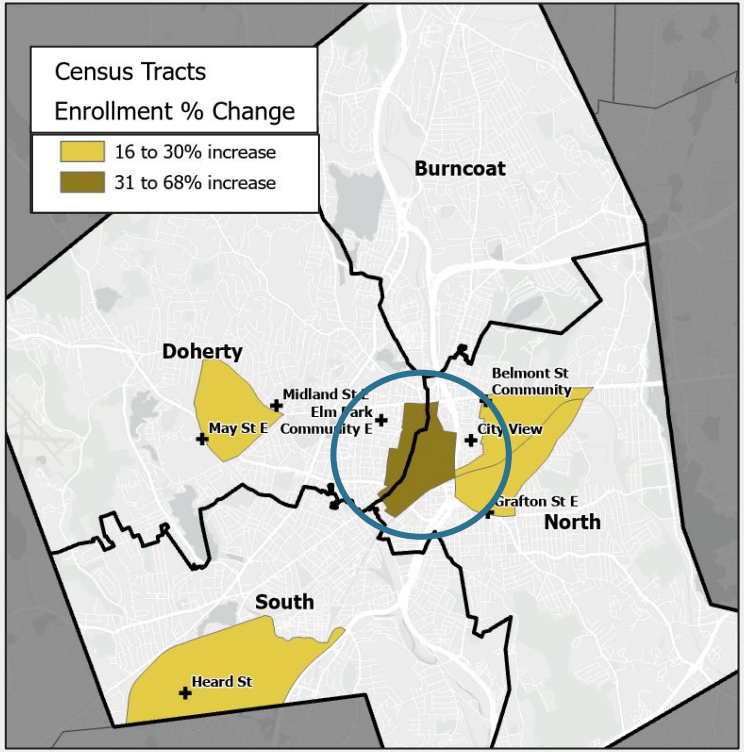
Data: WPS student-level enrollment data aggregated to census tract; % change between average enrollment SY15-18 and SY23-26

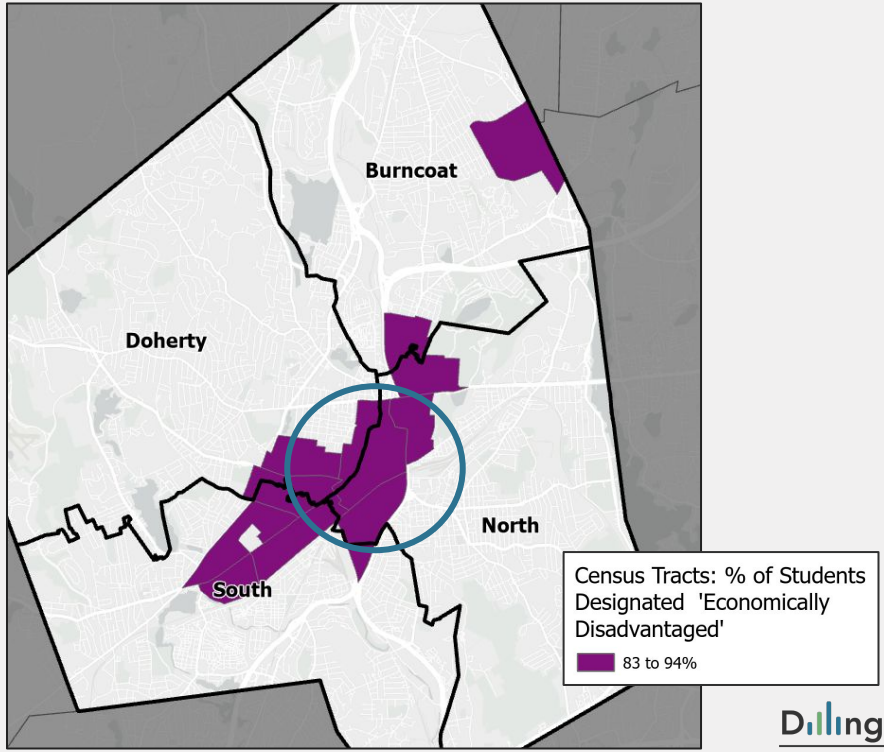
School locations included for reference



APPLIED DATA

The area of largest enrollment growth (left) is also high poverty (right)





Left map: Highlighted tracts represent highest enrollment growth based on % change between average enrollment SY15-18 and SY23-26.

Right map: Highlighted census tracts contain the highest concentrations of DESE-designated 'economically disadvantaged' students (83-94% of students in those tracts), based on participation in SNAP, TAFDC, DCF foster care, and MassHealth.

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Open Discussion

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Next Steps

- Community Forums
  - **May 5:** Community Forum (5:30 - 6:30 PM, Virtual - English)
  - **May 13:** Community Forum (7 - 8:30 PM, Virtual - Spanish)

- Ways to contact us and share your input:
  - Open through **Fri. May 15 @ 11:59 PM** (extended per community feedback):
    - Interactive Map
      - https://bit.ly/initial_baseline
    - Input Survey
      - https://forms.gle/47nhqR8JqRZnp2BA7
  - Open through the duration of the project:
    - Email
      - alignment@worcesterschools.net
    - Website
      - http://worcesterschools.org/alignment
    - ParentSquare
      - Group name: “School Boundary and Quadrant Alignment Project Updates”

Questions?



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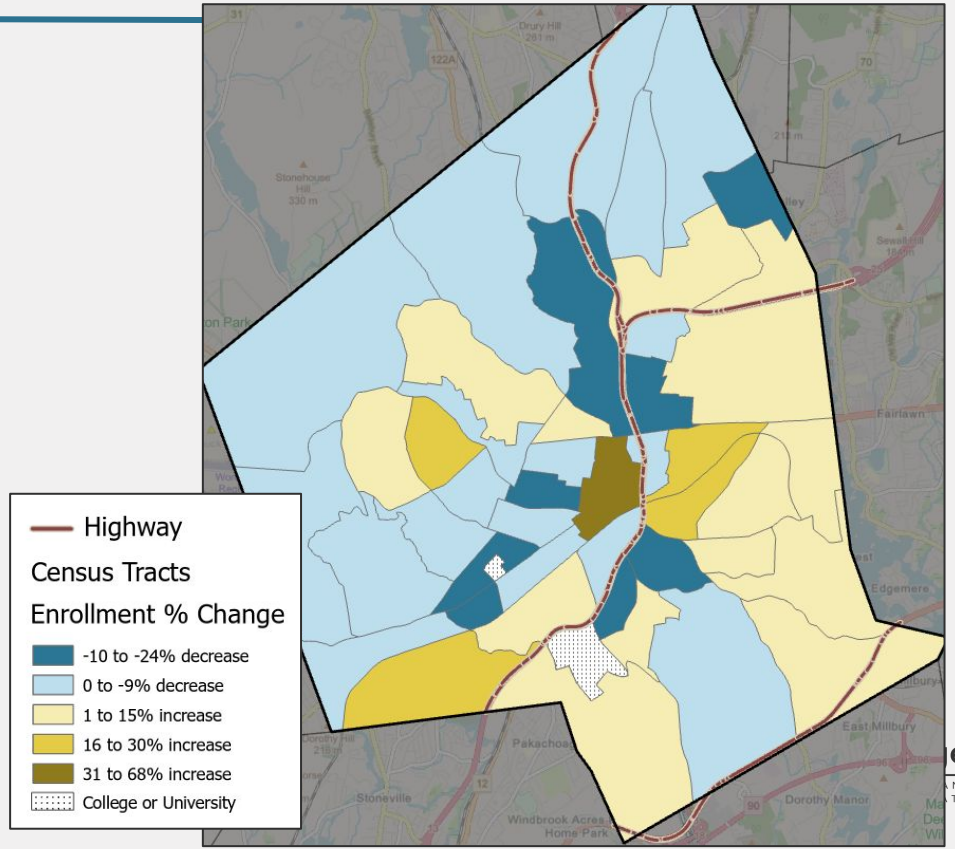
Appendix: Additional Data

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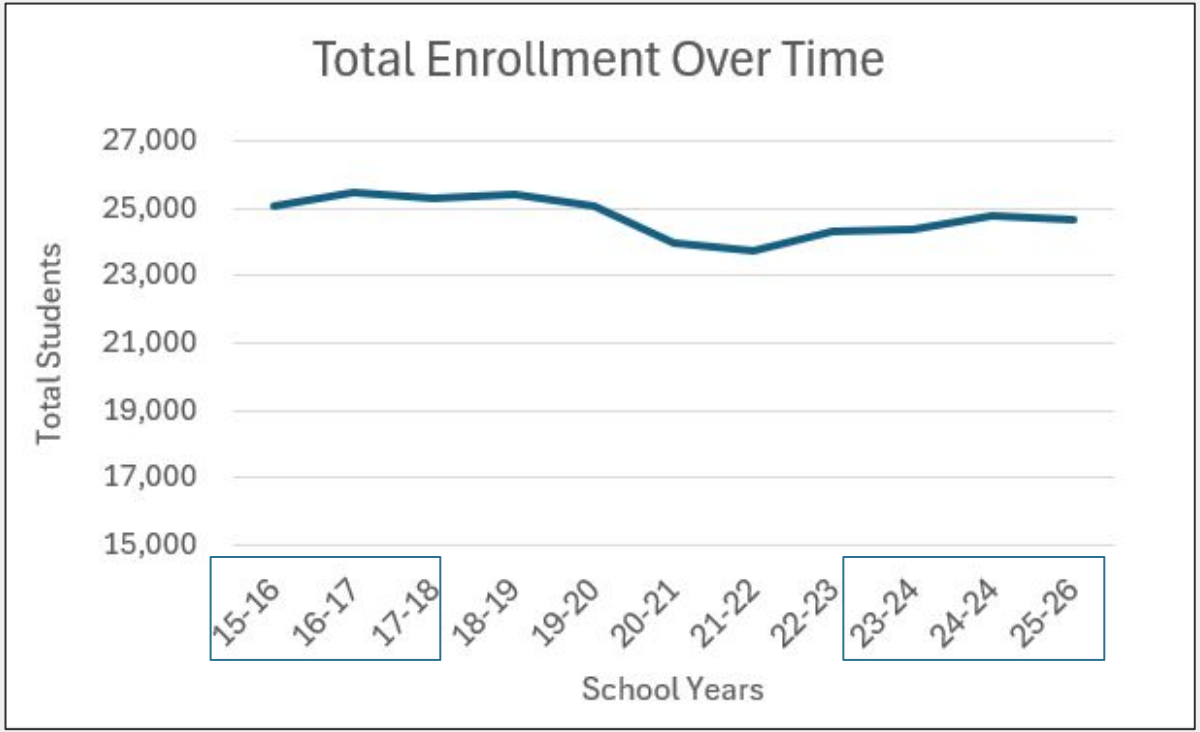
By census tract, enrollment decline is most concentrated in central and northeast Worcester

- Worcester City's <u>overall</u> population is **growing**, but WPS enrollment has slightly **declined** over the past decade
- Decline is most concentrated in central and northeast Worcester; the reasons behind this pattern are part of what this planning process seeks to understand
- Growth is limited to a small downtown core
- These enrollment shifts have direct implications for school capacity and attendance zone planning

Data: WPS student-level enrollment data aggregated to census tract; % change between average enrollment SY15-18 and SY23-26



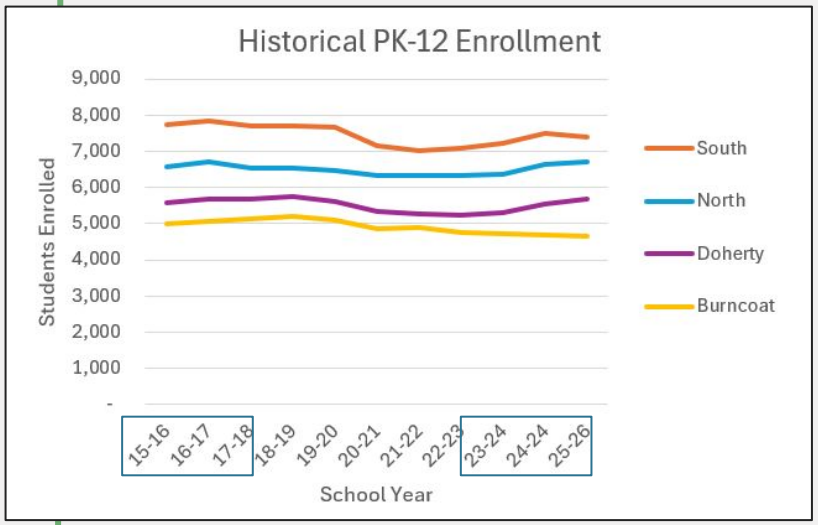
WPS enrollment has declined by 2.7% over the past decade



*Data Source: Student-level Data (WPS); *Averages were taken of school years SY15-16 through SY17-18 (early period) and SY23-24 through SY25-26 (recent period); % change reflects the difference between these two averaged periods*

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Enrollment has decreased the most in South and Burncoat quadrants



Quadrants	Average # of Students SY1516, 1617, 1718	Average # of Students SY2324, 2425, 2526	Enrollment Change by Quadrant (SY15-18 avg vs. SY23-26 avg)
South	7,760	7,366	-5.1%
Burncoat	5,060	4,686	-7.4%
Doherty	5,652	5,506	-2.6%
North	6,603	6,575	-0.4%

Data Source: Student-level Data (WPS)

Totals do not include students who live outside of city limits or are missing and address.

Averages were taken of school years SY15-16 through SY17-18 (early period) and SY23-24 through SY25-26 (recent period); % change reflects the difference between these two averaged periods

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