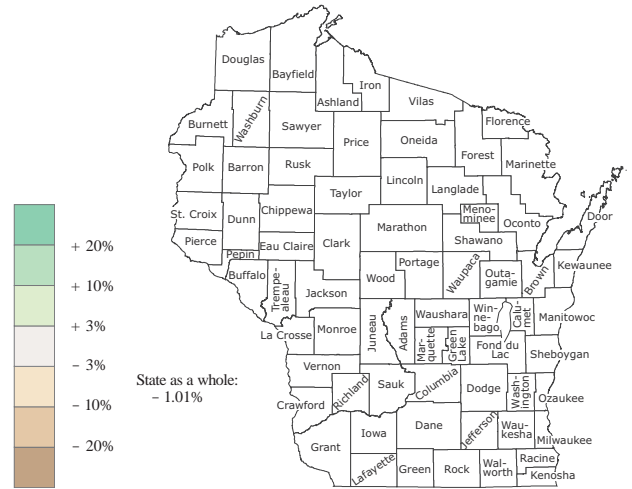
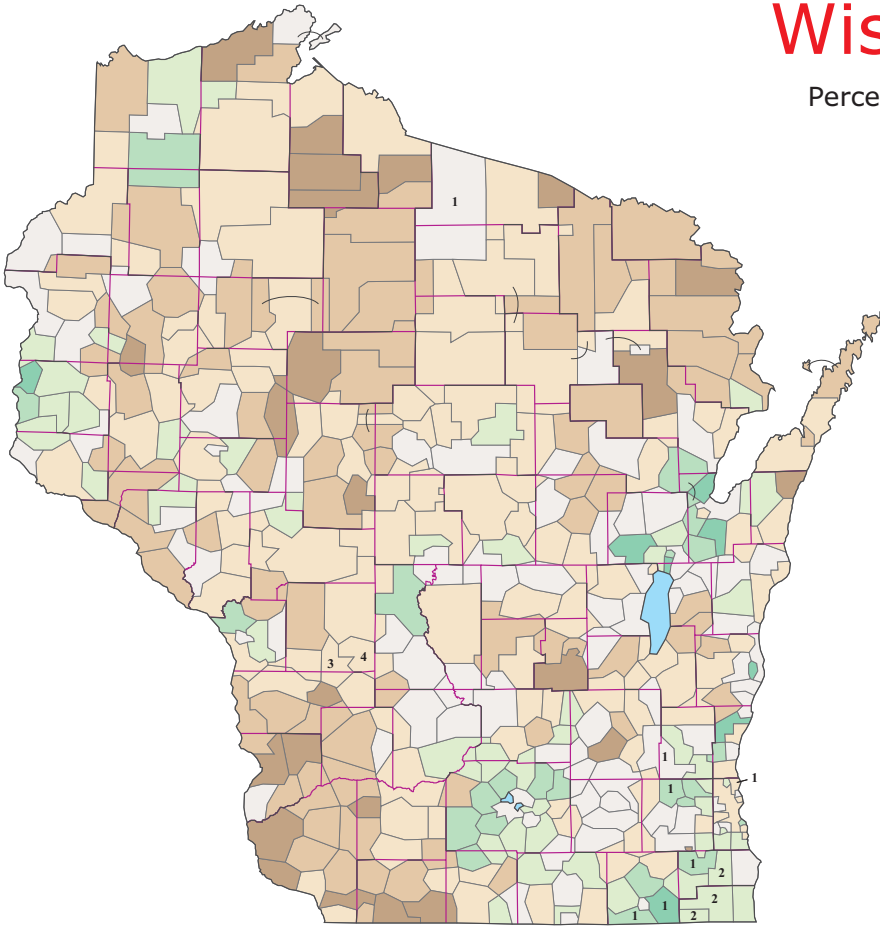


Wisconsin at a Glance

Percent Change in Public Enrollment by School District,
Grades Kindergarten to 12, 1997 to 2003



School district boundaries have been simplified.
A curved line (—) connects noncontiguous parts of a school district.
County lines appear in black where they coincide with school district boundaries, red where they do not.

Calculations are based on fall enrollment data, as reported on form PI-1290, adjusted as follows:
Calculations do not include pupils enrolled in grades below five-year-old kindergarten.
Calculations for union high school districts (1 and 2) include pupils enrolled in the elementary school districts (not shown) that feed into them. A single calculation has been made for three union high school districts (2) taken together because certain elementary school districts feed into more than one of them.
A single calculation has been made for the Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton School District (3) and the Royal School District (4) taken together, to compensate for a distortion in the data caused by a transfer of territory to the former from the latter that occurred in the 2000-01 school year.

Data: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



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Percent Change in Public Enrollment by School District, Grades Kindergarten to 12, 1997 to 2003

Changes in enrollment can present challenges for a public school district and its residents. Increases may lead to crowded classrooms or the expense of expanding staff and facilities, while decreases may lead to higher per-pupil costs due to lost economies of scale.

In the fall of 1997, Wisconsin's total public enrollment reached the high mark of a 14.9 percent climb that began in the fall of 1984. In subsequent years, however, Wisconsin's public enrollment has not reached that level again, and the U.S. Department of Education projects that it will decline more or less steadily until the fall of 2009, for a net loss, between 1997 and 2009, of about 2.8 percent.

At the school district level, the enrollment picture since the fall of 1997 has varied. 269 districts have shown decreases, while 156 have shown increases. When grades below five-year-old kindergarten are factored out (some districts offer more grades in this range than others, and some districts added grades in this range after the fall of 1997), 276 districts have shown decreases, while 149 have shown increases. Most of the decreases of three percent or more occurred in rural areas. Most of the increases of three percent or more occurred in four areas containing major urban centers: Dane County, the seven-county Milwaukee area, the Lower Fox River area (between Green Bay and Lake Winnebago), and St. Croix County (facing the city of St. Paul across the Wisconsin-Minnesota border). In a secondary pattern, the enrollments of some suburban school districts grew faster than those of the urban districts they border—for example, in the counties of Dane, Brown, Eau Claire, and La Crosse.

One factor contributing to declining enrollments has been an overall decline in the number of new births in the state. An offsetting factor in some places has been migration into the state due to a strong economy during the 1990s. Special factors have contributed to the decline in the Milwaukee School District's enrollment. A number of pupils who would otherwise have attended that district's schools have instead attended private schools under the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program or charter schools established in the district by the city of Milwaukee, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the Milwaukee Area Technical College. Had those pupils attended district schools, the Milwaukee School District's enrollment would have increased between the fall of 1997 and the fall of 2003.