



How Has Michigan's Population Changed?

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Any analysis of demographic change must begin by examining where do people live in the state.

- Which districts are gaining population and which ones are losing population?
- What are the ages of the people in the district – are young families, empty nesters, or retirees driving the population change?

Districts with increasing population must evaluate how to provide classrooms for new students without overbuilding; once new schools are added, how should students and teachers be shifted among schools? Districts with declining population face the opposite problem – whether to sell off buildings, increase millage, combine buildings, or attempt to attract students of choice from neighboring districts. In every district, education policymakers have to convince an ever-aging population base that children are the future of everyone in Michigan. It is important for education policy makers to look at the population shifts within their districts as they plan for the future.

Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Michigan increased from 9.2 to 9.9 million people, an increase of 643,147 or 6.9%. However, population is not distributed evenly across Michigan. Although school enrollment in the state increased by 73,000 students, 263 districts lost enrollment and 296 gained students. 33 districts in Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne counties account for 83% of the state's enrollment growth.

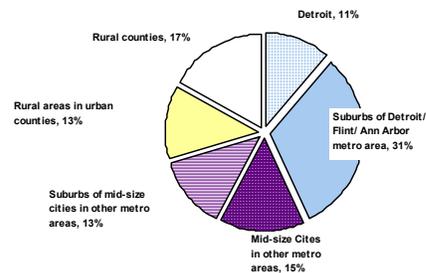
The school districts with the largest absolute growth are concentrated in the Detroit suburbs – the districts of Utica, Chippewa Valley, Walled Lake, Ann

Arbor, and Plymouth Canton each increased by more than 20,000 people. Traverse City and suburban areas of Livingston, Ingham, and Kent counties also saw rapid growth over the past 10 years.

Between 1990 and 2000, central city school districts, especially Detroit, Flint, and Saginaw lost the largest number of residents, followed by older suburbs in Wayne, Oakland, and Ingham counties. The closure of two Air Force bases had notable affect on school districts of Gwinn Area Community Schools and Oscoda area.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) classifies schools according to population characteristics and these classifications are helpful at seeing patterns of growth and decline in the state. The NCES classification distinguishes between large city districts, mid-size city districts, and compares suburban districts of large urban areas to suburban districts in smaller urban areas. Graph 1 shows the types of communities where children live in Michigan in 2000.

42% of the state's children live in Detroit and the Detroit metropolitan area, a 10 county region including the Flint and Ann Arbor areas. 41% of the state's children live in the other metropolitan counties, including Lansing, Grand Rapids, etc. Only 17% of Michigan's children live in the UP and rural northern peninsula.



Percent Change in Population 1990 to 2000

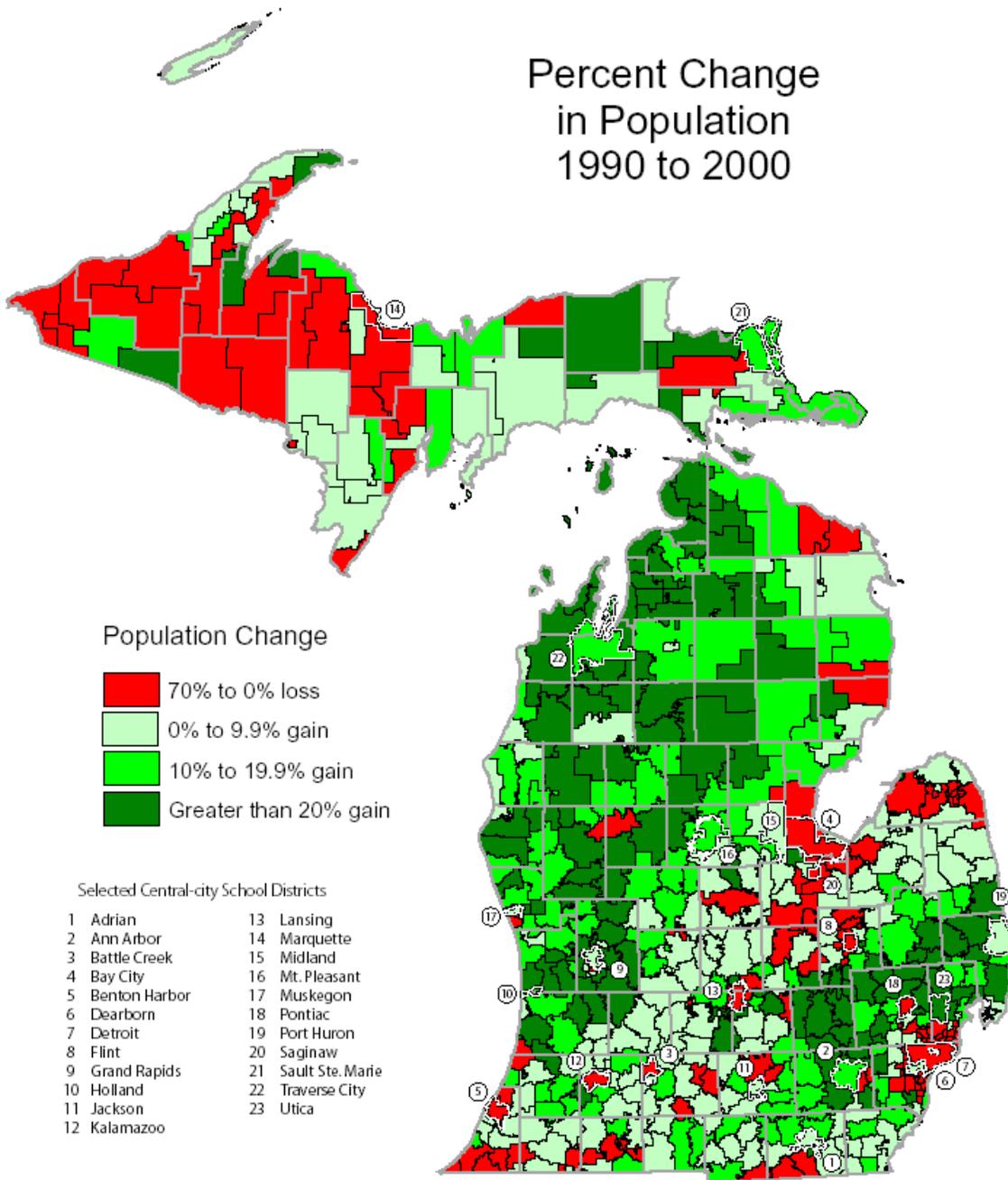


Table 1: School Districts with the Largest Growth

School District	1990	2000	Change	%Change
Michigan	9,295,297	9,938,444	643,147	7%
Utica Community Schools	126,705	159,918	33,213	26%
Chippewa Valley Schools	54,243	79,252	25,009	46%
Walled Lake Consolidated Schools	65,329	88,669	23,340	36%
Ann Arbor Public Schools	134,533	155,611	21,078	16%
Plymouth-Canton Community Schools	86,552	107,602	21,050	24%
West Ottawa Public Schools	28,565	44,052	15,487	54%
Rochester Community Schools	68,298	81,890	13,592	20%
Howell Public Schools	29,872	42,196	12,324	41%
Traverse City Area Public Schools	60,224	71,797	11,573	19%
Lake Orion Community Schools	27,651	38,787	11,136	40%
Kentwood Public Schools	44,449	55,478	11,029	25%

Table 2: School Districts that lost the most population

School District	1990	2000	Change	% Change
Detroit Public Schools	1,027,974	951,267	(76,707)	-7%
Flint Community Schools	140,676	124,753	(15,923)	-11%
Lansing Public Schools	135,172	125,326	(9,846)	-7%
Saginaw City School District	71,631	64,760	(6,871)	-10%
Genoa Area Community Schools	13,982	8,532	(5,450)	-39%
Royal Oak Public Schools	66,248	60,851	(5,397)	-8%
Taylor Public Schools	72,550	67,720	(4,830)	-7%
Pontiac School District	87,372	83,131	(4,241)	-5%
Oscoda Area Schools	17,861	13,696	(4,165)	-23%
East Lansing Public Schools	56,121	52,173	(3,948)	-7%
Highland Park Public Schools	20,121	16,746	(3,375)	-17%

Population growth in the 1990s was fastest in formerly rural areas of metropolitan counties – areas that are fast becoming new suburbs. Aging suburban communities have seen the percentage of children decline as children leave home and the parents remain in the same home, such as in East Lansing and Royal Oak. Some central cities are losing total population, but the percentage of children still remains high. Examples of these urban districts include Muskegon Heights, Beecher Community School District, Benton Harbor, Flint, Saginaw, and Detroit. Formerly rural areas of Livingston, Washtenaw, Ottawa, and Kent counties are experiencing population growth with the influx of families with young children.

- Michigan’s only city with a population over 250,000, Detroit, lost 76,707 or 7.5% of its 1990 population.
- The average change of school districts in other central cities in the state was 0.7%. In fact, some central city school districts such as Flint, Lansing, and Saginaw saw sharp declines in population, while other cities such as Ann Arbor, Harper Creek, and Holland increased by more than 15%. (*Mid-size city, urban county*)

- While the suburbs of the Detroit/Flint/Ann Arbor metropolitan region increased by 7%, suburban districts of other urban counties, for example, Kent, Ingham, Ottawa areas increased by 12.6%. (*Suburbs of Detroit metro area and Suburbs of other urban counties*)
- School districts within the rural areas of urban counties, typically those furthest from the central city, are the fastest growing districts in the state – with their populations increasing by 17.4%. (*Rural area in urban county*)
- School districts in small and large towns in rural counties, as well as in rural areas in rural counties also increased. (*Large or small town or rural area in rural county*)

Population trends reflect changes in the Michigan society – as employment opportunities relocate from inner cities to the suburbs, people move closer to the jobs. Families with young children find school districts where there are opportunities for their children. Older Michigianians chose to retire “up north,” and the opportunities to telecommute make it possible for workers to live far from their employers. School districts are affected by all these population shifts and must take them into account as they plan.

Table 1: Population Changes by School District Characteristics, 1990-2000

	Population	Population	Change	% Change
	2000	1990	1990-2000	1990-2000
Michigan	9,938,444	9,297,024	641,420	6.9%
Detroit	951,267	1,027,974	(76,707)	-7.5%
Mid-size, Cities, urban county	1,493,320	1,482,498	10,822	0.7%
Suburbs of Detroit metro area	3,317,125	3,095,200	221,925	7.2%
Suburbs of other urban counties	1,197,302	1,062,872	132,430	12.6%
Rural area in urban county	1,199,223	1,021,351	177,872	17.4%
Large Town in rural county	201,451	182,975	18,476	10.1%
Small Town in rural county	707,747	655,482	52,265	8.0%
Rural area in rural county	871,009	768,672	102,337	13.3%

Notes:
 NCES codes: Counties that include a city with a population of 50,000 and a region of 100,000 are classified as Metropolitan or urban regions and are referred to by the name of the central city. In Michigan, the small-city urban areas are Lansing/East Lansing, Flint, Grand Rapids/Muskegon/Holland, Benton Harbor, Saginaw/Bay City/Midland, Jackson, and Kalamazoo/Battle Creek. If a contiguous group of metropolitan areas has a population over 1 million, it is classified as a Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA). The Detroit/Flint/Ann Arbor ten county region is a CMSA extending from St. Clair, Lapeer and Genesee counties in the north to Lenawee and Monroe in the south. For more information, see <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metroarea.html>

Data for population change in all school districts in Michigan is available at www.epc.msu.edu.



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