

State Demographer Details Arizona Trends Affecting Education

Projected drops in overall K-12 enrollment as a result of declining birth rates in Arizona may impact the [state's goal](#) to increase educational attainment, according to demographic data presented to the Arizona Board of Regents.

State demographer Jim Chang, Ph.D., shared state and national population trends and forecasts pertaining to education populations. Trends reveal drops in birth rates, evident in kindergarten enrollment in Arizona that peaked in 2012 and started to decline in 2013. Total K-12 enrollment is projected to be flat for the next few years but start to decline soon. Depending on net migration, the decline could start as early as 2021 and will almost certainly happen by 2024, according to the data presented.

Despite the reductions, Dr. Chang forecasts Arizona's K-12 ethnic diversity will remain relatively consistent over the next two decades. Hispanics currently account for 44 percent of all Arizona children 17 and under. That percentage is projected to increase to 45 percent by 2035.

In addition to declining K-12 populations, Dr. Chang noted a number of additional headwinds to increasing educational attainment in Arizona.

High poverty rates: Poverty rates in Arizona are consistently above the national poverty rate, currently ranking 11th among states.

Low attainment rates among younger Arizonans: When comparing bachelor degree attainment among 25-34-year-olds, Arizona ranks 46th among states, with a rate of 11.04 percent, compared to the national average of 14.4 percent.

