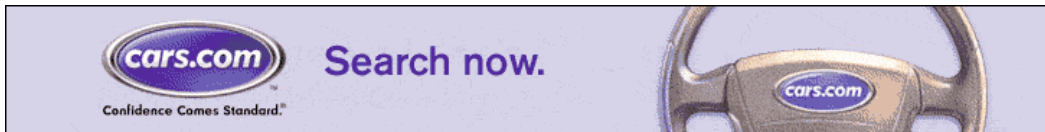




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School enrollment to grow thanks to bump in birth rate

By Cathy Grimes | 757-247-4758
1:50 PM EDT, May 5, 2009

Virginia's public school divisions may be bracing for higher elementary school enrollments over the next five years, according to population estimates released by the [University of Virginia's](#) Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service today. The numbers show births to state residents have increased about 10 percent from 2000 to 2007, meaning schools may see 42,000 more students in elementary schools by 2013. Center officials predict the number of 5-year-olds entering kindergarten will rise from 90,117 in September 2008 to 99,367, or just over 10 percent, in 2013. Gains across the district may be offset in the near term by continuing declines in high school enrollment. The center predicts the greatest declines in 12th-grade enrollment, which is expected to fall 5.5 percent. It will take 5 to 10 years for the new crop of students to affect middle and high school enrollment numbers.

But while the center predicts an enrollment bump in the making, it may take a while to reach at least 60 school divisions expecting fewer students next year. The center study shows the largest enrollment losses will be in urban school divisions in [Hampton Roads](#), including [Newport News](#) and Hampton. York may see a slight increase, while center staff predict Williamsburg- [James City County](#) will gain more than 100 students.

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