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**TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL**

Silicon Valley Community Leaders,

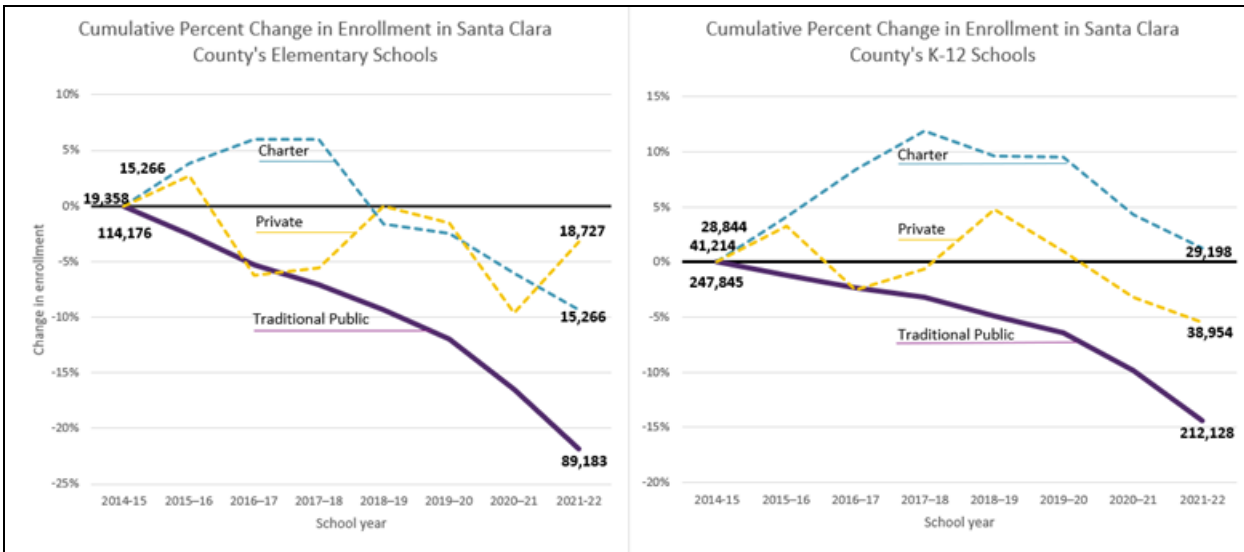
We are reaching out to you as local council members, city staff, school district superintendents, and school board members to share recent research we have conducted on declining school enrollment in your cities and school districts. **Right now, cities have a critical opportunity to stabilize and strengthen the local schools that are the cornerstone of our communities and our collective future, by planning for new housing.**

As most of you know, every city and town in the Bay Area is currently engaged in a state-mandated process – the Housing Element Update – of planning for a significant number of new homes affordable to residents of all income levels. Meanwhile, school districts throughout the County are experiencing significant declines in enrollment, with local elementary schools being particularly hard hit, as the shortage and rising cost of housing forces many families to leave for more affordable locations. The effect has been devastating. For some of our districts fewer students means massive budget deficits; for others it means destabilizing inefficiencies. In all our districts declining enrollment means disruption, instability, loss of our school families, loss of our next generation of teachers, and often heart-wrenching school closures and consolidation. These troubling enrollment declines are impacting public, private, and charter schools, began *before* the pandemic, and are forecast to continue through the next decade- unless local leaders take action. **See how enrollment declines are affecting your town, and how that compares to the county [here](#) or in the attached PDF.**

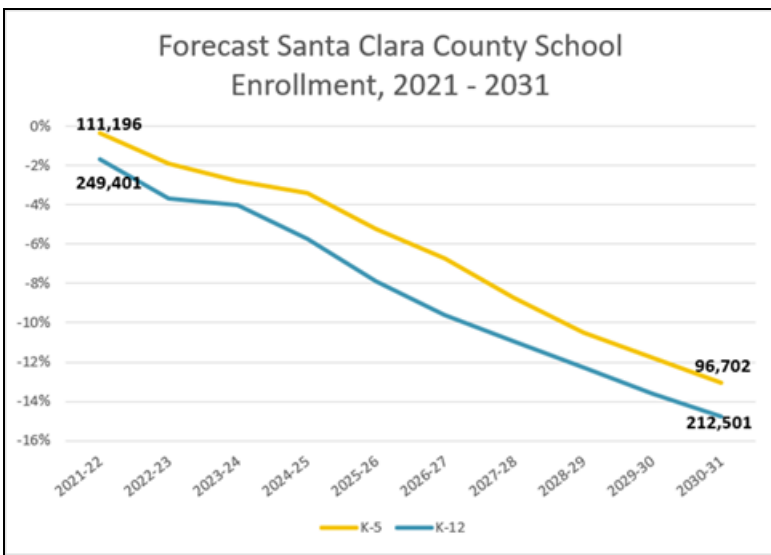
Our recent [report](#), produced in partnership with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Palo Alto Forward, shows that strategic planning for new housing development, by both location and affordability, offers an opportunity to stabilize local schools by creating more affordable options for younger families with school age children, and to reduce student attrition caused by housing instability and displacement. **This is an area where the education community and local officials share a common interest, and must show collective leadership.**

[Learn more](#) about declining enrollment in individual schools and districts in your communities and planning for new homes through the Housing Element Update, and view [The Missing Piece: How New Homes Can Help Save Our Schools from Declining Enrollment](#), a conversation with **Peter Ortiz**, President of the Santa Clara County Board of Education, **Jennifer DiBrienza**, Vice President of the Palo Alto Unified School District Board, and **Steve Levy**, Director and Senior Economist of the Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy.

Contact [Alison Cingolani](#) at SV@Home for more information on how local community leaders can be a part of this discussion.



Source: California Department of Education



Source: California Department of Finance

In partnership,  
**Alison Cingolani**  
 Policy & Research Senior Associate