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Changes in Student Enrollment in Indiana Public School Corporations, 2006-2022 and 2021-2022 to 2022-2023

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Key Takeaways

- Trends indicate that there are winners and losers when it comes to enrollment changes.
- Part of the reason for changing enrollment is the institutional environment that allows student transfers and competition introduced by school choice reforms.
- Online schools appear to have been significant in boosting enrollment of school corporations, but any causal claim needs further inquiry.

Indiana has undergone significant education policy changes in the last two decades, with a focus on accountability, expanding school choice options, improving teacher evaluation systems, and emphasizing college and career readiness. These changes have transformed the competitive environment in which schools and school corporations operate, impacting schools' and school corporations' enrollment. Enrollment trends reflect such changes and provide an opportunity to explore and understand these factors and their impacts.

This report examines the trends in student enrollment in Indiana School corporations/districts as reported by the Indiana Department of Education. The enrollment trends are analyzed over a 16-year period, 2006-2022, as well as the change over the most recent academic year for which data are available, 2022-2023. Fall Average Daily Membership (ADM) counts were used in this analysis. The patterns identified in this report demonstrate a story of “winners” and “losers” in Indiana’s efforts to create a competitive education landscape.

Historical Trends in Indiana

The 286 school corporations whose data are presented were chosen based on the availability of enrollment data. Overall enrollment changes presented in Figure 1 below are for the period of 2006-2022, revealing that about 75 (26%) school corporations experienced an enrollment growth of 5% or more. 20 school corporations (7%) experienced a growth of 5% or less, and 191 school corporations (67%) experienced a loss in enrollment. Table 1 below presents the 25 school corporations with the largest enrollment growth. Interestingly, 14 of the 25 school corporations with the highest enrollment growth are from the Indianapolis metropolitan area.

Figure 1.
Enrollment changes 2006-2022

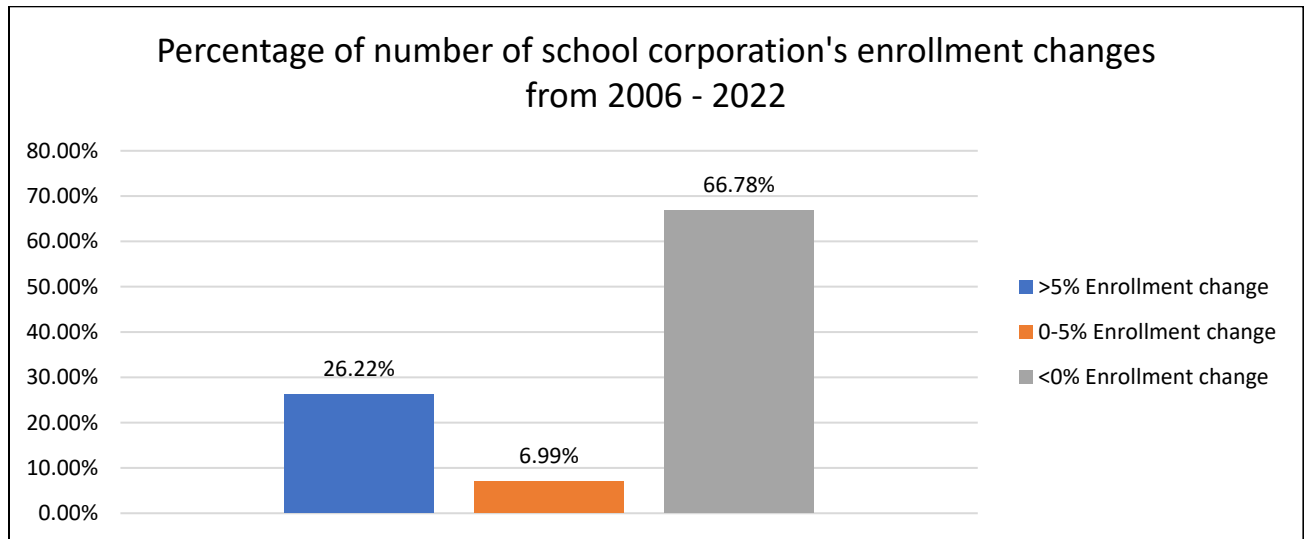


Table 1.

25 school corporations with the largest enrollment growth in numbers from 2006 to 2022 in ADM

Corp Name	Change in Enrollment 2006-2022 (N)
Hamilton Southeastern Schools*	7,381
Union School Corporation	6,762
Westfield-Washington Schools*	3,935
Brownsburg Community School Corp*	3,446
Franklin Township Com Sch Corp*	3,394
Avon Community School Corp*	3,299
Zionsville Community Schools*	3,086
Noblesville Schools*	2,803
Tippecanoe School Corp	2,604
Clarksville Community School Corp	2,524
Perry Township Schools*	2,383
Northwest Allen County Schools	2,330
Crown Point Community School Corp	2,298
Center Grove Community School Corp*	2,278
M S D Wayne Township*	1,808
Carmel Clay Schools*	1,705
Clark-Pleasant Community Sch Corp*	1,655

Plainfield Community School Corp*	1,626
M S D Southwest Allen County Schls	1,478
Seymour Community Schools	1,382
Mt Vernon Community School Corp*	1,374
North Central Parke Comm Schl Corp	1,194
Hanover Community School Corp	1,038
Penn-Harris-Madison School Corp	952
Bartholomew Con School Corp	909

Note: *Indianapolis Metropolitan Area school corporation.

Table 2 presents the percentage enrollment growth of 25 school corporations whose numbers were presented above. Seven school corporations experienced a growth rate of more than 50%, while the remaining were between 23% and 50%. The two school corporations experiencing the largest percentage growth started online schools that opened between 2018 and 2021. Figure 2 shows the trends in enrollment numbers from 2006 – 2022, which shows that while enrollment in in-person schools within the two school corporations remains approximately constant, the total enrollment gains are from enrollment spikes in online schools post-2018 (i.e., 6795 – 7131 – Indiana Digital Jr and High School, 6795 – 7142 – Indiana Digital Alternative School, 6795 – 7122 – Indiana Digital Elementary, and 1000 – 1007 – Indiana Gateway Digital Academy).

To reinforce the significance of online schools in these enrollment spikes, it is noteworthy that Union School Corporation, with the highest enrollment increase, has three online schools, two starting in 2019 and one in 2020. Whereas Clarksville Com School Corporation, with the second highest enrollment increase, has only one online school that started in 2022. It is also important to highlight the huge enrollment gap (1252.66%) between the two school corporations with the highest enrollment gains that can be attributed to the number of online schools and their duration of operations. The availability of state-wide data on online schools might also reveal other interesting trends. However, here, it is evident that online schools have played a significant role in boosting enrollment for the two school corporations, whose enrollment gains are markedly higher than gains observed in all other school corporations.

Table 2.

25 school corporations with the largest percentage enrollment growth from 2006 to 2022 in ADM

Corp Name	Change in Enrollment (%) 2006-2022
Union School Corporation	1420.59
Clarksville Com School Corp	167.93
Westfield-Washington Schools*	75.02
Zionsville Community Schools*	64.02



Hanover Community School Corp	61.20
Hamilton Southeastern Schools*	51.87
Daleville Community Schools	51.26
Brownsburg Community Sch Corp*	51.23
Avon Community School Corp*	45.55
Franklin Township Com Sch Corp*	43.41
Northwest Allen County Schools	39.80
Plainfield Community Sch Corp*	39.41
Mt Vernon Community Sch Corp*	39.24
Lawrenceburg Com School Corp	36.60
Barr-Reeve Com Schools Inc	36.56
Clark-Pleasant Com School Corp*	36.54
Noblesville Schools*	36.05
Seymour Community Schools	34.89
Crown Point Community Sch Corp	33.96
Center Grove Com Sch Corp*	31.38
Whiting School City	29.65
Frankton-Lapel Community Schs	29.34
Eastern Howard School Corp	25.40
Tippecanoe School Corp	23.65
M S D Southwest Allen County	23.18

Note: *Indianapolis Metropolitan Corporation.

Figure 2.
Enrollment trend 2006 – 2022 in two school corporations

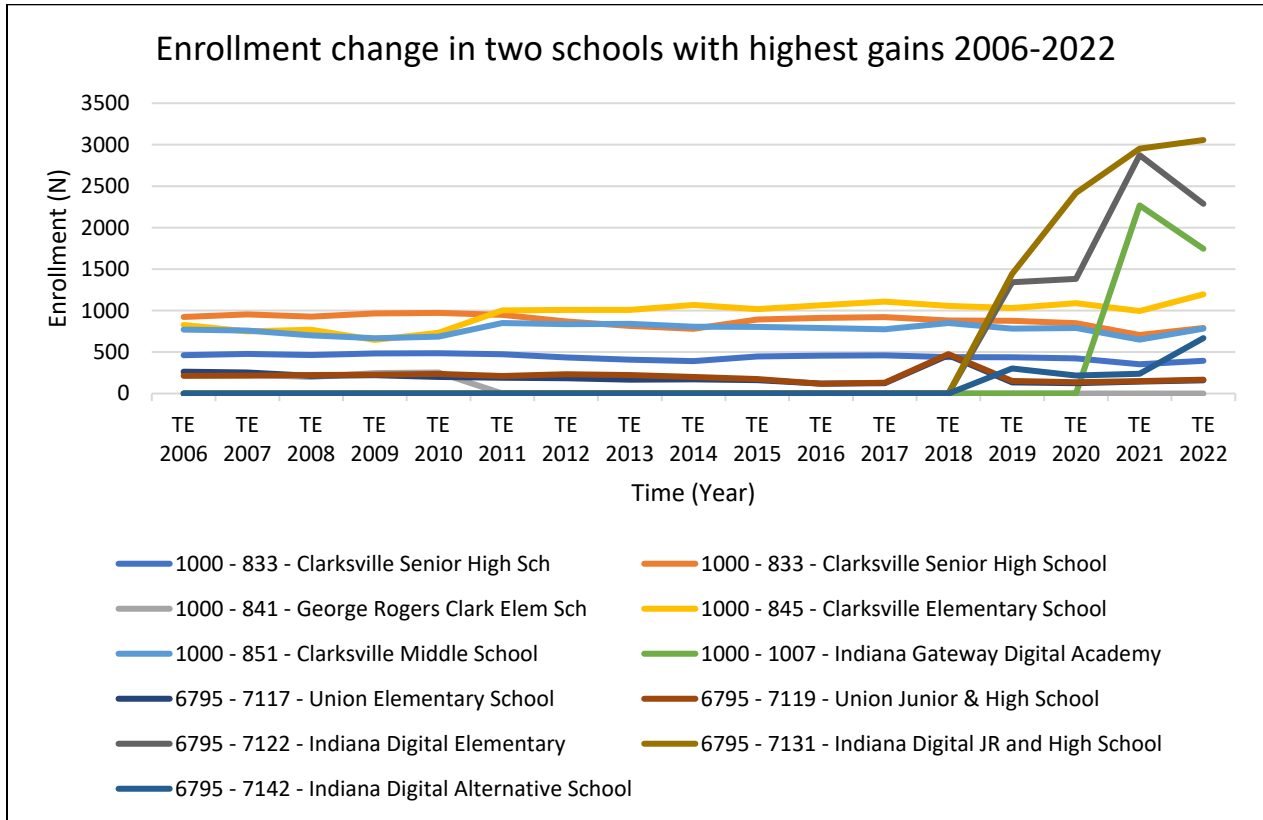


Table 3 presents the 20 school corporations with the largest reduction in enrollment numbers, with ten school corporations losing more than 2000 students and ten school corporations losing less than 2000 students. While these numbers do not seem high, when looking at the proportion of reduction in student enrollment in Table 4, we can see that 44 school corporations lost from a quarter to about three-quarters of their enrollment in these 16 years.

Table 3.
20 school corporations with the greatest number of students from 2006 – 2022

Corp Name	Change in Enrollment (N) 2006-2022
1. Indianapolis Public Schools	-15,527
2. Gary Community School Corp	-11,041
3. South Bend Community Sch Corp	-6,417
4. Anderson Community School Corp	-3,824
5. School City of Hammond	-3,123
6. Fort Wayne Community Schools	-2,729



7. School City of East Chicago	-2,668
8. Vigo County School Corp	-2,633
9. Muncie Community Schools	-2,487
10. Elkhart Community Schools	-2,171
11. Kokomo-Center Twp Con Sch Corp	-1,789
12. North Lawrence Com Schools	-1,738
13. Marion Community Schools	-1,665
14. Portage Township Schools	-1,646
15. Michigan City Area Schools	-1,633
16. M S D Martinsville Schools	-1,531
17. Huntington Co Com Sch Corp	-1,461
18. Jennings County Schools	-1,408
19. New Castle Community Sch Corp	-1,091
20. Franklin County Com Sch Corp	-1,068

Table 4.

School corporations with a percentage loss of enrollment greater than 25%

Corp Name	Change in Enrollment (%) 2006-2022
Gary Community School Corp	-73.03%
Northeast School Corp	-48.53%
Hamilton Community Schools	-46.59%
Eminence Community School Corp	-44.46%
School City of East Chicago	-44.34%
Attica Consolidated Sch Corp	-42.89%
Indianapolis Public Schools	-41.35%
Whitko Community School Corp	-39.17%
Anderson Community School Corp	-38.16%
North Miami Community Schools	-36.89%
North Judson-San Pierre Sch Corp	-36.32%
Western Wayne Schools	-36.30%
Blackford County Schools	-34.88%
South Dearborn Com School Corp	-34.51%
Franklin County Com Sch Corp	-34.26%
Muncie Community Schools	-32.87%
North Lawrence Com Schools	-32.20%
North Newton School Corp	-32.01%

Marion Community Schools	-31.02%
East Gibson School Corporation	-30.81%
Loogootee Community Sch Corp	-30.36%
Oregon-Davis School Corp	-30.04%
Medora Community School Corp	-29.77%
West Central School Corp	-29.47%
South Bend Community Sch Corp	-29.35%
North Putnam Community Schools	-29.35%
Lakeland School Corporation	-28.44%
Lake Ridge Schools	-28.19%
Spencer-Owen Community Schools	-27.99%
North Adams Community Schools	-27.84%
M S D Martinsville Schools	-27.42%
Brown County School Corporation	-27.24%
New Castle Community Sch Corp	-27.07%
Culver Community Schools Corp	-27.02%
Jennings County Schools	-26.58%
Griffith Public Schools	-26.56%
Mitchell Community Schools	-26.48%
M S D Shakamak Schools	-26.34%
Rush County Schools	-26.11%
Crawford Co Com School Corp	-26.07%
Southeast Fountain School Corp	-25.53%
Kokomo-Center Twp Con Sch Corp	-25.46%
Pike County School Corp	-25.44%
Crothersville Community Schools	-25.00%

Table 5. presents 15 school corporations that lost both the highest numbers of students and the percentage of students in the past 16 years.

Table 5.

Top 15 in net number losses in ADM as well as 25% of their student population

Corp Name	Change in Enrollment 2006-2022	
	N	%
Indianapolis Public Schools	-15,527	-41.35%
Gary Community School Corp	-11,041	-73.03%
South Bend Community Sch Corp	-6,417	-29.35%

Anderson Community School Corp	-3,824	-38.16%
School City of East Chicago	-2,668	-44.34%
Muncie Community Schools	-2,487	-32.87%
Kokomo-Center Twp Con Sch Corp	-1,789	25.46%
North Lawrence Com Schools	-1,738	-32.20%
Marion Community Schools	-1,665	-31.02%
M S D Martinsville Schools	-1,531	-27.42%
Jennings County Schools	-1,408	-26.58%
New Castle Community Sch Corp	-1,091	-27.07%
Franklin County Com Sch Corp	-1,068	-34.26%
South Dearborn Com School Corp	-1,036	-34.51%
Spencer-Owen Community Schools	-870	27.99%

ADM Trends 2022-2023

While the long-term trends in enrollment are important in revealing patterns over time, yearly shifts in enrollments are important in revealing short-term trends and shifts. This becomes particularly important during unprecedented changes, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As some semblance of normalcy returns, we are left with changes in enrollment that may have significant long-term and short-term impacts on budgets and the viability of local public schools. Overall, 133 corporations increased enrollment during this period, and 155 school corporations lost enrollment from last year. The enrollment trends in Indiana school corporations presented below reveal ADM trends from 2022-2023.

Table 6 presents the top 20 school corporations based on their net ADM increase from 2021-22 to 2022-23. There is a marked difference between the enrollment increase in the top two school corporations, which see gains significantly greater than the increases in the remainder of the school corporations. It is noteworthy that these are the two school corporations that have experienced the highest enrollment increase during the past 16 years as well and have a significant proportion of online schools. See Figure 2 for longitudinal trends in school enrollment shifts within these two school corporations.

Table 6.

Top 20 school corporations based on net ADM increase from 2021-22 to 2022-23

School Corp	Net ADM Increase (N) from 2021-22 to 2022-23
Clarksville Community School Corp	2685
Union School Corporation	900
Brownsburg Community School Corp*	373



Center Grove Community School Corp*	364
Westfield-Washington Schools*	360
Madison-Grant United School Corp	299
Cloverdale Community Schools	280
Crown Point Community School Corp	243
Avon Community School Corp*	232
Northwest Allen County Schools	229
MSD Lawrence Township*	167
Mt Vernon Community School Corp*	151
Silver Creek School Corporation	151
MSD Wabash County Schools	141
Lebanon Community School Corp*	135
Zionsville Community Schools*	122
Hanover Community School Corp	119
Concord Community Schools	113
Southern Hancock Co Com Sch Corp*	107
Southwest School Corporation	93

Note: *Indianapolis Metropolitan Corporation.

Table 7 presents the top 22 school corporations by the percentage of enrollment increase. The top six school corporations experienced a greater than 10% increase in enrollment, with the top school corporation having a 200% percent increase in enrollment, followed by gains of 30.43% and 23.69%, respectively. The remaining 16 school corporations experienced enrollment increases ranging from 4% to 9%.

Table 7.

Top 22 school corporations as per their percentage enrollment increase

School Corp	Increase in ADM 2021-22 to 2022-23 (%)
Clarksville Community School Corp	200.07
Medora Community School Corp	30.43
Madison-Grant United School Corp	23.69
Cloverdale Community Schools	19.91
Union School Corporation	14.20
Caston School Corporation	12.08
MSD of New Durham Township	8.13
Milan Community Schools	7.42
West Washington School Corp	7.11

Argos Community Schools	6.82
MSD Wabash County Schools	6.64
Southwestern Con Sch Shelby Co	6.38
South Henry School Corp	6.21
Southwest School Corporation	5.64
Southern Wells Com Schools	5.21
Silver Creek School Corporation	5.05
Scott County School District 1	5.02
Hanover Community School Corp	4.55
Eastern Howard School Corporation	4.34
MSD Boone Township	4.18
Shelby Eastern Schools	4.12
Westfield-Washington Schools	4.08

Table 8 presents the school corporations that experienced a decrease in enrollment from 2021-2022 to the 2022-23 School Year. These 20 school corporations experienced the highest enrollment losses, with the top seven school corporations losing 300 or more students, while the remaining 13 school corporations experienced enrollment losses ranging from 134 to 296 students.

Table 8.

Top 20 school corporations based on greatest enrollment losses from 2021-22 to 2022-23

School Corp	Net Decrease (N) from 2021-22 to 2022-23 in ADM
South Bend Community School Corp	-521
School City of Hammond	-452
Clark-Pleasant Community Sch Corp	-440
MSD Washington Township	-390
Perry Township Schools	-380
Elkhart Community Schools	-340
New Albany-Floyd Co Con Sch	-300
Gary Community School Corp	-296
Anderson Community School Corp	-274
MSD Wayne Township	-257
MSD Pike Township	-244
North Lawrence Com Schools	-227

Portage Township Schools	-219
Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp	-202
Fort Wayne Community Schools	-165
Penn-Harris-Madison School Corp	-153
Vigo County School Corp	-153
School City of Mishawaka	-146
Carmel Clay Schools	-143
Jennings County School Corporation	-134

Table 9 below presents the top 20 school corporations based on percentage enrollment losses during the 2021-22 to 2022-23 school year. The top two school corporations experienced an enrollment loss of more than 10%. The proceeding seven school corporations experienced an enrollment loss between 5% and 9%, whereas the remaining 11 experienced an enrollment loss ranging from about 4% to 5%.

Table 9.

Top 20 school corporations based on percentage enrollment losses during the 2021-22 to 2022-23 school year

School Corp	Net Decrease 2021-22 to 2022-23 (%)
Attica Consolidated School Corp	-12.01%
North Miami Community Schools	-10.26%
Crothersville Community Schools	-8.51%
Cannelton City Schools	-8.37%
Gary Community School Corp	-6.77%
Clark-Pleasant Community Sch Corp	-6.46%
Peru Community Schools	-6.36%
Western Wayne Schools	-6.24%
White River Valley School District	-6.17%
North Lawrence Com Schools	-5.84%
Smith-Green Community Schools	-4.95%
East Washington School Corp	-4.94%
School City of Whiting	-4.84%
Northeast Dubois Co Sch Corp	-4.79%
North Newton School Corp	-4.79%
Delphi Community School Corp	-4.76%
Rochester Community School Corp	-4.61%
Lakeland School Corporation	-4.58%

Anderson Community School Corp	-4.23%
Pioneer Regional School Corp	-4.08%

School Corporations with less than 1,000 Students

At the legislative level, there has been much discussion about the substantial number of school corporations with small student populations. Currently, there are 54 school corporations with less than 1,000 students. All but seven of those school corporations lost student enrollment from 2006-2022. Table 10 presents the change in ADM in numbers and percentages of these 54 school corporations over the past 16 years, from 2006 to 2022. All these school corporations, except seven, experienced a loss in enrollment over the past 16 years.

Table 10.

ADM change from 2006 – 2022 in 54 school corporations with less than 1000 students

School Corporation	2022-23 ADM (N)	2006 ADM (N)	Change in ADM (N)	Change in ADM as a Percent of Total Enrollment (%)
Southeast Fountain School Corp	989	1,328	-339	-25.53
Fremont Community Schools	985	1,206	-221	-18.33
Flat Rock-Hawcreek School Corp	972	1,147	-175	-15.26
Rossville Con School District	960	1,006	-46	-4.57
South Central Com School Corp	950	849	101	11.90
Triton School Corporation	946	1,116	-170	-15.23
M S D of New Durham Township	944	830	114	13.73
Pioneer Regional School Corp	941	1,048	-107	-10.21
West Washington School Corp	934	1020	-86	-8.43
North Judson-San Pierre Sch Corp	931	1462	-531	-36.32
Randolph Eastern School Corp	928	1055	-127	-12.04
Orleans Community Schools	908	847	61	7.20
North White School Corp	900	1055	-155	-14.69
Southern Wells Com Schools	889	821	68	8.28
Covington Community School Corp	888	991	-103	-10.39
Clinton Central School Corporation	867	1098	-231	-21.04
South Newton School Corp	862	969	-107	-11.04
Wes-Del Community Schools	861	880	-19	-2.16
Bloomfield School District	858	1112	-254	-22.84
Culver Community Schools Corp	840	1151	-311	-27.02



Edinburgh Community School Corp	838	895	-57	-6.37
Springs Valley Com School Corp	837	980	-143	-14.59
Caston School Corporation	835	833	2	0.24
Northeast Dubois Co Sch Corp	834	964	-130	-13.49
Rising Sun-Ohio Co Com	825	980	-155	-15.82
Cowan Community School Corp	791	651	140	21.51
Tri-Central Community Schools	787	1046	-259	-24.76
Jac-Cen-Del Community Sch Corp	773	968	-195	-20.14
Northeast School Corp	770	1496	-726	-48.53
North Miami Community Schools	770	1220	-450	-36.89
Tri-County School Corporation	765	813	-48	-5.90
South Henry School Corp	753	818	-65	-7.95
Western Wayne Schools	751	1179	-428	-36.30
Loogootee Community Sch Corp	750	1077	-327	-30.36
White River Valley School District	745	901	-156	-17.31
Lanesville Community School Corp	744	654	90	13.76
East Gibson School Corporation	721	1042	-321	-30.81
Argos Community Schools	689	703	-14	-1.99
M S D Shakamak Schools	674	915	-241	-26.34
North Vermillion Com Sch Corp	673	826	-153	-18.52
Frontier School Corporation	671	831	-160	-19.25
Shoals Community School Corp	669	714	-45	-6.30
Blue River Valley Schools	642	832	-190	-22.84
West Central School Corp	639	906	-267	-29.47
Southwestern Con Sch Shelby Co	634	744	-110	-14.78
Attica Consolidated School Corp	542	949	-407	-42.89
Randolph Southern School Corp	522	655	-133	-20.31
Oregon-Davis School Corp	496	709	-213	-30.04
Crothersville Community Schools	441	588	-147	-25.00
Hamilton Community Schools	352	659	-307	-46.59
Tri-Township Cons School Corp	337	395	-58	-14.68
Eminence Community School Corp	306	551	-245	-44.46
Cannelton City Schools	219	249	-30	-12.05
Medora Community School Corp	210	299	-89	-29.77

In theory, students should generally be transferred to more effective schools (Walberg & Bast, 2003), although it is not clear from these data that this is always the case.

These data show several trends indicating that many Indiana schools are experiencing significant enrollment instability. In some respects, this is to be expected, as

policymakers have laid the legislative groundwork for a system in which public school corporations, charter school organizations, and even private schools could poach students from each other as they are incentivized to improve, innovate, or market themselves, or otherwise face severe if not fatal financial repercussions. However, given mounting evidence, transferring students is often not moving to more effective alternatives, and these policies overall may be increasing forms of student sorting (Abdulkadiroglu et al., 2017; Bifulco & Ladd, 2007; Lubienski et al., 2022). Parents, policymakers, and voters should also consider the relative costs of these policies that create winners and losers in the education marketplace.

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