

Growing Our Schools in Partnership

March 16, 2026

Presented by a subcommittee of Grosse Pointe Park City Council

Who am I?

Matt Kahl

- Resident of Grosse Pointe Park since 2021
- Father of (adorable) 4 y.o. girl and 2 y.o. boy
- Member of a Grosse Pointe Park City Council subcommittee that helped Grosse Pointe Schools survey GPP last year

Why am I here?

- Grosse Pointe Park saw great success working closely with the school district
- Our public schools are the backbone of our communities
- Our cities and school district can work together to maximize enrollment

Agenda Today

01 Neighborhood Preschool

In May 2025, we presented a vision of greatly expanded Pre-K offerings that would feature **4 y.o. Pre-K in every elementary school.**

02 The Data

The “capture rate” has dropped for Grosse Pointe Schools; enrollment hasn’t followed statewide/competitor trends. Data suggests families want more GPPSS preschool.

03 The Opportunities

We believe that a Neighborhood Preschool model throughout the district is one of many ways (like virtual schooling offerings) to cost-effectively maximize enrollment and attract new families.

Neighborhood Preschool

01

“Neighborhood Preschool” suggested in May 2025

- In May 2025, Grosse Pointe Park hosted an event at Grosse Pointe North’s Media Center and presented analysis of a Neighborhood Preschool model similar to Birmingham Public Schools.
- **Features**
 - One centralized ECC (Barnes) + 4 y.o. preschool within elementary schools
- **Benefits**
 - **Tuition-free** (GSRP) and tuition-based options
 - Projected as budget-neutral
 - Capitalizes on local demand
 - Meets the needs of **today’s families**
 - Shares building costs, reducing strain on operating budget
 - Matches competitors’ offerings
 - Allows for flexible future visions (e.g. expanding even-earlier childhood programming; 3 y.o., etc.)

Why preschool?

- **Long-story short:** The **data** led us here (more on that in a second!)
- Competitor/comparable districts have increasingly leaned into convenience and earlier introductions to families.

e.g. Many comparable districts have expanded tuition-free preschool (GSRP), expanded earlier childhood options (18 mo. and up), embedded preschool into their neighborhood elementary schools.

This makes a **good impression with families as early as possible**, helps academic performance, and makes our communities **attractive for today's families**.

The good news is, we already have a fantastic preschool offering at GPPSS just not enough.

The Data

02

GPPSS Professional Survey Summary

- **The current board of education voted to hire a professional survey company, Epic MRA, to survey families in Grosse Pointe Park.** Households with at least one child under the age of 10 were asked a series of questions.
- In March 2025, the City of Grosse Pointe Park and GPPSS worked together to achieve an estimated **71% response rate for this mailer survey**. A postcard with a unique code was mailed to every address South of Jefferson Ave. for secure and highly-targeted, address-verified data.
- In May 2025, GPP publicly presented the **first analysis** of the Epic MRA survey data, introduced the idea of a Neighborhood Preschool model, and suggested that rich data be sought for every community (esp. for “Under 5 y.o.” growth areas Plante Moran predicted in GPP and GPW).

Example of what a partnership can accomplish



Volunteers of all ages (preschool, elementary, middle, and high school).

How GPP helped the school district's survey succeed:

Improving Accessibility

Grosse Pointe Park provided GPPSS access to its City Clerk to help with ID-verified in-person survey completions.

Expanding Outreach

The City of Grosse Pointe Park funded the printing of flyers to be delivered to every household.

Engaging The Community

NHS students, alumni, current Defer Dragons, and local preschoolers hand-delivered 1600+ flyers to every door in one afternoon!

Ensuring Delivery

The District provided a sample image of the postcard. The local postmaster requested the image to provide to carriers on the route in order to ensure all were aware of the importance of the postcard's delivery.

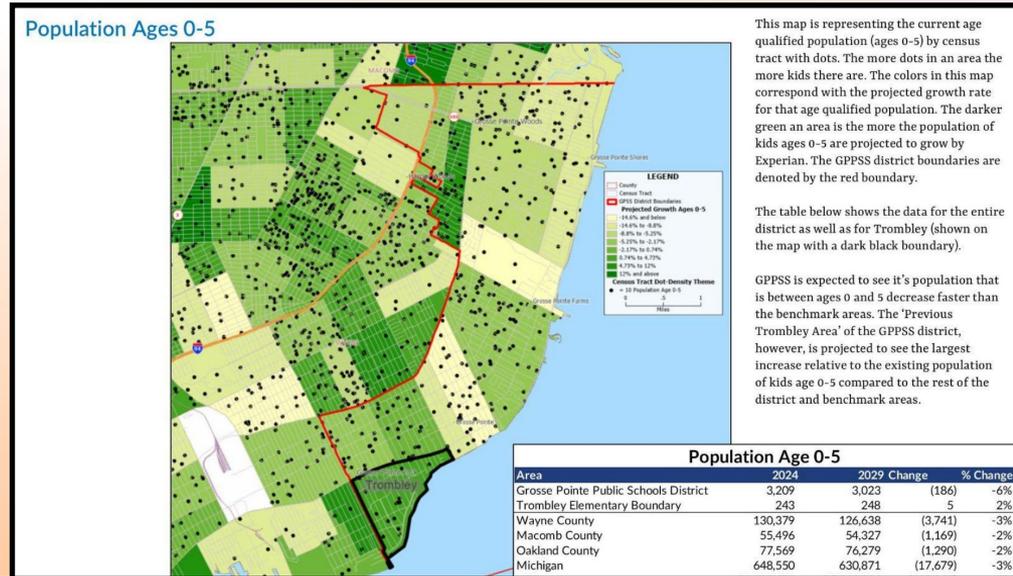
Finding #1 - Verified “Under 5 y.o.” growth

Plante Moran projected most growth in Grosse Pointe Park – survey confirmed even more kids than expected.

Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Survey Count	42	32	42	58	43	35	42	31	36	35

Figure: Head count from March 2025 GPPSS survey conducted by EpicMRA (est. 71% response rate)

Figure: Plante Moran heatmap predicting Trombly catchment as the fastest-growing 0-5 cohort in the District. Next-fastest is in GPW.



Finding #2 - Class Size/Overcrowding Concerns Cited

Primary concern from Defer Elementary families: **overcrowding and class sizes**

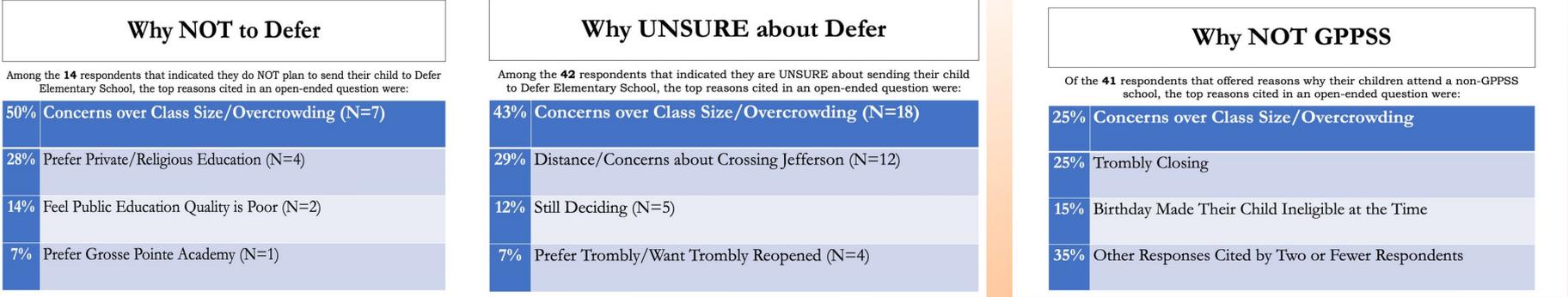


Figure: Survey data summary presented by Epic MRA

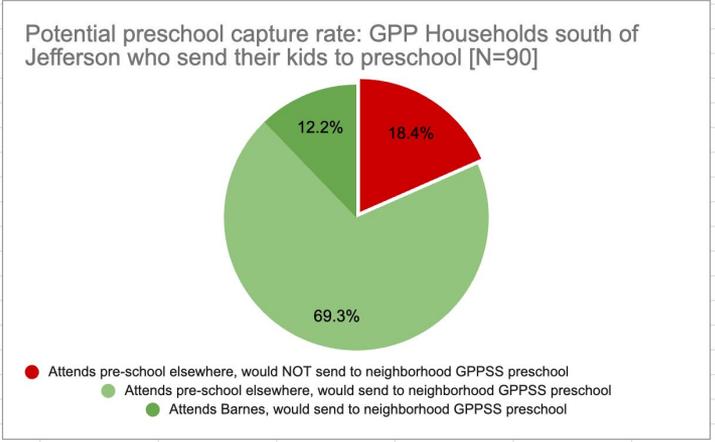
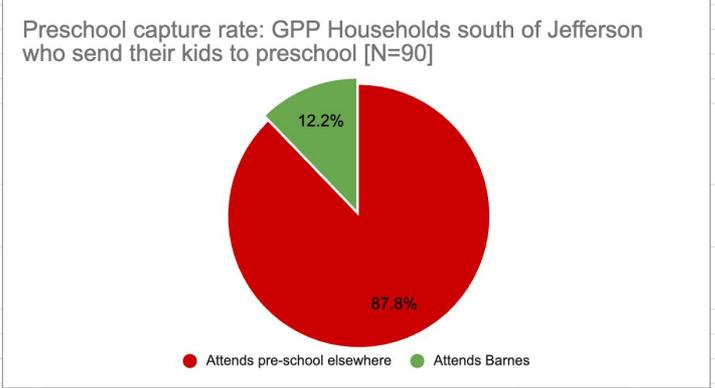
Finding #3 - People Want More GPPSS Preschool

88% of preschool families go private – but **80%** want GPPSS

i.e. **69.3%** of households reported the **desire to send their kids to GPPSS** for preschool but were not able due to **lack of capacity**.

Figure: Current vs. potential preschool capture rate
Take note of the demand. Only 18.4% of preschool families would continue to send outside of GPPSS. But today, 87.8% send to private preschool.

Data from Epic MRA’s executive summary.



How is this data useful? Helping repair capture rate.

- Pockets of “Under 5 y.o.” growth only matter if the families are choosing GPPSS.
- In its “Pupil Enrollment Projection Study” from February 2024, Plante Moran showed that a **10-point drop** occurred in capture rate across the district between 2017-2022. Majority of loss was “Public - Non-GPPSS”. i.e. Virtual, Homeschool, Charter, Other Public District
- 10-point capture rate drop = 851 students = **~\$9M/year of lost revenue for operating budget**

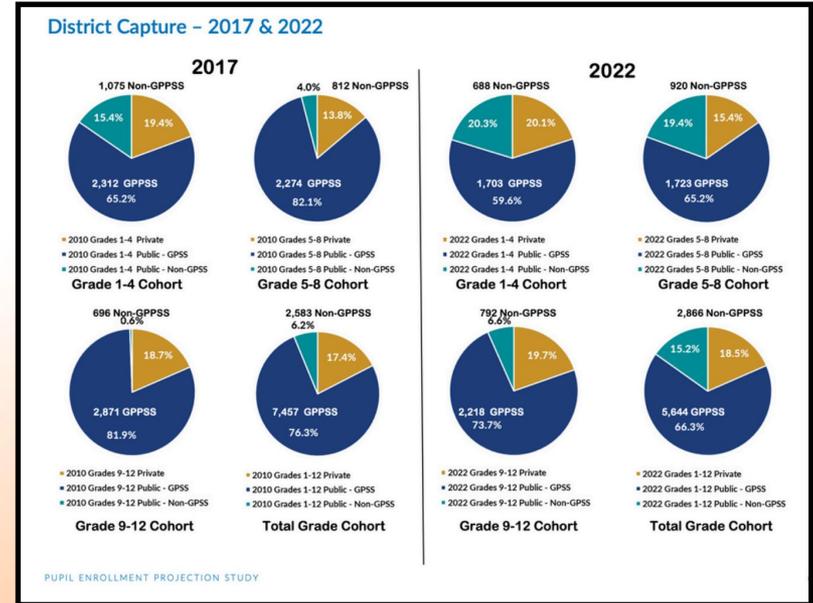


Figure: Excerpt from Plante Moran’s 2024 “Pupil Enrollment Projection Study” showing a 10-point drop in capture rate as of 2022

Statewide Trends: COVID hurt enrollment, but temporarily

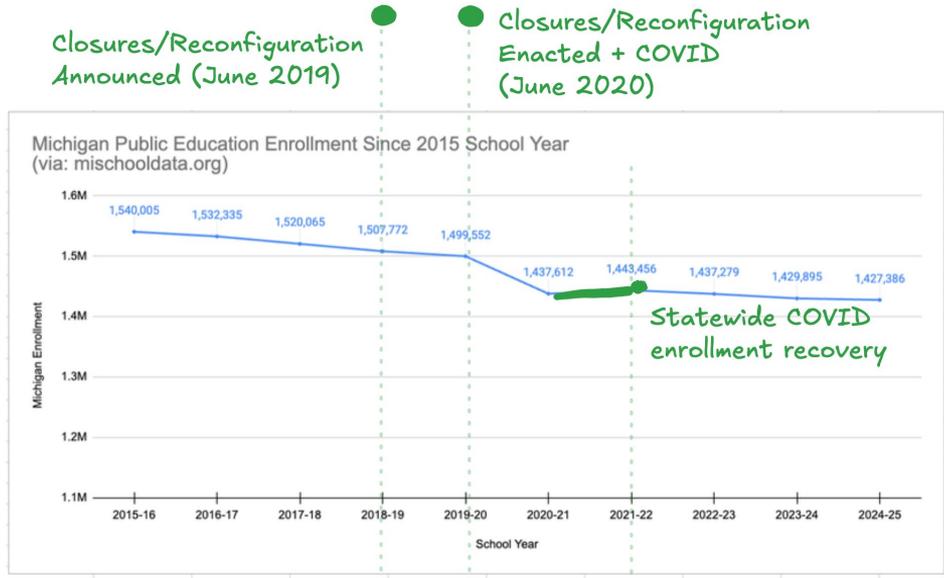


Figure: Note that statewide enrollment faced a big drop during COVID but “recovered” the following year. Data from MI at mischooldata.org.

GPPSS COVID: No enrollment recovery experienced

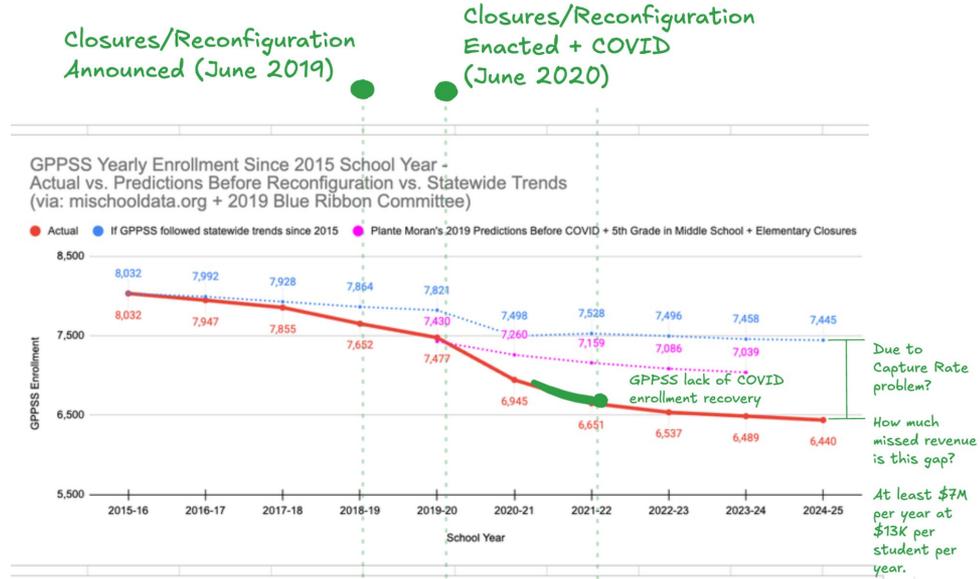


Figure: Note that GPPSS saw COVID drop but did not see a recovery. Enrollment decline exceeds state trends and Plante Moran predictions from 2019 Blue Ribbon Committee. Data from MI at mischooldata.org and 2019 Blue Ribbon Committee.

Comparable Districts: Followed statewide trends

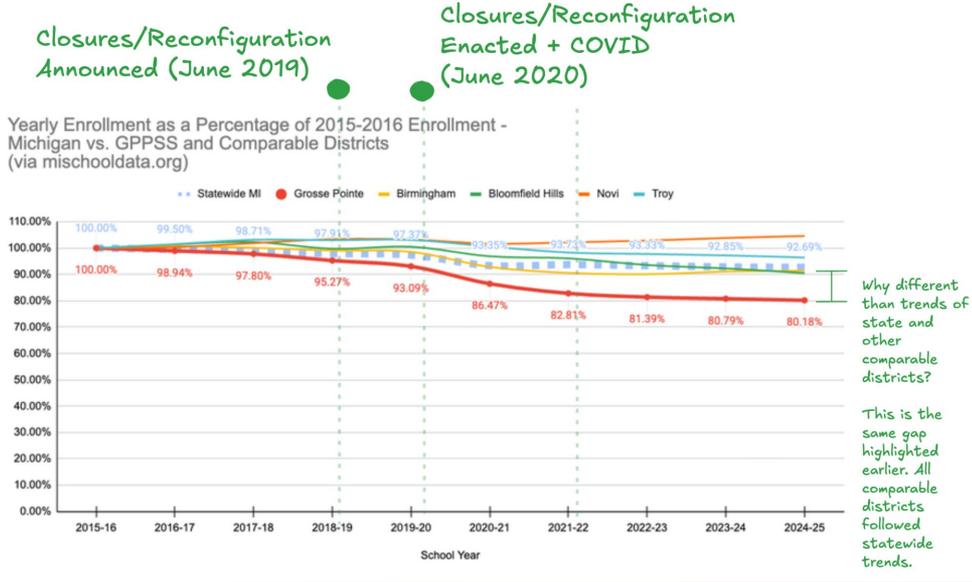


Figure: Note that comparable districts largely followed statewide trends. Data from MI at mischooldata.org.

What happened in GPPSS but not in other districts?

- **2019 Reconfiguration**

- 5th grade moved to middle school
- Loss of Head Start program
- Closure of two elementary schools

- **Other possibilities?**

- Increased competition (homeschool, charter, private, other public, virtual)
- We should investigate

2019 Reconfiguration: Data shows savings haven't materialized

2019 Reconfiguration Projections (\$4M-6M in capital, \$1.3M-\$1.9M in yearly savings, no transportation)	Actual (less capital, yearly losses, costly drop in capture rate, unexpected transportation costs)
"\$4-6M in land value" earned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Elementary sale generated \$600k ✗ Admin building sale price of \$1M ~\$2.4-4.4M less than expected.
"\$1.3-1.9M in operational savings"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ February 2024, Plante Moran reported 10 point capture rate drop (2017 vs. 2022) reducing revenue by upwards of \$9M per year (851 students lost). How do we reverse this trend, why is there an increase in people choosing outside of GPPSS who live in district boundaries? <p>Limiting our future family pipeline from the start. This negates projected savings and is not a statewide trend or a trend in comparable districts.</p>
"Transportation is not part of this proposal as it would negate a large portion of the cost savings. " - From the 2019 Blue Ribbon Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ General home-to-school route has been added despite 2019 plan; negating savings. ✗ Transportation costs have increased by \$1.1M since, in part due to new route. <p>This may be necessary for capture rate along the new route. However, it was not planned for and was known to negate the planned cost savings due to being very costly.</p>

Opportunities

03

The bottom line

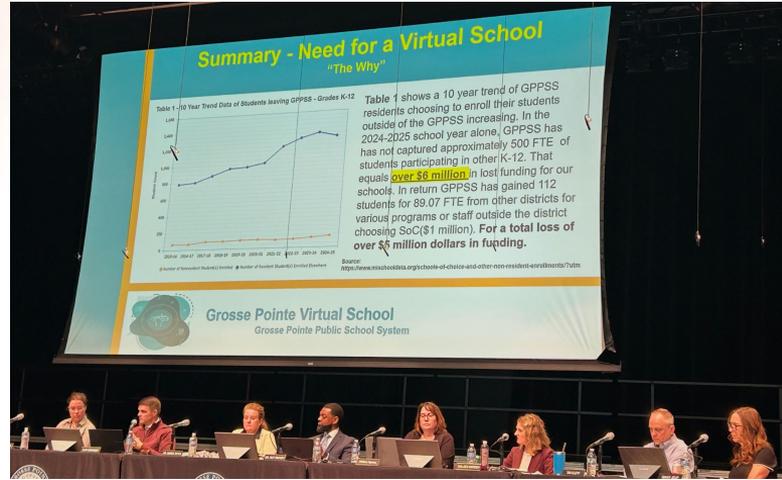
- Increasing the GPPSS “capture rate” inherently involves understanding the families in each community
- Data is incredibly valuable
- Essentially there are three avenues to increasing enrollment

— ~~#1~~ ~~Convince people to have more kids~~
(out of scope...)

- **#2** Convince prospective families to **move here**
(less control, longer-term)

- **#3** Convince families that are here to **choose GPPSS**
(most control, highest urgency)

Opportunity #1 Virtual Schools



- GPPSS Previewed “Grosse Pointe Virtual School” at last week’s school board meeting! **Featuring capture rate analysis** as the justification (**citing \$6M in lost revenue** in 2024-2025).
- This is a **great example** of embracing the data we’ve been discussing, finding creative solutions, and meeting families where they are.

Opportunity #2 Neighborhood Preschools

- We believe the Neighborhood Preschool model would attract **new and existing** families to the district.
- It takes our existing buildings and **adds funded programming**. This **increases our utilization rate districtwide** and reduces K-12 operational budget strain by sharing costs.
- It is a model that is flexible and complementary to additional visions for GPPSS.

	Neighborhood Preschools + Barnes ECC (The Birmingham Model)
Projected as budget neutral?	✓
Cost estimates by district experts?	✓ Cost estimates developed by Plante Moran and GPPSS in December 2024.
Shares building operating costs?	✓ Programming is funded via GSRP or tuition.
Increases building utilization?	✓
Cost of renovations	Known. \$\$ (Under \$5.8M of bond revenue)
<i>Vision flexibility:</i> Potential for moving 5th grade back to middle school in future	✓ Doesn't require it. But allows for it.
<i>Vision flexibility:</i> Potential for expanding to toddler-care	✓ Doesn't require it. But allows for it.
<i>Vision flexibility:</i> Potential for reducing class sizes	✓ Doesn't require it. But allows for it.

In Review

01 Neighborhood Preschool
Data suggests there is an **enormous unmet demand for GPPSS preschool**. We recommend the Neighborhood Preschool Model. 69.3% of households reported the desire to send their kids to GPPSS for preschool but were unable.

~~“If you build it they will come”~~ They are here and want it built.”

02 The Data
District experts report the “capture rate” has dropped for Grosse Pointe Schools; enrollment hasn’t followed statewide/competitor trends.

03 The Opportunities
We believe that a Neighborhood Preschool Model throughout the district is one of many ways (like virtual schooling options) to **cost-effectively maximize enrollment, improve educational outcomes, and attract new families.**

Understanding these challenges is the first step

- This is about the health of our communities. Our cities and schools have a shared interest in meeting the demand of today's families for early childhood education.
- Every city can **work collaboratively with Grosse Pointe Schools** to maximize enrollment which, in turn, maximizes the revenue available for our teachers and the instruction of our students.
- We believe that **offering preschool within local elementaries** across **the entire district** would improve educational outcomes, help enrollment, and help attract new families to the GPPSS communities.

Thank You.

Questions?