# Monitoring key datasets to prepare for K-12 market conditions

As districts are facing enrollment declines, average daily attendance (ADA) declines and ESSER fiscal cliffs, what metrics should your district be monitoring?
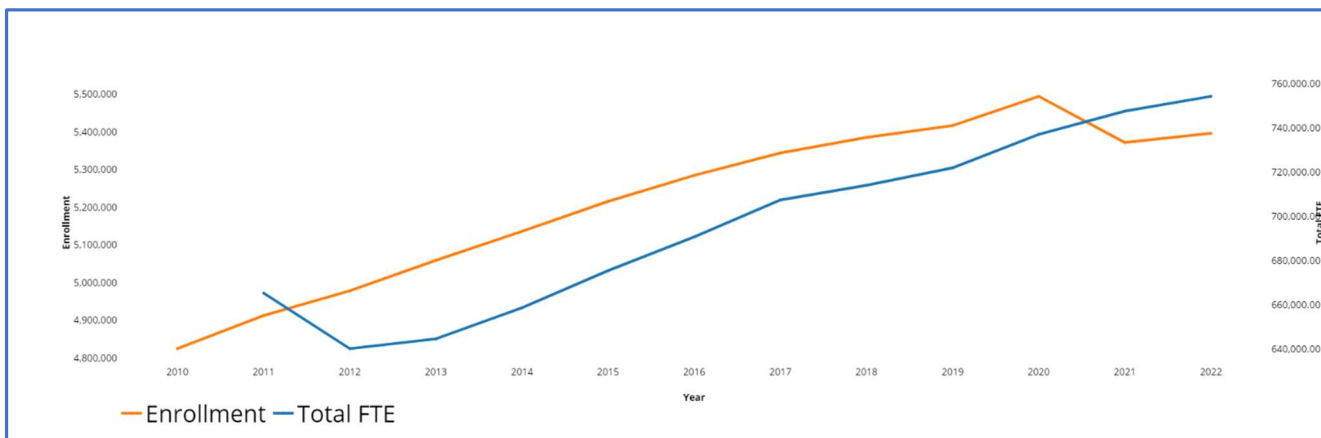
Enrollment

Enrollment declines have been well documented since the beginning of the pandemic. While total enrollment is presenting a modest recovery in 2022, it hasn't fully recovered to 2020 enrollment. This doesn't mean that certain subpopulations haven't returned to schools. The graph below shows the special education population growing from 9.64% of all students in 2019 to 11.61% of all students in 2022. Additionally, the green bar shows the increase of At-Risk students growing from 49.09% in 2019 to 53.48% in 2022. These student subgroups may look different from district to district, but it is important to know how a district is preparing to meet these changing student populations needs.
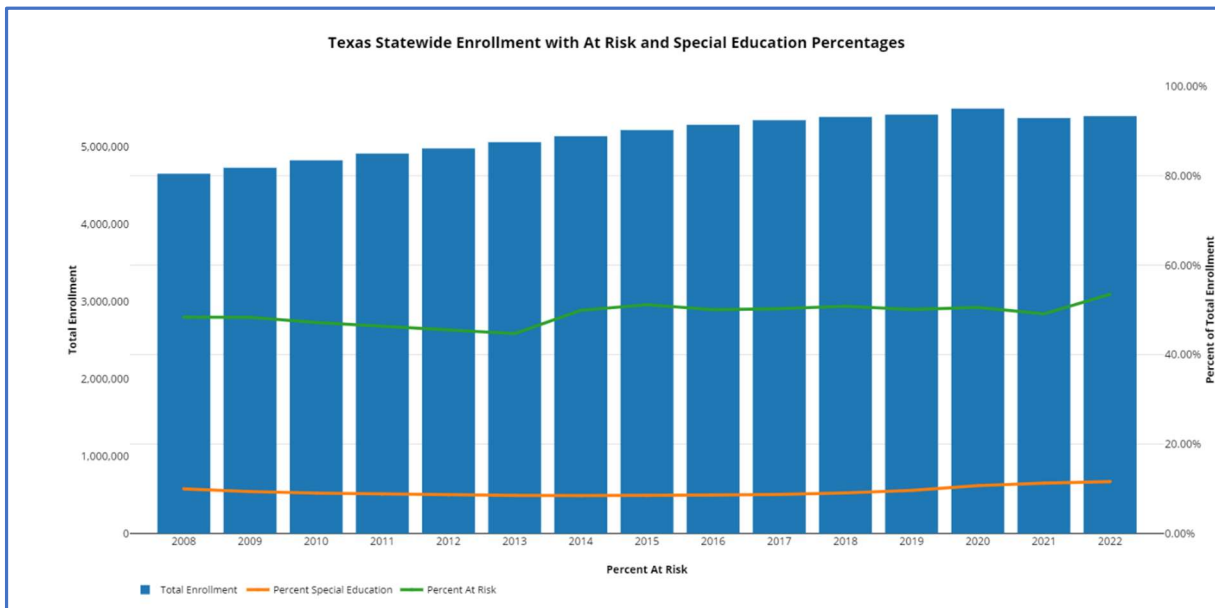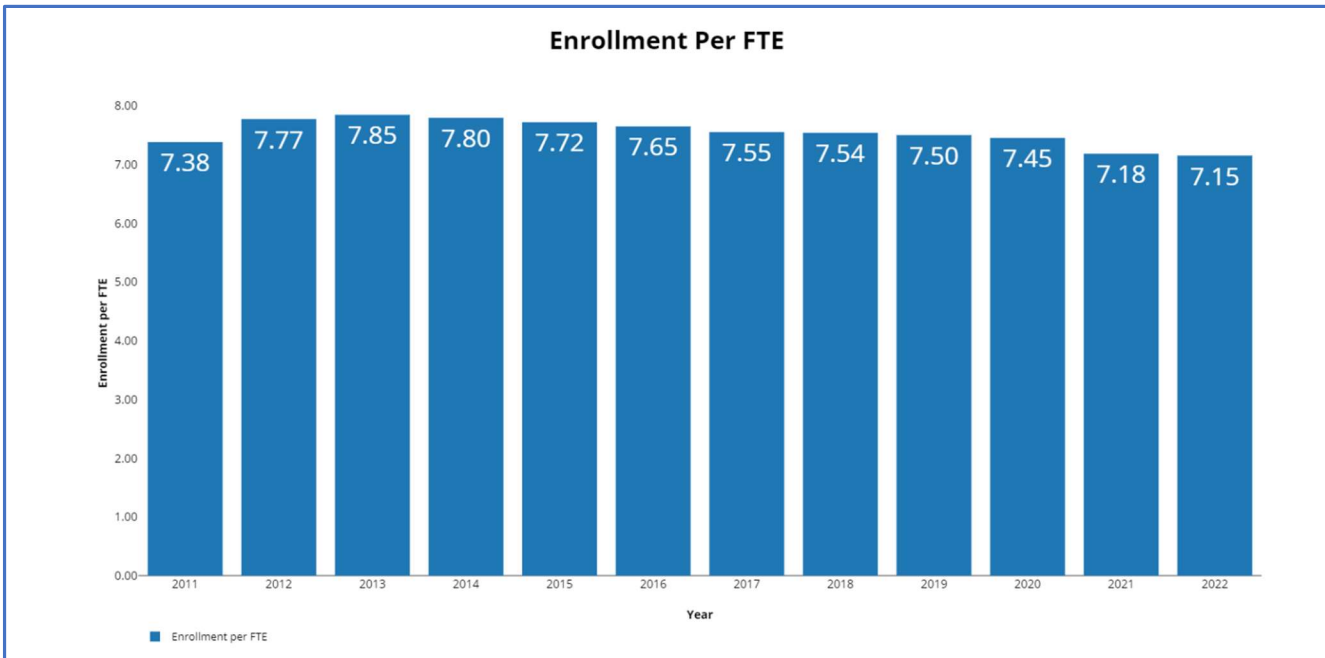

Staffing

Despite decreased enrollment, many districts added additional resources to support students by leveraging short-term federal funds which allowed staffing levels to continue to grow statewide.


There are two main takeaways from the graph above. The first is that when ARRA funds ran out in 2011 there was a large staffing adjustment made in 2012 as indicated by the blue line. Additionally, enrollments never decreased from 2008-2012, while still having a need to reduce staff to offset fiscal losses from the ending of the ARRA program. As ESSER

funds come to an end, there will be a compound effect of a decline in enrollment coupled with an ending of the stimulus grants. This will lead to districts needing to make difficult decisions in the upcoming year, unless there is a change in funding systems.

As districts are monitoring their student staffing ratios, they'll want to take note that the students per FTE have been decreasing since 2013:

Additionally, schools will want to monitor where they are seeing the most changes. The recommended best practice is to break down total staffing ratios into sub-groups in order to monitor where the largest changes are occurring. In Texas, districts have gone from a high of 85.28 students per Educational Aide down to 64.85 students per aide. Also, Professional Support has gone from 85.39 to 64.38 students per employee. Each district will want to monitor staffing changes and be prepared to determine if reductions will be needed once the ESSER funds run out.
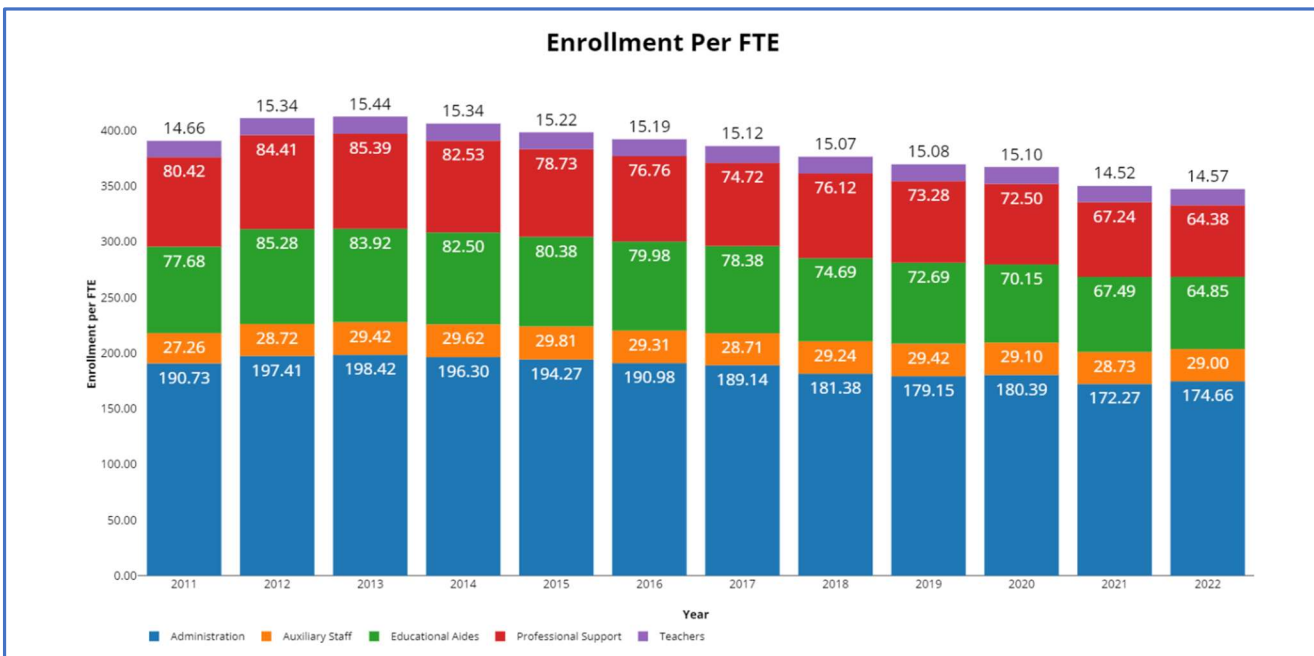
School leaders will want to focus on three major areas: Enrollment, Fiscal Planning and Staffing. As the enrollment changes, make the requisite changes to your staffing models. Using analytics can help school leaders better prepare for the road ahead. Making sure you are using data to help support critical decisions in the upcoming year as funding from ESSER expires will position your district for long term success.