



# News Release

Elk River Area School District ISD 728  
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## **DISTRICT RELEASES CENSUS FIGURES**

**ELK RIVER, MN** – Census data released by the district show a slowing economy is having an adverse affect on the district's budget. The most prominent factor is a significant slowing of household growth within the Elk River Area Schools' border, a measure that is resulting in a lower growth rate in the district's 17 schools.

According to figures, household growth in the district's four counties (Anoka, Hennepin, Sherburne and Wright) fell to 2.5 percent in 2007, a decrease of 2.7 percent from the previous year. In the five-year tracking cycle household growth in the district has slowed to 4.9 percent. Joe Stangler, Director of Research and Assessment, says his projections show a 1.5 percent increase for 2008.

The slowing in the rate of growth in households is also affecting the rate of growth of students enrolling in the district. Stangler's figures show student enrollment has grown 39% since 1999, but is leveling off. He reports there were 12,246 students enrolled in 2007, up from 11,844 the year before. In the preceding five years, the district saw an increase of 1,810 students. Stangler's report shows growth peaked in 2003 at 6.9 percent and has decreased each year since.

The adjustments in population have created a "double-edge sword" for the district. On the one hand, the continued increase in households and population provide the district additional revenue; however, on the other hand that revenue is not keeping up with the number of new students. To compound matters, the growth has not come in a uniform fashion, resulting in many schools being overcrowded and in need of additions or in several cases communities needing new schools. The district currently has limited funding to renovate or build additions to schools; monies for large-scale projects, such as additions beyond 20 percent of a facility or a new school, can only be raised through a support of voters. At this time, the district does not plan to ask voters to support a bond referendum in 2008.

The district receives approximately 14 percent of its budget from local property taxes. As population increases, the school district receives additional revenue, which is primarily invested in the classroom. The bottom line for the district is that as growth slows so does increased revenue, monies needed to support students.

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For additional information, please read the attached report or call Joe Stangler at (763) 241-1235.

The Elk River School Area District mission is to educate, inspire and empower our diverse learners to shape their futures, to accomplish their dreams and to contribute positively to our local and global communities.