

Chapter 8.

Education, Workforce Development, and Lifelong Learning



YOUR CITY. YOUR PLAN.



Chapter 8 Education, Workforce Development, and Lifelong Learning

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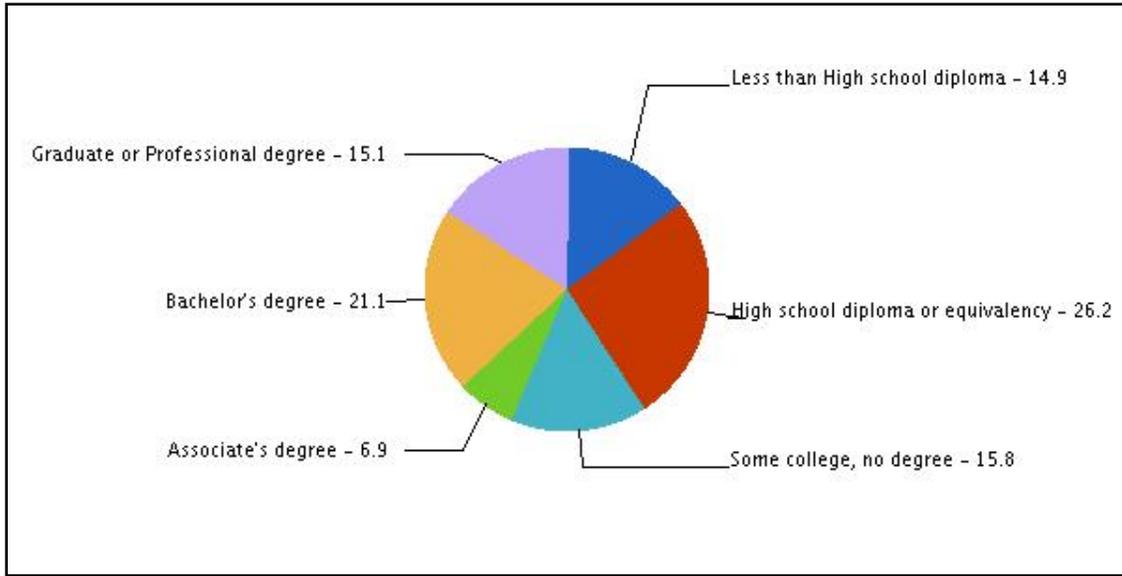
Introduction

Harrisonburg is a city of education with two major universities, an excellent public school system, and highly regarded private schools. Many community members are affiliated with the schools, either working there or attending class, making school life a very important aspect of city life. The City is dedicated to making its public schools the best that they can be. Cooperation between City Council and the School Board is essential for meeting this broad goal. Cooperation between the City, the universities, and other organizations and resources in the community should be is also sought in efforts to meet many of the goals, objectives, and strategies of this plan, from those supporting adult education to promotion of the arts (as discussed in Chapter 9) to economic development (as discussed in Chapter 14).

Background

According to the 2012-2016 ACS, 85 percent of people 25 years and over had at least graduated from high school and 36% had a bachelor's degree or higher. An estimated 15% did not complete high school.

Figure 8-1. Educational Attainment of People in Harrisonburg, 2012-2016



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2012-2016

The total school enrollment in Harrisonburg was 24,000 in 2012-2016. Nursery school and kindergarten enrollment was 957 and elementary plus high school enrollment was 5,100 children. College plus graduate school enrollment was 17,900.

Harrisonburg City Public Schools

Harrisonburg City Public Schools' (HCPS) adopted vision and mission statements are as follows to guide their work.

Vision Statement: "Motivate, Educate, Celebrate: Learning together for a better future."

Mission Statement: "Harrisonburg City Public Schools: A place where learning has no limits and together we work for the success of all."

HCPS's Core Beliefs include:

LEARNING	We believe learning is the heart and soul of what we do, and that all students will learn to high levels.
EQUITY	We cherish and celebrate the talents, identities, and dreams of each and every student. We will never be satisfied until every student experiences access, inclusion, and success.
EXCELLENCE	We hold high expectations for all students and adults in attitude, behavior, progress, and achievement.

TOGETHER	We value meaningful collaboration with each other, parents, and the community so that every student is surrounded by advocates.
FORWARD	We expect continuous improvement through innovation, taking risks, solving problems, having fun, and expressing joy.

School Facilities

HCPS has experienced substantial growth over the last several years, and this growth has resulted in the need for additional classroom space. Currently, HCPS operates ten public school facilities, including the two newest facilities, Bluestone Elementary School and the Elon W. Rhodes Early Learning Center, which opened in Fall 2017-2018. A new high school is being planned to open in Fall 2023.

The physical capacity of school buildings is a dynamic measurement, due in part to the changing standards that result from legislative requirements to provide additional services for special populations. The original “intended” or “designed” capacities are greater than the current “effective” capacities, due to these changing requirements.

Table 8-1 shows a summary of the physical plants and the effective capacities of the current school facilities.

Table 8-1. City of Harrisonburg Public School Facilities

School	Date of Original Construction	Acreage	Effective Capacity*
Harrisonburg High School	2005	63	1350
Thomas Harrison Middle School	1989	34	890
Skyline Middle School (campus shared with SMES and EREEC)	2008	Part of a 65 acre shared campus	790
Bluestone Elementary School	2017	11	755
Keister Elementary School	1955	17	445
Smithland Elementary School (campus shared with SKMS and EREEC)	2008	Part of a 65 acre shared campus	487
Spotswood Elementary School	1960	16	486
Stone Spring Elementary School	1993	23	470
Waterman Elementary School	1911	9	446
Elon W. Rhodes Early Education Center (campus shared with SMES and SKMS)	2017	Part of a 65 acre shared campus	155

Source: Harrisonburg City Public Schools, March 2017

Effective Capacity taken from *School Capacity Expansion Study*, Moseley Architects, January 2012

* Number of students the facility can accommodate while providing space for mandated or specialized programming

School Services

HCPS offers an extremely wide range of services to the City’s children in order to provide a quality education and meet individual student needs. Preschool classes are offered and some college credit courses are taught in high school. Special Education classes and alternative education programs are also available for students who need them. The school division also offers a dual language program at the elementary level

and a Fine Arts Academy and a Governor’s STEM Academy at the high school. A Global Studies Academy at the high school began in the 2018-19 school year.

As noted in Table 8-2, 34 percent of students are identified as English Learners (EL). (Note: The terms English Learners (ELs), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are used interchangeably.) This is an extraordinarily high percentage compared to other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth. Most EL students need extra help with English language support, which therefore requires additional staffing resources. Unless there are dramatic changes in the economic characteristics of the region, the City school system should expect the EL population to continue to rise. A table showing LEP Enrollment at each Harrisonburg City Public School by grade level can be found in Chapter 4, Planning Context.

Table 8-2. City of Harrisonburg K-12 Enrollment, Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficiency, and Special Education

School	Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficiency	Special Education
Bluestone	67%	47%	6%
Keister	61%	40%	7%
Smithland	68%	42%	8%
Spotswood	74%	49%	13%
Stone Spring	60%	44%	16%
Waterman	74%	41%	14%
Skyline Middle	73%	27%	10%
Thomas Harrison	64%	23%	9%
Harrisonburg High	66%	29%	9%
Division	70%	34%	10%

Source: Harrisonburg City Public Schools, average percentages as of March 31, 2018
 Percentages do not include pre-kindergarten students

The City school system currently cooperates with the County school system through a joint consortium for purchasing (food supplies, etc.) and jointly operates the special education program for “low-incident” (low rate of occurrence) special populations in which shared services allows economies of scale for both systems. Massanutten Technical Center, which offers technical and vocational training and classes for high school and adult students, is also jointly operated by the both school systems.

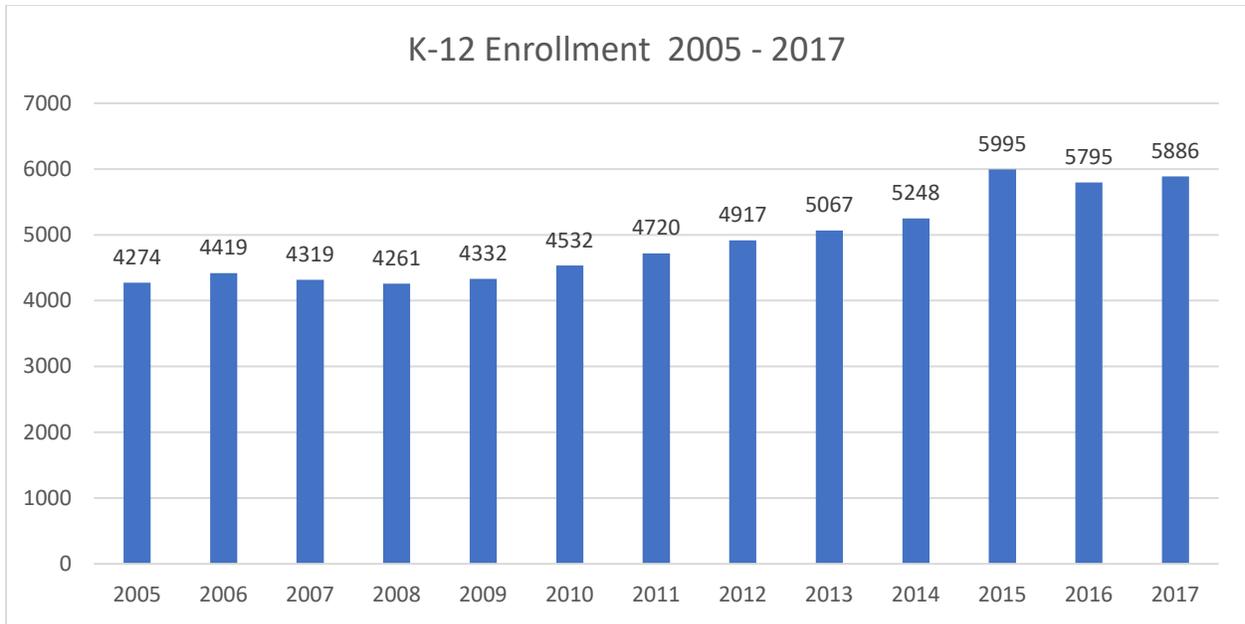


Figure 8-2. City of Harrisonburg K-12 Enrollment Trends, Average Daily Membership (ADM)

Source: Harrisonburg City Public Schools, May 2018

Future Needs and Planned Facilities

As indicated in Figure 8-2, the total 2017 enrollment of the school system, reported as Average Daily Membership (ADM) as of September 30, 2017 was approximately 5,886 students. This reflects a significant increase in enrollment that has occurred over multiple years. With the opening of the new elementary and preschool center, and the grade reconfiguration (K-5 at elementary schools and 6-8 at middle schools), the school division continues to address the overcrowding issues. Until a second high school is built, the School Board continues to develop solutions to the space constraints at Harrisonburg High School. Figure 8-3 shows the school system’s projected enrollments.

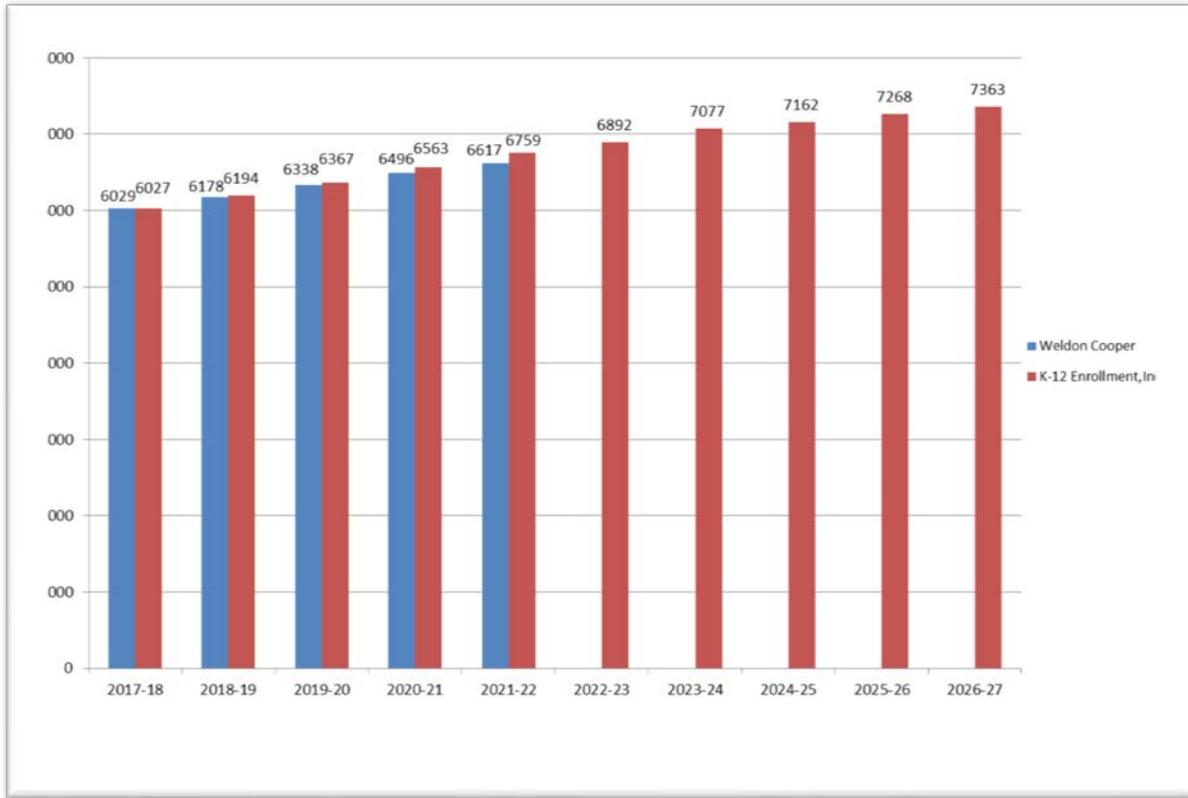


Figure 8-3. City of Harrisonburg Projected Enrollment

Source: School Enrollment Projections, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, October 2016
 Harrisonburg City Public Schools Enrollment Projection Study, 2017-2016, K-12 Enrollment, Inc., February 2017

Service and Facility Standards

For instructional staffing, the system uses class size targets and state standards for special education. Maximum class size targets are:

- Grades K-3: 17-23 students per teacher
- Grades 4-5: 24-27 students per teacher
- Grades 6-12: State Standards of Quality (SOQ) requirements

However, school funding may alter these targets, resulting in slightly larger class sizes.

Early Childhood Care and Education

The National Association for the Education of Young Children defines “early childhood” as occurring before the age of eight, and it is during this period that a child goes through the most rapid phase of growth and development. While early childhood education is not mandated by the U.S. Department of Education, it is encouraged for the healthy development and nurturing of a child’s social and cognitive

skills. Early childhood care and education services are offered and supported by a variety of public agencies and private organizations.

Workforce Development, Lifelong Learning, and Higher Education

Workforce development is an important element of Harrisonburg’s overall economic development strategy. Workforce development enables individuals to acquire knowledge and skills for gainful employment or improved work performance and it provides employers with an effective means to communicate and meet their demand skills. The City of Harrisonburg partners with the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board (SVWDB) to assist businesses in recruiting and training employees. The SVWDB provides oversight and administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the Shenandoah Valley. The WIOA guides the delivery of workforce development programs for adults, dislocated workers, and youth throughout the United States. The WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to complete in the global economy. The Valley Workforce Center, which is operated by SVWDB, is located in downtown Harrisonburg.

Lifelong learning is the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge. Lifelong learning can be for personal reasons to advance knowledge about a hobby or something that is of personal interest, or for professional reasons to improve job skills or expertise related to career advancement. Lifelong learning is not limited to any and can be facilitated by a variety of methods including, but not limited to, formal classroom instruction, through participation in community organizations and activities, and use of the internet for distance learning or self-directed learning.

Higher education is a stage of formal learning that occurs after the completion of secondary education. Harrisonburg is home to James Madison University, a public coeducational research university; Eastern Mennonite University, a private liberal arts university; and American National University, a postsecondary education institution.¹ Other higher education and training providers in the area that serve Harrisonburg residents include Blue Ridge Community College, Bridgewater College, Mary Baldwin University, and the Woodrow Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center. There are opportunities for the City and community organizations to partner with colleges and universities with respect to student internships, special projects, and technical assistance on governmental and environmental issues.

Massanutten Regional Library

The Massanutten Regional Library (MRL) is a private, non-profit organization supported jointly by the City of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, and Page County. Public libraries play an important role in strengthening places and community quality of life. The Main Library is located at 174 South Main Street in downtown Harrisonburg. There are six branch libraries in Rockingham and Page counties. An increasingly

¹ Student population growth trends and projections for James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University is found in Chapter 4, Planning Context.

important service and facility provision in libraries today is Internet access. MRL provides free internet access via public wi-fi and the availability of public use computers. Patrons utilize both methods of internet access for a variety of purposes, including job applications, research, homework (both at K-12 and post-secondary level), personal communication, and leisure.

In addition to hosting educational and cultural events, such as book clubs and reading times for adults, teenagers, and young children, MRL also offers meeting spaces for community organizations to utilize for small meetings as well as to host larger public events.

Education, Workforce Development, and Lifelong Learning Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 7. To provide a wide, accessible, and equitably distributed range of educational opportunities for all.

Objective 7.1 To adopt a holistic approach to education that considers the academic, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs of individual children.

Strategy 7.1.1 To engage families, caregivers, schools, and support networks in the success of each child in the community.

Strategy 7.1.2 To support quality and affordable public and privately-run child care and education for children under 5 years old.

Objective 7.2 To carefully plan the location of new and updated Harrisonburg City Public School facilities to enhance, connect to, and be part of the surrounding community.

Strategy 7.2.1 To use enrollment trends and projections to ensure quality educational facilities.

Strategy 7.2.2 To design new schools to fit into surrounding neighborhoods or in areas designated for future residential development. Consideration should be given to making schools accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists, well-landscaped, with lighting not to intrude into the surrounding neighborhood, and to not be dominated by parking lots.

Objective 7.3 To provide support for educational programs for workforce development, apprenticeship, training and retraining to meet the demands of business and industry, as well as, improving the skills of individual community members. See Chapter 14, Economic Development and Tourism's Objective 16.3 for related strategies.

Strategy 7.3.1 To promote the awareness of programs offered by and information available from organizations such as the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board (SVWDB) and its Valley Workforce Center, the Small Business Development Center, and Massanutten Technical Center.

- Strategy 7.3.2 To support close communication between the Harrisonburg Department of Economic Development, institutions of higher learning, and existing and prospective businesses regarding educational needs of the current and future workforce.
- Strategy 7.3.3 To support programs that promote English language and literacy skills of community members to be self-sufficient and to participate in civic affairs, education, and the workforce.
- Objective 7.4 To support early childhood education and life-long learning through schools, libraries, continuing and higher education programs, non-profit and for-profit community-based education programs, and recreation programs for people of all ages.
- Strategy 7.4.1 To encourage the design of public schools and community centers so that they may be utilized for multiple uses such as lifelong learning locations, and for recreational programming.
- Strategy 7.4.2 To encourage James Madison University, Eastern Mennonite University, Blue Ridge Community College, Bridgewater College, and other institutions of higher learning to create and extend credit and noncredit enrichment courses for the community.
- Strategy 7.4.3 To promote the awareness of life-long learning programs in Harrisonburg.
- Objective 7.5 To improve community access to books (in paper and electronic format), computers and the internet, and spaces for programming and civic engagement.
- Strategy 7.5.1 To help support ways to increase financial support to Massanutten Regional Library to reflect the mean level of locality funding for all public libraries in Virginia so that MRL may expand hours open to the public and improve current offerings.

Chapter Resources

City of Harrisonburg Public Schools, Enrollment Statistics, <http://harrisonburg.k12.va.us/instruction/English-as-a-second-language/Enrollment-Statistics>

K12 Enrollment Inc, "Harrisonburg City Public Schools Enrollment Projection Study, 2017-2026," <http://www.harrisonburg.k12.va.us/HarrisonburgCitySchools/media/images/Documents/Community/Harrisonburg-EPS---FINAL.pdf>

Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Demographics Research Group, "School Enrollment Projections – Harrisonburg City," October 2017,

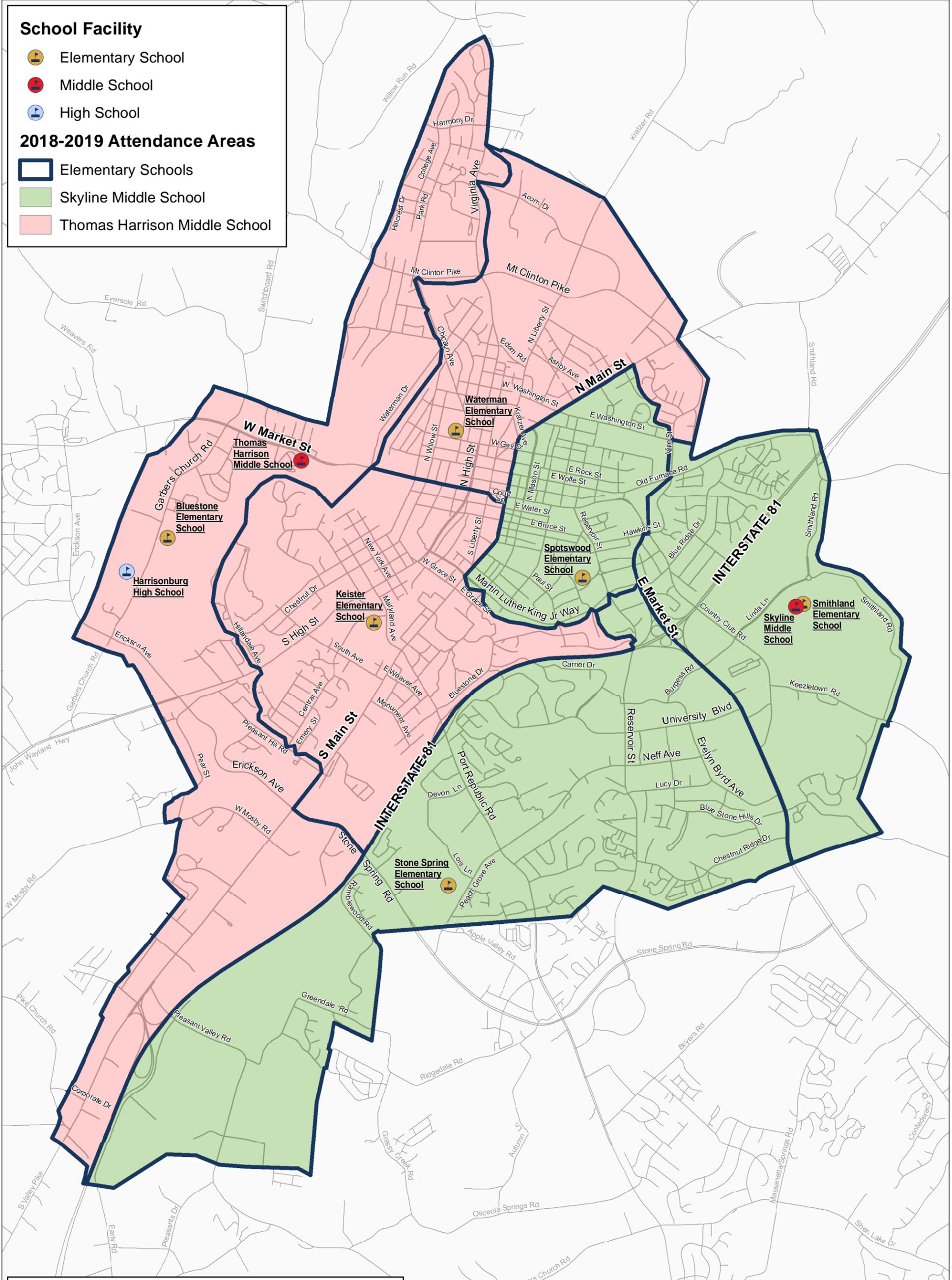
http://harrisonburg.k12.va.us/HarrisonburgCitySchools/media/images/Documents/Community/SchoolEnrollmentProjections_Harrisonburg-City_October2016_UVaCooperCenter-16.pdf

School Facility

-  Elementary School
-  Middle School
-  High School

2018-2019 Attendance Areas

-  Elementary Schools
-  Skyline Middle School
-  Thomas Harrison Middle School

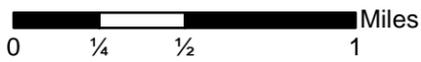


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Data Sources:
 Harrisonburg City Public Schools
 Department of Planning and Community Development

Existing Harrisonburg City Public Schools

Comprehensive Plan
 Map created: September 30, 2018



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