

Part 1. – DEMOGRAPHIC VARIETY

One of the first things we are asked when discussing the possibility of a future search within a school district is whether another district of similar size and demographics successfully has used future search to achieve similar results that the current district is hoping for. Our response is that demographic differences have little impact on the kinds of results that can be achieved. Having said this, we have put together a school district demographic table (see table P1.1) to illustrate the range of populations in the systems discussed in this book to assure readers that future search has been used successfully in a district similar to their own. The chapters themselves delineate other similarities and differences with respect to desired outcomes and current challenges.

The two chapters in this section illustrate how future search can be used in a small district as well as in a very large one. Both districts share a strong desire to make education the best it can be for all children.

Lawrence, KS (chapter 1) is a district with 10,000 students. Its future search unfolded in a fairly typical way. People across the community and within the education system came together around a shared goal of improving education. The district continues to use the outcomes from the future search as a framework for districtwide decision making.

In contrast, Toronto, ON, (chapter 2) is one of the largest school districts in North America, and the largest educational system in which future search has been used. Here the future search was anything but straightforward. Despite unanticipated disruptions and changes imposed upon the system, Toronto continues to make headway on some of the goals established during its future search. This chapter gives the reader a good idea of the challenges and realities of making systemic change in a large school district.

Table SI.1: School District Demographics

<i>Name</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Student Population</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Area sq. miles</i>
Chapter 6 North Platte, NE	24,000	3,870	11	10.8
Chapter 5 Perkiomen Valley, PA	29,000	5,000	7	30
Chapter 8 San Gabriel, CA	39,804	6,000+	9	4.1
Chapter 11 Novato, CA	47,630	7,794	17	28
Chapter 3 Carson City, NV	54,000	8,400	9	30
Chapter 1 Lawrence, KS	80,000	10,000	22	28
Chapter 10 Santa Monica and Malibu, CA	102,000	12,500	16	79
Chapter 7 Naperville, IL	130,000	19,000	23	36.5
Chapter 12 Montreal, QC	450, 380	33,000 +	59	359
Chapter 9 Minneapolis, MN	382,700	47,661	133	58.72
Chapter 4 Ottawa-Carleton, ON	710,000	~ 80,000	145	1,715
Chapter 2 Toronto, ON	2.5 million	~ 300,000	558	393