

1-31-71

School Enrollment Up

Public school enrollment in Santa Cruz County was up 4.98 per cent this past fall, according to data supplied by Dr. Richard Fickel, County Superintendent of Education.

Altogether there were 34,584 students enrolled in classes from kindergarten to Cabrillo College, a gain of 1641 students in the past year.

However, the increase in enrollment comes at a level which does not particularly indicate any substantial population increase, but rather a change in educational demands.

The enrollment growth, for all practical purposes, occurred at the high school and community college level.

This is the way the enrollment changed in the various educational levels in the County:

K-8 — Enrollment increased from 19,612 students to 19,815, a gain of 203 students or 1.03 per cent.

9-12 — Enrollment increased from 7918 to 8271, a gain of 353 students or 4.45 per cent.

13-14 — Enrollment at Cabrillo jumped from 4679 students to 5886, an increase of 1207 or 25.7 per cent.

Special — Students enrolled in handicapped programs or special programs operated by the County Department of Education dropped from 734 to 612, a

decline of 122 students or 19.9 per cent.

Total enrollment was 34,584 compared to 32,943 a year ago, an increase of 1641.

Actually the numbers are slightly different as classifications changed during the year but the above figures are indicative of the total change.

The fact that the increase in elementary schools was virtually nil, only 1 per cent, is helpful in the fact that it probably closer determines our growth rate during the past year than the other enrollment data.

The substantial high school increase, close to the total change, reflects the fact that we have about 2200 pupils at every school class level in the County from kindergarten through the junior year of high school. At the senior year, the drop-out factor becomes apparent as we have 500 more freshmen enrolled than we have seniors.

However, at the community college level, the picture changes completely with nearly 6000 students enrolled at Cabrillo. The total figure this past fall was 5886 compared to about less than 5000 the year before.

At Cabrillo we are not only getting more high school graduates enrolled, but we are gaining returning veterans, older students and part-time students, enrolled

in both academic and vocational programs, designed to further their education.

From a housing and academic teaching load point of view, our critical situation is centered at Cabrillo where it is not at all unlikely that we will be forced into an enrollment priority program this coming fall for the first time.

The fact that our elementary enrollment has more or less leveled off for the past three years allows the schools a little more breathing time as far as housing (classroom) demands are concerned although all of the school districts face operational cost crises.

At the high school level the increase in facilities in both the Santa Cruz High School District and in the Pajaro Valley Unified District are meeting current demands although the nominal increases will cause some inconvenience in class scheduling and housing.

At Cabrillo we have a serious problem which can only be met by a substantial increase in the college program, both in the development of new facilities and the expansion of both the academic and vocational programs.

This year school enrollment does not reflect population growth nearly as much as it does the gratifying condition that our young people are seeking more education.