

# Demographics Bulletin

## Zachary Community Schools

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### New Residential Construction and Affordable Student Housing

**Will Zachary's housing boom translate into a school enrollment boom?**

- **Not all new homes are suitable for families with children.**
- **This is the typical newly built home occupied by Zachary students:**  
**Square feet: 1961**  
**Price: \$235,320**
- **About 25 percent of new Zachary homes may be out of reach of families with children.**

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Zachary is a vibrant and growing community with many new homes planned or under construction. What does this housing development mean for the Zachary Community Schools? Will an influx of new students outstrip school capacity? Without careful planning and monitoring, this is certainly a possibility. But, not every new home will house students. Some residences will be owned by empty-nesters or other persons who have no school-age children. Up-scale houses may not be affordable for families with young children. The Zachary Community School Board is sponsoring ongoing demographic analysis that can inform policy formation and strategic planning. A key

objective of the demographic work is to differentiate affordable family housing from more expensive luxury homes that are being built in and around Zachary.

One part of the demographic analysis is the development of a residential building permit database. City of Zachary records have been tallied from January, 2006, through mid-March of 2007. For each residential permit issued, square footage and a cost estimate have been recorded. This database is updated at least bi-monthly.

A second part of the demographic analysis involves matching the street addresses on the recent building permits to the addresses of newly enrolled Zachary students. This allows us to identify the characteristics of newly constructed housing units where students new to the district reside. This report focuses on the period between January 1, 2006, and December, 2007. In that time, 520 residential permits were issued by the City of Zachary. Of those 500+ permits, 103 addresses match those of one or more new Zachary students enrolling since July 1, 2006. In that two-year period, 103 of the 520 houses were completed, sold, and inhabited for the 2007-08 school year. The median size of new homes with students was 1961 square feet, and the median cost was \$235,320 (estimated at \$120 per square foot). Further analysis indicates that about one-fourth of the residential permits are for homes that are unlikely to be affordable for young families with children. Though this should continue to be monitored, it does appear that students are unlikely to reside in at least a quarter of the new homes in Zachary. Watch future bulletins for updates on these housing statistics.

#### Coming in Next Bulletin:

#### Will the Real Estate Slowdown Impact Zachary Schools?

Just because a building permit is issued doesn't mean that a house will be built immediately. And, completed homes may not sell right away. In the current economic slowdown, there are reports of buyers having difficulties with financing. Memorial Day marks the traditional end of the spring housing sales rush. Data for the early part of the spring sales season showed a slow down in Zachary sales. What will the data show after Memorial Day? In the next demographic bulletin, we will compare Zachary sales and closings data for this sales season to those of recent years. Special thanks to School Board member Hubie Owen for providing data for this analysis.