

# Edwardsville School District Notes Changing Demographics at Board Meeting

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Edwardsville Community Unit School District #7 Board of Education held a special meeting on Monday, Nov. 13, 2023. Among other topics, they discussed the changing demographics of the district.

Superintendent Dr. Patrick Shelton and Curriculum/Instruction Director Tara Fox presented data from Illinois Report Card — a program that breaks down how each school in a district is performing on an academic and social level — to the Board. The school report card shows how the district compares to other Illinois schools.

There is also data about the district's racial/ethnic diversity, the number of low income and unhoused students, and students with individualized educational plans (IEPs). Racial /ethnic diversity has been a topic of discussion at board meetings over the past several months. As Superintendent Dr. Patrick Shelton demonstrated to the Board how to navigate the [Illinois Report Card website](#), he noted how these demographics have shifted in recent years.

“We have a changing demographic in our school district,” Shelton said. “And it’s not very apparent when you look from year to year, but if you look back a number of years, what you’re going to see is we are slowly becoming a less white population as a school district. We are, this year, almost at 75% white. A quarter of our students don’t look like me. And so that’s important from a cultural understanding. It’s important from the teaching and learning perspective that we have a changing demographic both racially and then socioeconomically as well. We also have a poverty rate this year, low income, that’s over 20%. So, not a big deal at a lot of places when you close that 20% mark, but if you’ve been at 15% and all of a sudden you’re at 22, then you see that trend.”

ECUSD7 has always been a predominantly white district, with 80% of students identifying as white in 2018. In 2023, 77.5% of ECUSD7 students are white, 7.7% are Black, 5% are Hispanic, 2.9% are Asian and 0.2% are American Indian. Approximately 6.6% of students identify as two or more races.

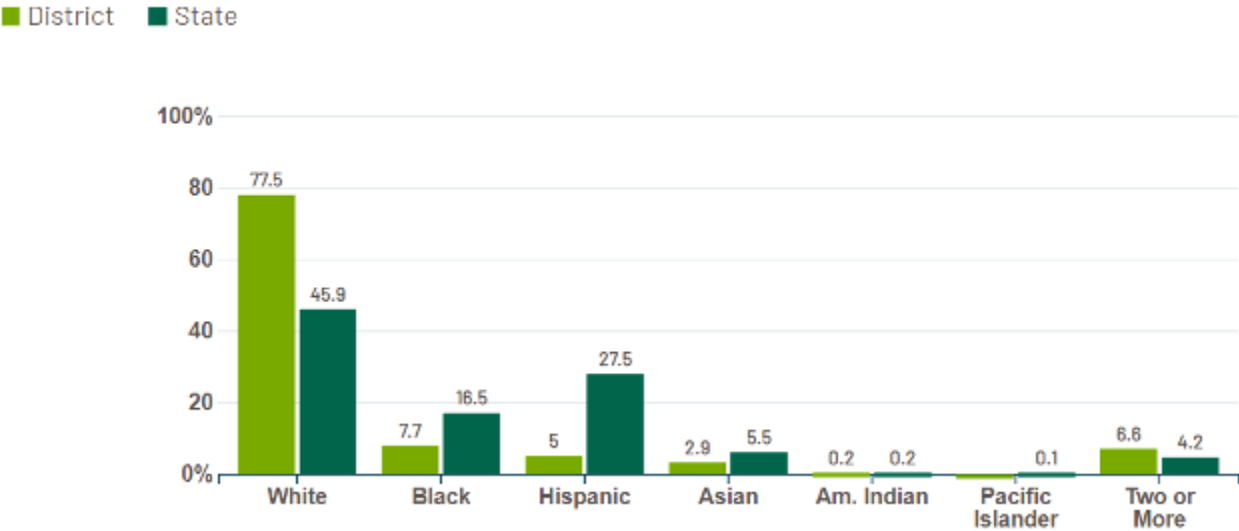
The [racial/ethnic diversity trends on the school report card](#) show a slow increase in BIPOC students and a slow decrease in white students. More students also identify as belonging to two or more racial groups than in recent years. According to the school report card, 93.8% of ECUSD7 teachers are white.

Students ages 3–17 are considered low income if they “receive or live in households that receive public aid from SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or TANF (Targeted Assistance for Needy Families); are classified as homeless, migrant, runaway, Head Start, or foster children; or live in a household where the household income meets (USDA) guidelines to receive free or reduced-price meals,” according to the [Illinois Report Card website](#).

The jump in low income students at ECUSD7 fits the trend across the state. In 2022, 18.7% of ECUSD7 students were identified as low income compared to 46.5% of students statewide. In 2023, these numbers increased to 22.3% at ECUSD7 and 49% in Illinois.

“It just gives you an idea of where we compare with other districts, and you can go into math, you can look at all these other demographic groups, graduation rates, all kinds of different ways that you can do that,” Shelton added of the school report card.

Shelton and Fox talked through other data points revealed in the report card, including stagnant test scores and chronic absenteeism. Check out [this article](#) at [RiverBender.com](#) for more information about the Illinois Report Card and how ECUSD7 scored. To see the full ECUSD7 report card, click [here](#).



Level

Year

District

2023

22.3

2022

18.7

2021

17.5

2020

17.8

2019

18.9

2018

17.8

0%

20

40

60

80

100%

State

2023

49

2022

46.5

2021

48.1

2020

48.5

2019

48.8

2018

49.4

0%

20

40

60

80

100%