

ECONOMIC REVIEW

A Breakdown of 2023 K-12 Enrollment: Greater MetroWest



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Major: Mathematics
YOG: May 2025

The Greater MetroWest region includes 13 communities: Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Natick, Sherborn, Sudbury, Wayland, Southborough, Hudson, Marlborough, Northborough, and Westborough. This article will focus on K-12 enrollment for these communities and how the COVID-19 pandemic affected each community's enrollment, as well as selected populations as a percent of enrollment by community.

Figure 1 shows the total enrollment for each community for the 2023-2024 school year. Framingham had the highest total enrollment out of all the communities with 8,856 students, followed by Natick, with 5,179. Only six of the thirteen communities had over 3,000 students enrolled: Sudbury, Westborough, Hopkinton, Marlborough, as well as Natick and Framingham. Sherborn had the lowest enrollment of the communities with only 898 students enrolled for the academic year of 2023. Southborough, the town with the second smallest total enrollment of 1,648 students had 750 more students than Sherborn. The majority of the communities fall into the range of 0-2,999 total students enrolled for the 2023-2024 school year.

2023-2024 GMW Public School Enrollment By Community

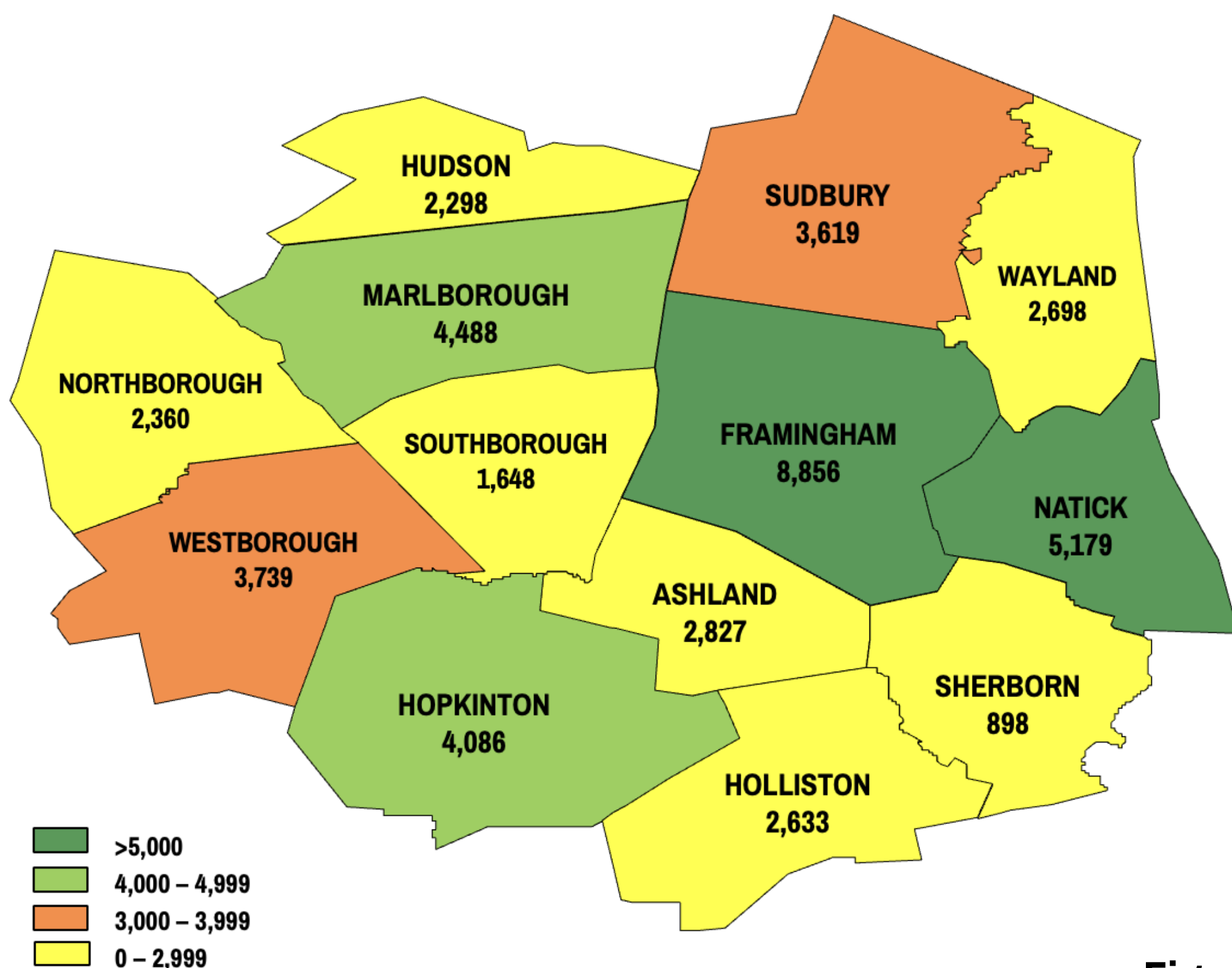


Figure 1

FEBRUARY 2025 Issue 3



Figure 2 represents two sets of information: K-12 total enrollment in each community for the academic year 2023-2024 shown by the green bars and measured on the left-hand axis, and the enrollment as a percentage of population for 2023 shown by the orange bars and measured on the right-hand axis. While Framingham had the highest total enrollment of the communities, it actually had one of the lowest percentages of the population, with only 12.3% enrolled as public-school students in grades 12. Similarly, Natick which had the second highest enrollment of the communities, but only had 14.2% of its population enrolled as K-12 students. On the other hand, when observing the total enrollment in Sherborn, it had the lowest enrollment of all the communities. However, total enrollment as a percentage of the population, Sherborn had the second highest percentage of population with 20.7%. One possible explanation for this could be Sherborn's excellent public school system --- families could be moving there specifically to send their children to its public school. A similar argument could be made with the community Hopkinton which is annually ranked in the top 20 for public school systems in the Commonwealth.

2023-2024 GMW Public School Enrollment As a Percentage of Population

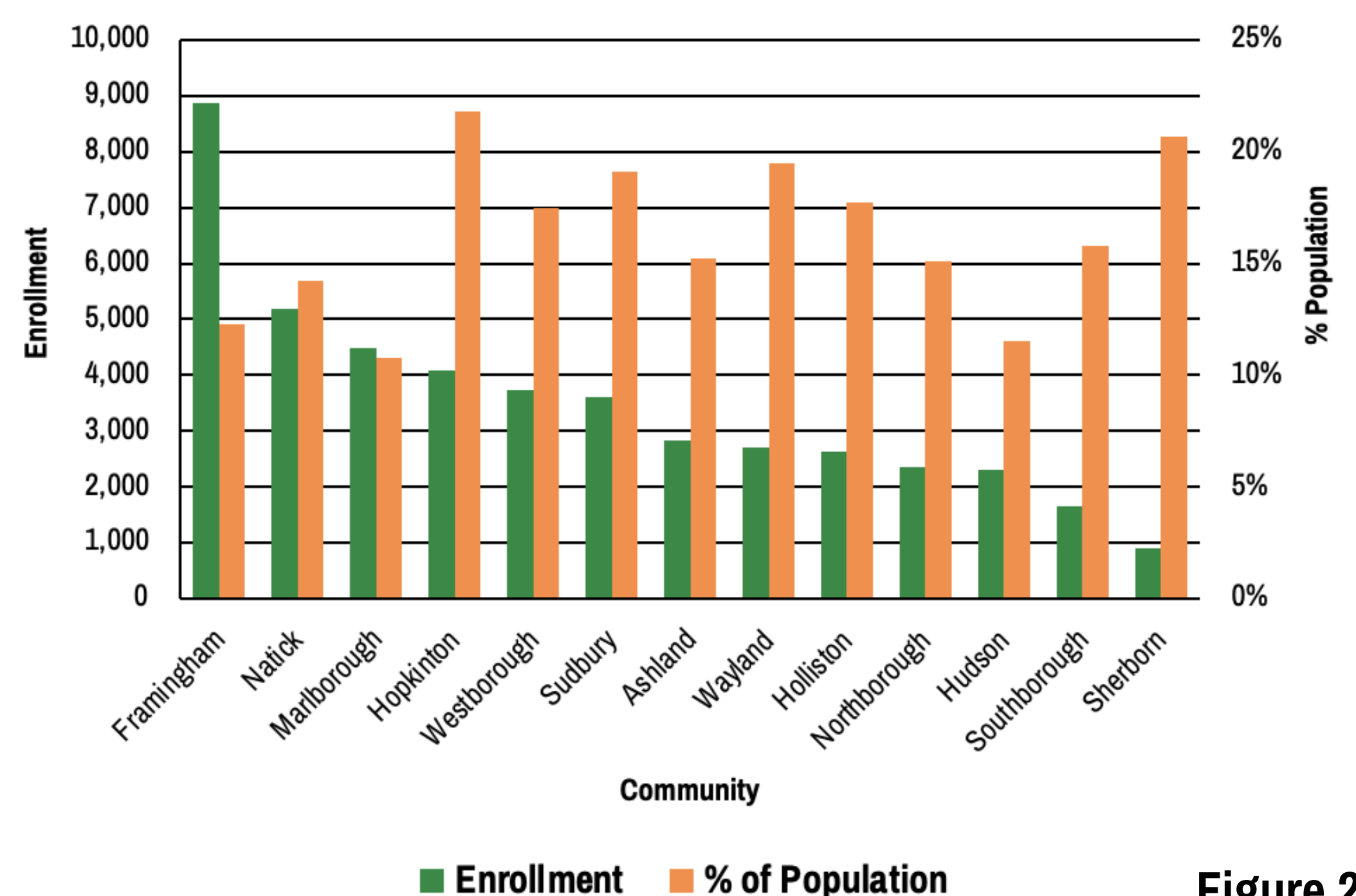


Figure 2

Coming out of the pandemic, it is interesting to look at the percent change in K-12 enrollment from 2020 to 2023. In Figure 3, only 5 of the 13 communities had an enrollment increase from 2020 to 2023. Of those, Hopkinton had the highest relative increase in total enrollment, with 5.9% change, followed by Ashland with 5.5%. Hopkinton, Ashland, as well as Framingham, all had percent changes of enrollment that were higher than that of the U.S. and Massachusetts (MA), which registered 1.9% and 0.3% increases, respectively. However, of the communities with a negative percent change, four of them had less than a -1% change. Those were: Wayland and Westborough with -0.1%, Sherborn with -0.3% and Marlborough with -0.8%. Hudson had the largest decrease in enrollment from 2020 to 2023 with -7.7%. The majority of the communities' enrollment numbers went down from 2020-2023. This could possibly be due to the other options of schooling that became more popular during the COVID-19 pandemic, like

**2020-2023 % Change in Enrollment
By GMW Communities, GMW, MA, U.S.**

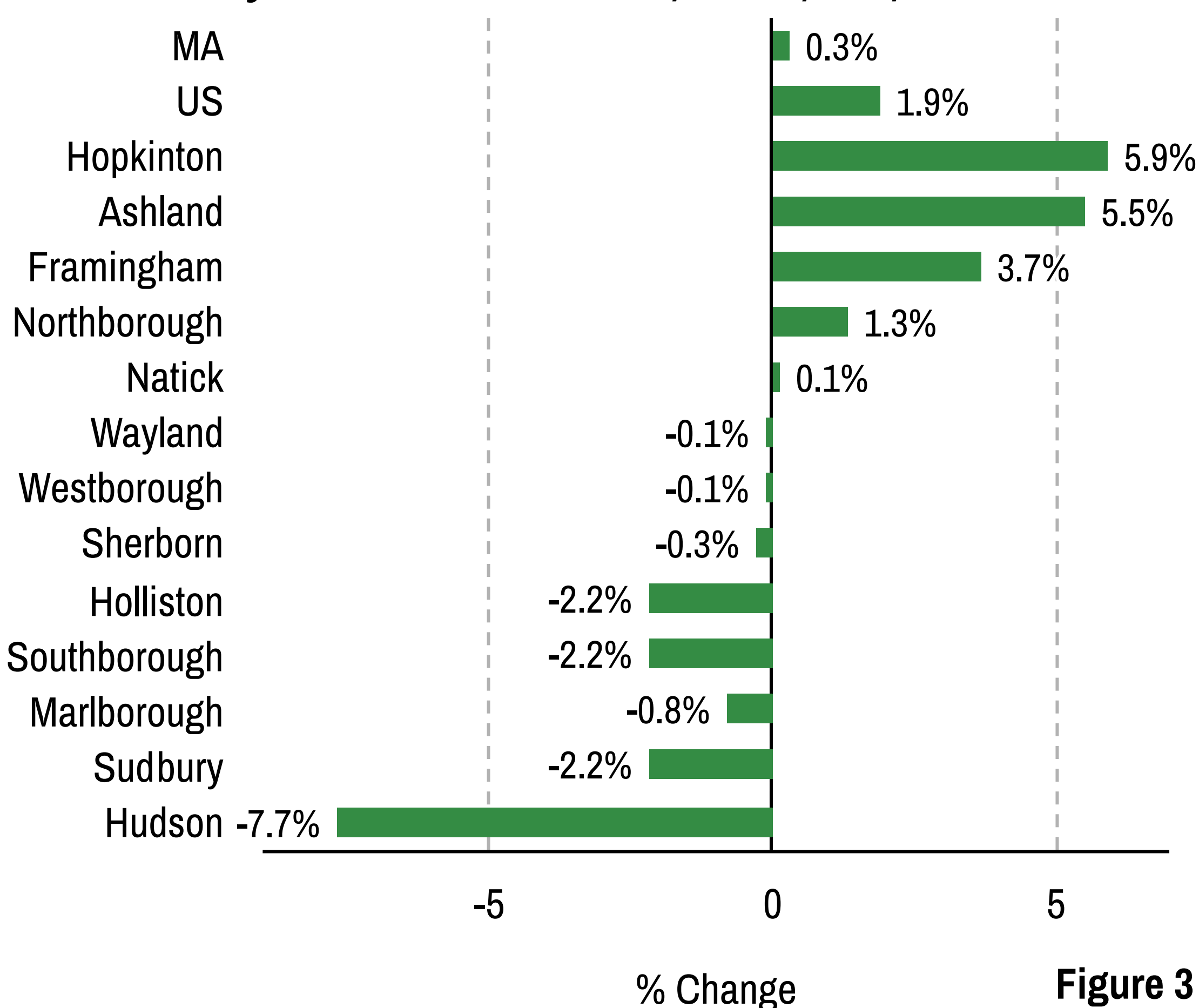


Figure 3

Selected populations such as 'first language not English' or 'students with disabilities' are important to monitor because it allows teachers to structure programs and instructions to the specific needs of the students in each particular group as a part of the whole student body. Figure 4 focuses on the percentage of total enrollment whose first language was not English. From Figure 4, Framingham and Marlborough had the top two highest percentages of students whose first language was not English, with 54.7% and 58.6%, respectively. While Sherborn (4.5%), Sudbury (11%), and Holliston (13.2%) had the lowest.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of the total enrollment who were classified as high needs. The high needs category includes people who are any of the following: low income, economically disadvantaged, English learner or former English learner, or a student with disabilities.

**GMW 2023 K-12 First Language Not English
By Community**

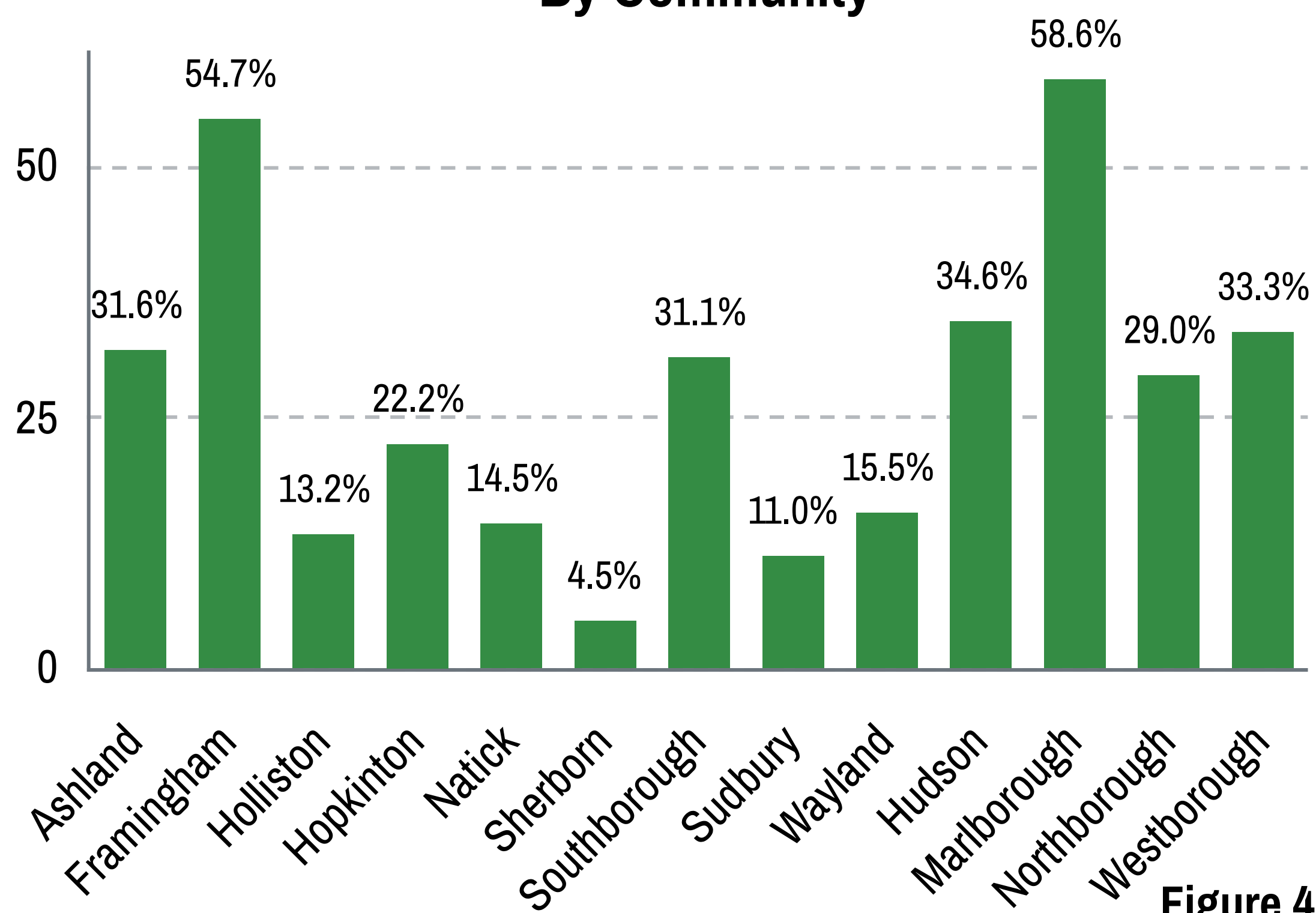


Figure 4

Figure 5 follows a similar trend to Figure 4, where Framingham and Marlborough had the highest percentages of the total enrollment who were high needs, with 70.3% and 73.8%, respectively. Sherborn had the lowest percentage with 23.5% followed by Holliston and Wayland.

**GMW 2023 K-12 % High Needs
By Community**

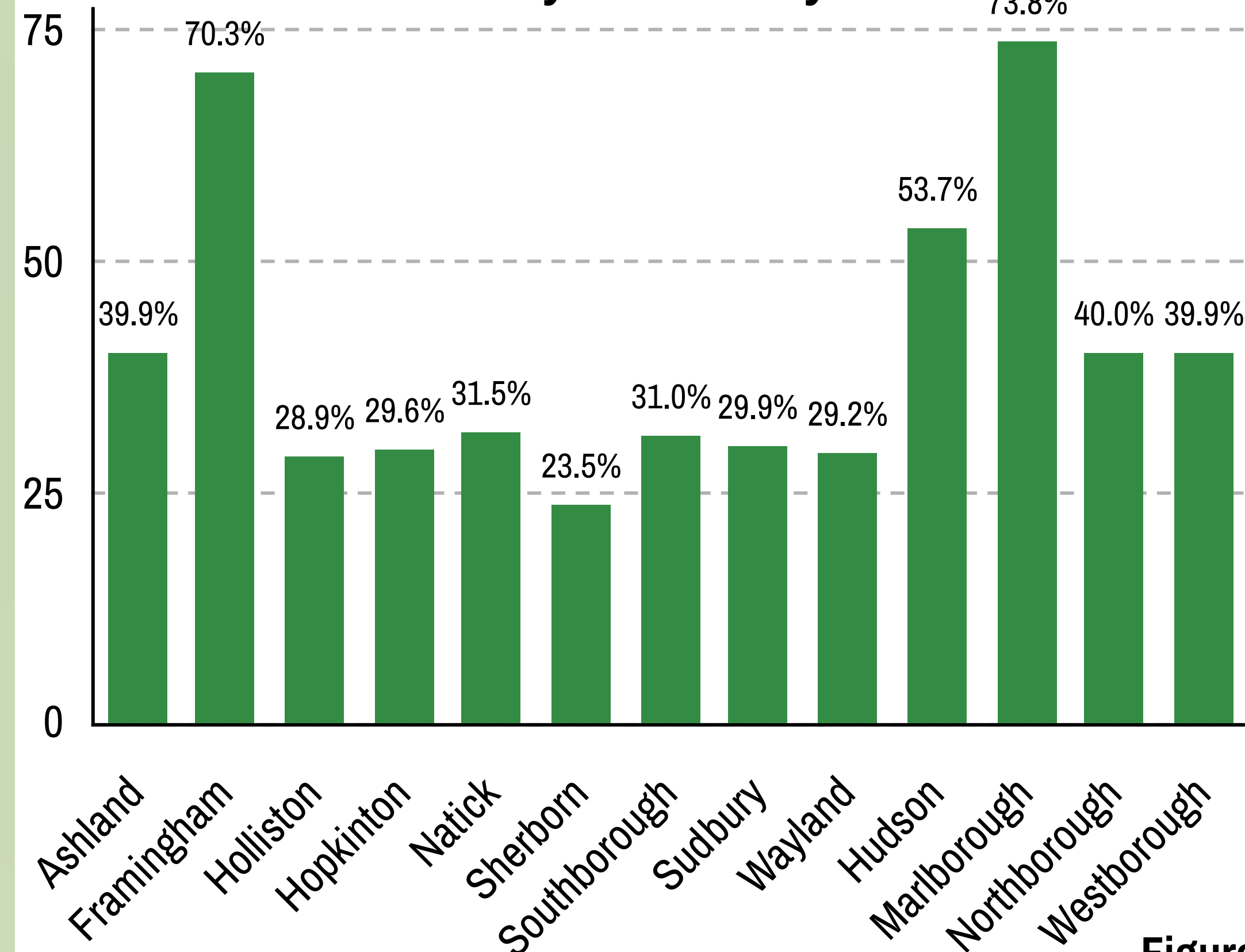


Figure 5

In summary, Framingham and Natick had the two highest total public-school enrollment of the communities, while Hopkinton had the lowest. However, when total enrollment was looked at as a percentage of the population, we see that Hopkinton had the second highest portion of the total population that were enrolled in the community's public schools, while Framingham had the third lowest percentage of student enrolled out of the total population. From 2020 to 2023, eight of the communities experienced a decrease in enrollment. When looking at particular selected populations of the total enrollment of the communities, Framingham and Marlborough follow a similar trend, both having the largest percentages of the total public-school enrollment categorized as First Language not English and High Needs.