

ECONOMIC REVIEW

K-12 Public School Enrollment: Greater MetroWest



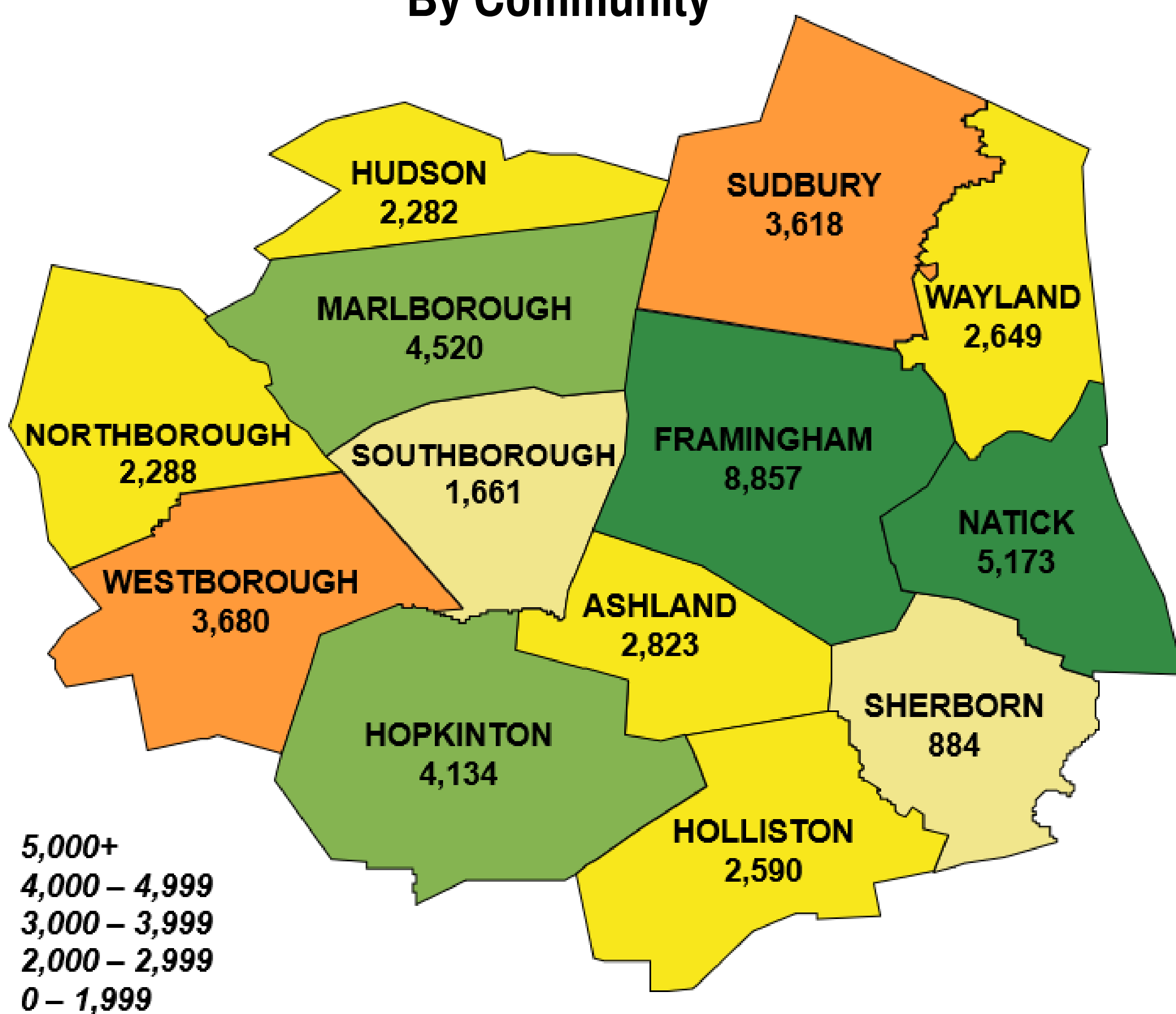
Report by:
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Major: Mathematics
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The Greater MetroWest (GMW) region includes 13 communities: Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Natick, Northborough, Sherborn, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, and Westborough. This article will focus on K-12 public school enrollment for these communities, as well as the race/ethnicity and low-income percentage of the student body by community, using data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and MERC.

Figure 1 represents the total public-school enrollment by community for the 2024-2025 school year. The total enrollment for the Greater MetroWest region was 45,159 students. Framingham had the highest total enrollment out of all communities with 8,857 students, followed by Natick, with 5,173 students. Of the 13 communities in the region, 7 communities had fewer than 3,000 students enrolled. The town with the lowest enrollment was Sherborn with 884 students, which was followed by Southborough with 1,661 students.

Figure 1: 2024-2025 GMW Public School Enrollment By Community



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Figure 2 shows how the total enrollment for each community changed from academic year 2023 to 2024, from largest percentage decrease to largest percentage increase. Massachusetts had an increase of just over 0.1% in public school enrollment, while Greater MetroWest had a decrease of about 0.4%. The greatest percentage change that occurred in the region was in Northborough, with a decrease of about 3.1% in enrollment. Hopkinton had the largest increase in enrollment of almost 1.2%. Overall, there was a trend of decreasing enrollment present in Greater MetroWest, with 9 of the 13 communities having a decrease in total enrollment from the 2023 to 2024 school year.

Figure 2: 2023-2024 Percentage Change in Enrollment By Community, GMW, MA

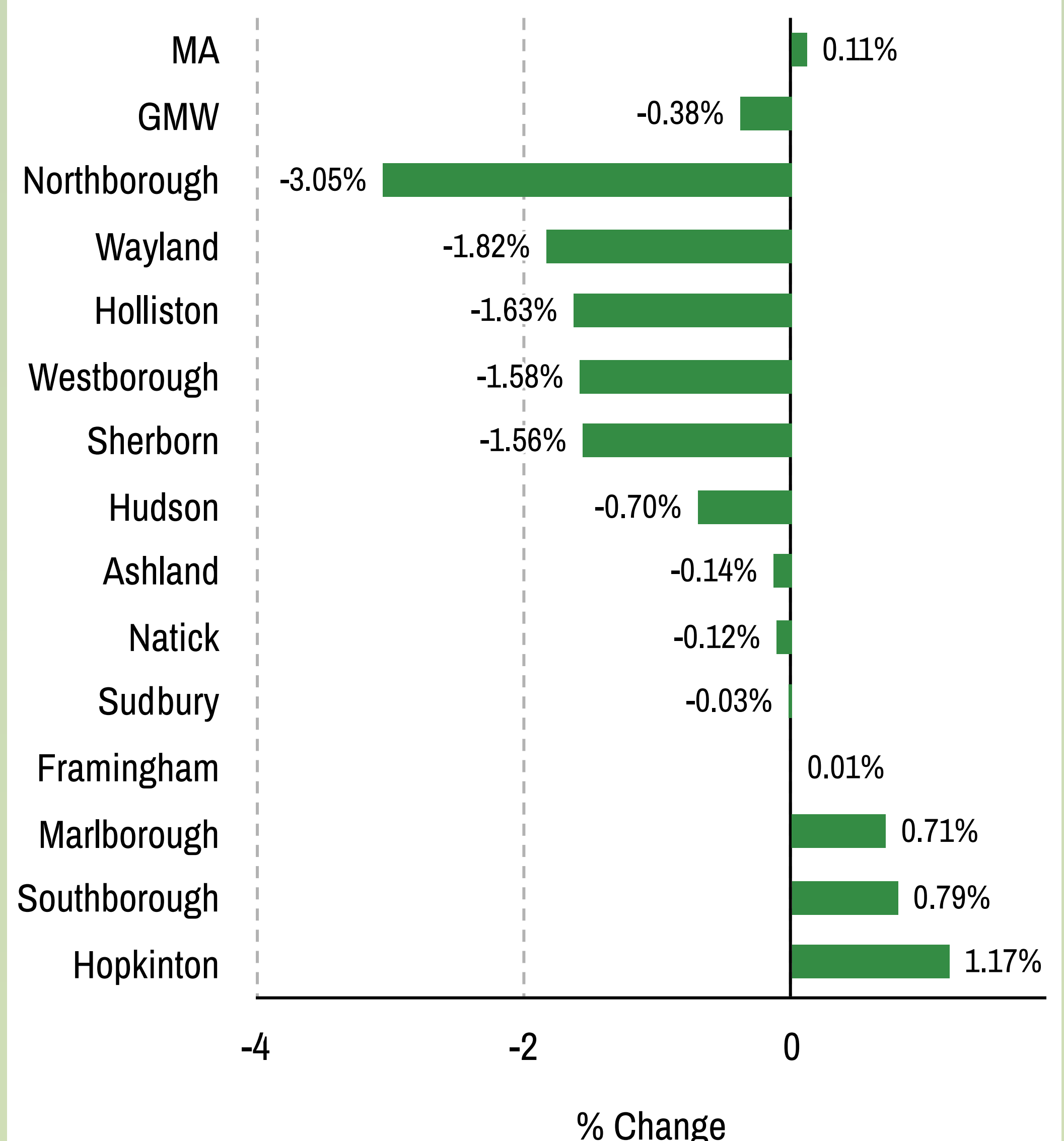


Figure 3 illustrates the number of low-income students as a percentage of each community's total enrollment. Low-income students are defined as those who participate in certain programs; such as SNAP, TAFDC, foster care, Medicaid up to 185% of the federal poverty level, or are identified by the district as homeless. The average percentage of low-income students for Greater MetroWest was 21.3% in the 2024 academic year. Only 4 of the 13 communities had a higher percentage than the region's average. The largest were Marlborough with 60.6% and Framingham with 56.2%, followed by Hudson and Ashland, with 38.9% and 22.7%, respectively. Of the other 9 communities with percentages lower than the region's average, Sherborn had the smallest with 5.3% of students classified as low-income.

Figure 3: GMW Percentage of Low Income Students By Community

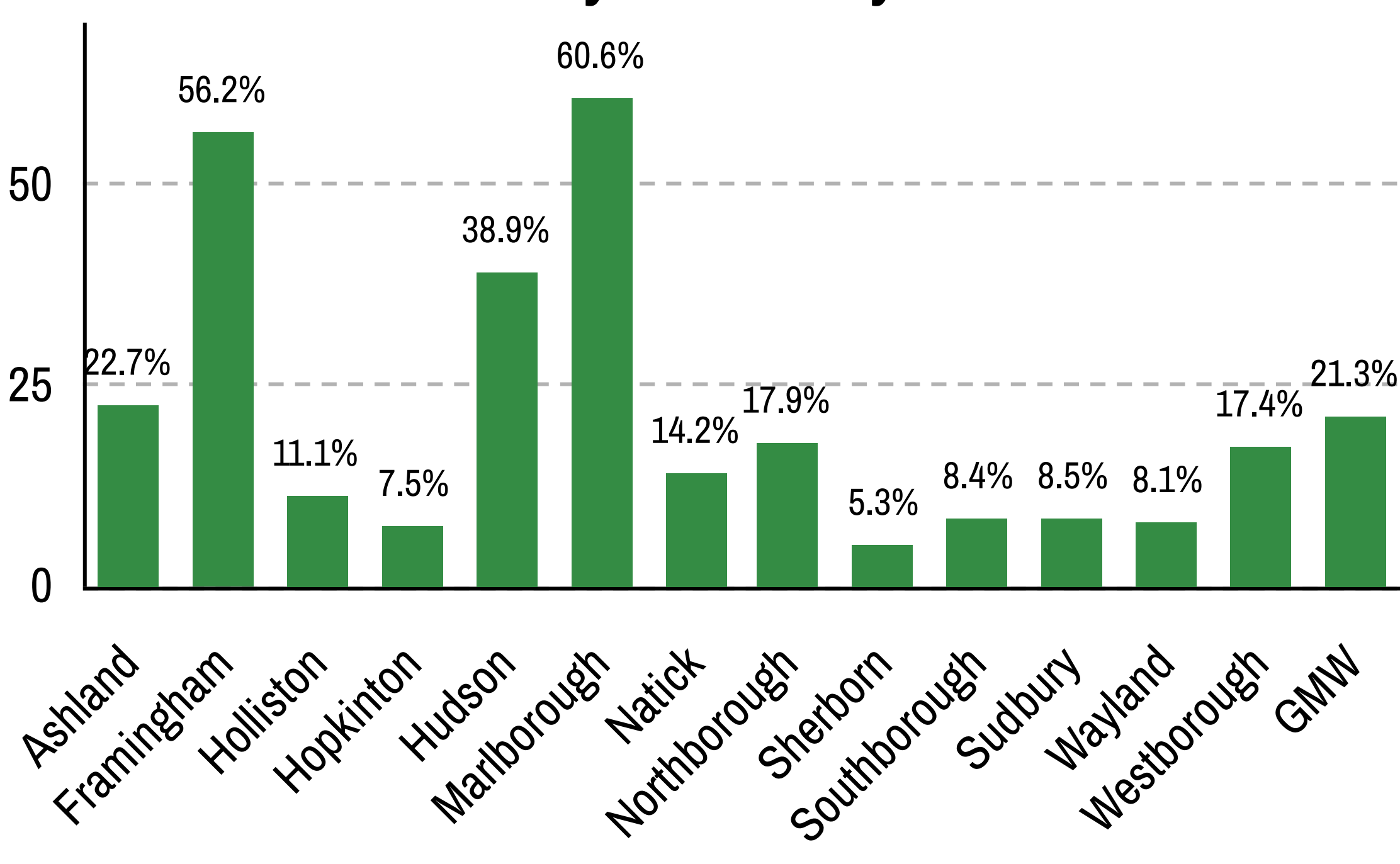


Figure 4 shows how different races/ethnicities made up public school enrollment for each community in AY2024. Overall, GMW public school enrollment was primarily comprised of White students with 53.9%, followed by Hispanic or Latino students with 23.8%, and Asian students with 13.3%, accounting for approximately 91% of the total student population. In 11 of the 13 communities, the majority of enrollment was made up of White students. In the other 2 communities, Framingham and Marlborough, the majority of students were Hispanic or Latino, with 53.2% and 58.5% of students, respectively. The communities with the greatest percentage of Asian students were Hopkinton with 31.7%, and Westborough with 34.5%.

Figure 4: AY2024 GMW Race & Ethnicity of Students By GMW Community

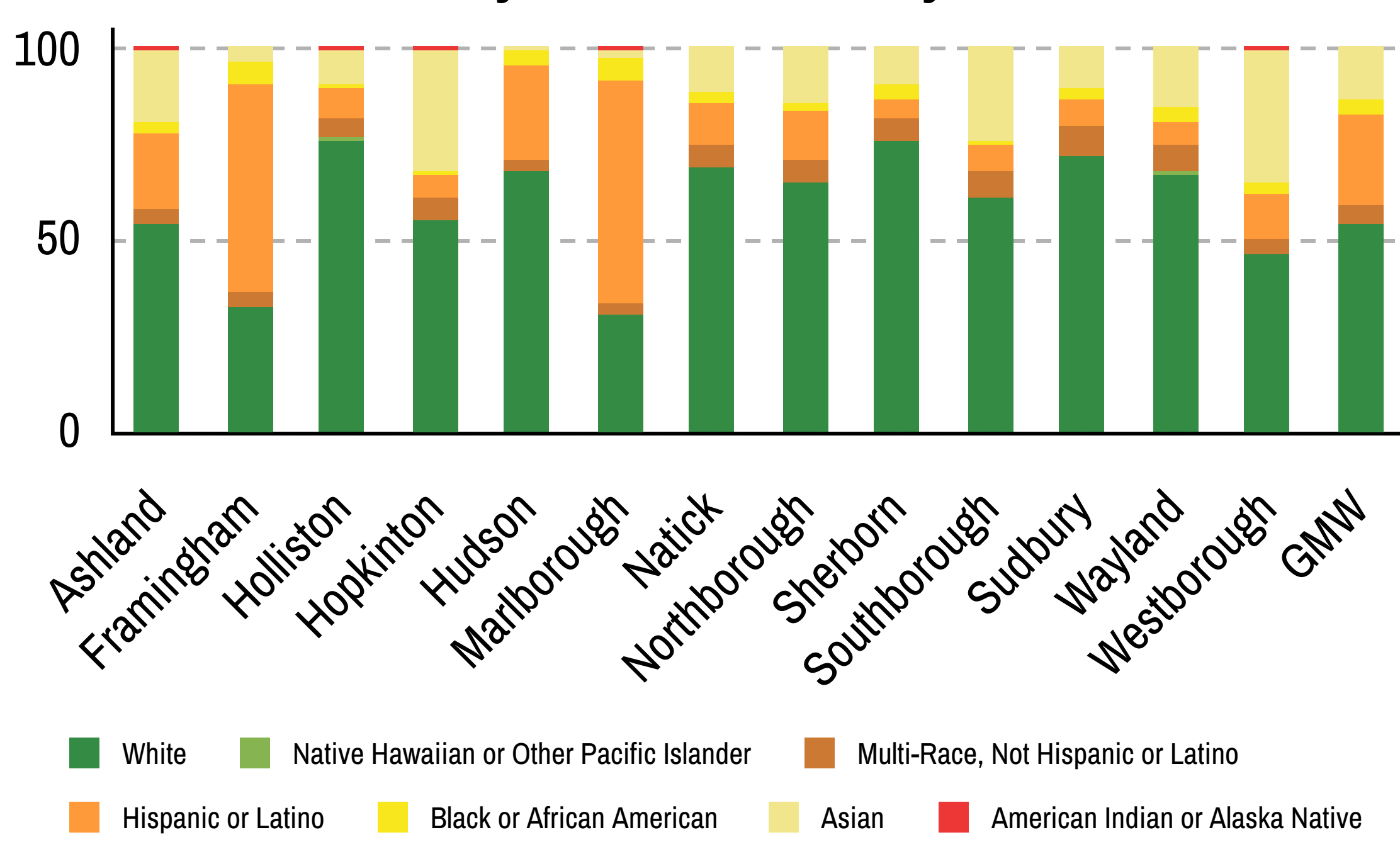


Figure 5 looks at kindergarten, grade 12, and total enrollment from AY 2014 to AY 2024 in the Greater MetroWest region. The values for kindergarten (green line) and grade 12 (orange line) are shown on the left axis, and the values for total enrollment of the region (gray bars) are shown on the right axis. The trend for kindergarten enrollment helps show how many new students are entering the public-school system each year.

The highest total enrollment of 46,108 students occurred in the 2019 academic year, along with the highest kindergarten enrollment of 3,477 students. Between the 2019 and 2020 academic years, there was a decrease of 1,097 students in total enrollment. There was also a significant decrease of 353 students in kindergarten enrollment, which could be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic and how parents were choosing to keep their children home for an extra year before enrolling them in public school. Also, between the 2019 and 2020 academic years, there was an increase of 163 students enrolled in grade 12.

Figure 5: AY2014-AY2024 GMW Enrollment Kindergarten, Grade 12, Total

