

SMART GROWTH AND EDUCATION

*How Connecticut's current development is hurting every community . . .
and why smarter growth may be the answer.*

created by

THE **CENTEREDGE** PROJECT

This fact sheet is a brief summary of a translation paper on smart growth, part of a series produced by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. The full papers can be found on the Funders' Network website, www.fundersnetwork.org

School Sprawl: The Problem

- **Across the U.S., the average size of public schools is increasing.** Schools constructed today are often designed to serve more students, and require larger facilities.
- Because **these schools require larger lots**, they usually cannot be built in the more central, developed sections of towns or neighborhoods.
- **Instead, new schools are often located on the edge of a community**, creating a need for new roads and other infrastructure.
- This encourages the construction of new houses around the school, and the resulting pattern of rapid development can lead to **the elimination of valued open space.**

The Impact on Our Children

- When schools are less centrally located, **fewer children can walk to school safely.** This eliminates an opportunity for children to exercise, and places increased responsibilities on parents.
- In addition, **students' academic performance may suffer** when they attend larger schools, due to fewer opportunities for close teacher-student relationships.

- **Students attending smaller schools are more likely to graduate** and perform better on standardized tests than students attending larger schools.

The Impact on Our Communities

- **Larger schools are often more isolated** from the community, because their size makes a central location impossible.
- On the other hand, if children attend smaller schools with strong roots in a particular neighborhood, **parents can more easily become involved** in their children's education.
- When schools are located in an accessible neighborhood, they can more easily support a range of community activities, and **become a resource for the entire community to enjoy**.

An Opportunity for Positive Change

- Smaller schools represent a family- and community-friendly education strategy that can lead to **better schools, revitalized neighborhoods and stronger communities**.

For more information about smart growth, how it affects your community and what you can do, contact the CenterEdge Project.

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