Welcome to the first issue in 2013 of our quarterly newsletter, which aims to inform and educate school administrators on the process of performing enrollment projections and other topics related to school demography.

Every so often, I receive a question from a concerned school administrator regarding a new housing development being built and its potential impact on enrollment. It usually sounds like this:

"We have a development of (fill in the number) single-family homes being built and want to know how many students will attend the school district."

You might think there should be a really simple answer to this question, but there is not.

The first resource used to solve this problem is *Who Lives in New Jersey Housing*, published by the Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research. It provides student yields (number of children per housing unit), based on the following variables:

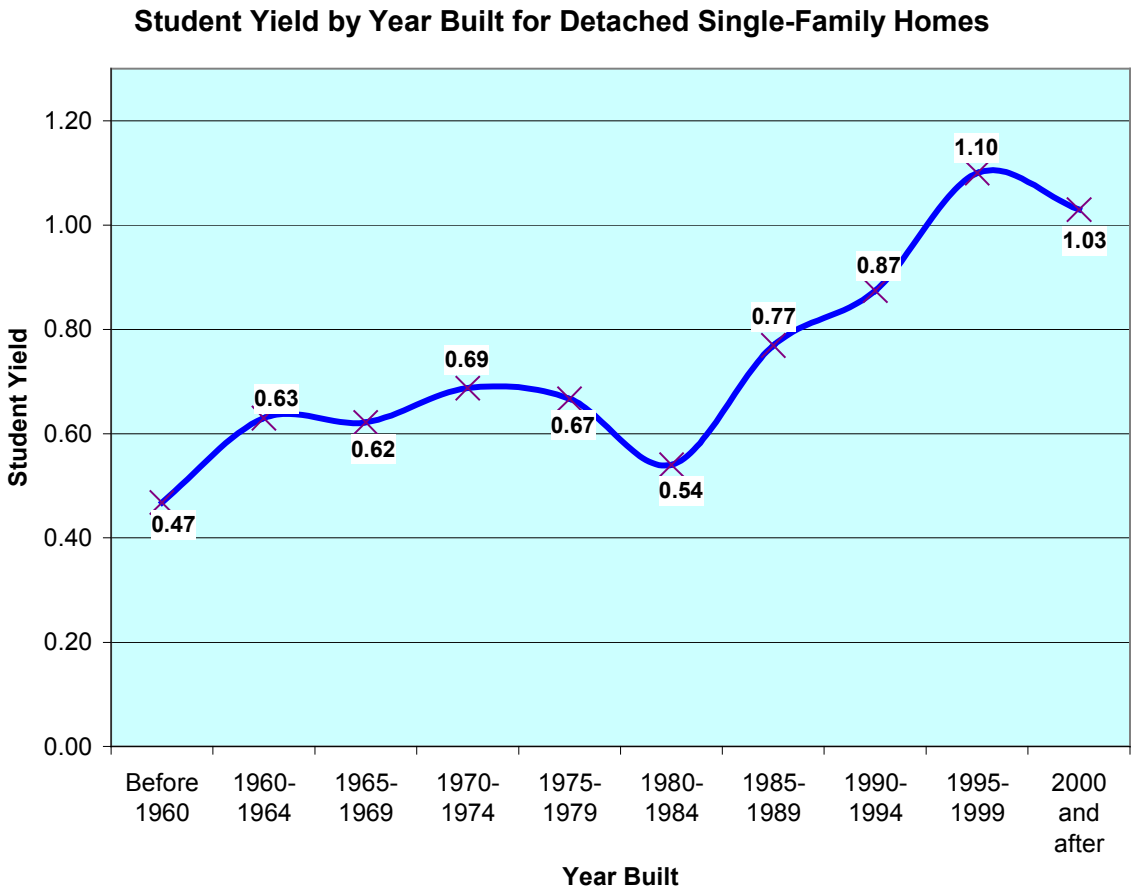
- housing type
- number of bedrooms
- housing value
- housing tenure (owned vs. rented)
- market-rate or affordable units
- geographic location

The problem with this resource is that these are *average* student yields and may not reflect a specific community.

Is there anything else that can be done? Fortunately, the answer is yes, but it can be quite time consuming. The first thing that is needed is an up-to-date database of all the student addresses. Next, a list of developments with the associated street names is needed, along with the number of homes in each development. Then, using the student address database, student yields can be created for each street, and subsequently each development.

What we have found out is that student yields are a moving target; that is, they change over time. As developments get older, homes typically have fewer children. New developments typically have the most children per housing unit.

The figure below shows student yields by year built for detached single-family homes for a township in New Jersey in a recently completed demographic study. Notice the student yields are above 1.00 for recently built homes, but are below 0.50 for homes built prior to 1960.



So to answer the question, a demographer can use the higher yield to project the initial number of students, but explain that the yield will decrease over time, lessening the impact on the district.

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