

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

Although the housing market has cooled off considerably from a decade ago, some communities in the state are starting to see a rebound in new housing construction. Monroe Township in Middlesex County led the state in 2014 with 481 COs (certificates of occupancy). Others in the top 10 include “Gold Coast” towns such as West New York and Hoboken.

What are the effects on the local school districts after these homes are built? How many children will come from each housing unit, which is otherwise known as “student yields?” For school administrators, this is a very important question that can have far-reaching impacts on the services they provide.

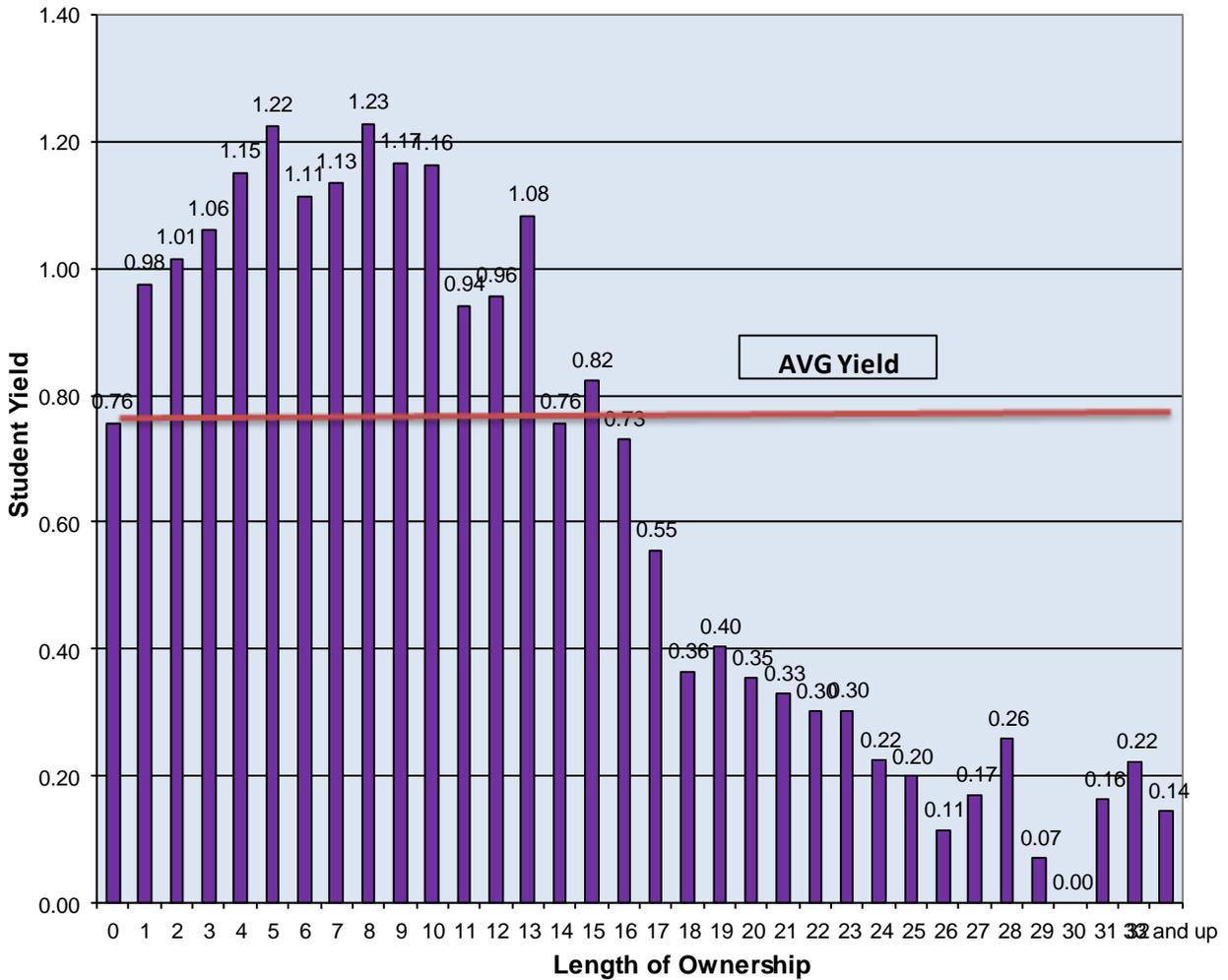
Some demographers in the state use *Who Lives in New Jersey Housing?*, published by the Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research. It is essentially a handbook of student yield values based on housing type, number of bedrooms, housing value, and location within the state.

However, since this data is aggregated by region (north, central, south), characteristics that are unique to a community are lost. For instance, homes in the Gold Coast may have fewer children, as they may be occupied by young professionals, resulting in smaller yields than published in the handbook.

Another drawback of the Rutgers handbook is that the student yields will include homes owned by all age segments of the population, such as empty-nesters and senior citizens, lowering the overall student yield. If a district uses these yields, they are likely to underestimate the future number of children. Often, in high-performing, desirable school districts, new homes are not purchased by a representative cross-section of the population. Instead, they are purchased by families from surrounding communities with either school-age children or children under the age of five, in an effort to enroll their children in the district.

To provide better student yield approximations for my clients, I have begun joining community property data, with sales dates to compute length of ownership, and the school district’s student database. The figure below shows student yields by length of ownership for detached single-family homes for an affluent community in New Jersey.

Student Yields by Length of Ownership Single-Family Homes



From my research, homes with low lengths of ownership have the most children, while long-held homes do not have many children as they are likely to have graduated from the school district. If length of ownership is not considered, the average student yield from the figure above is 0.76 children per home. However, what the figure shows is that homes with low lengths of ownership (1-10 years) have yields that exceed 1.00 children per home. The higher yield is more likely the value that can be expected when a family buys a new home, which helps to prevent underestimating future schoolchildren.

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Statistical Forecasting LLC is an educational consulting firm specializing in school demography based in Secaucus, NJ. If you have any comments or questions, feel free to email or call us toll-free at 1-877-299-6412.

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