



Ten Fundamental Principles of Smart School Siting

For School Districts and Local Governments

1. **Collaborative Planning:** Work toward meaningful coordinated planning with [local government/s], with the goal of sharing data, addressing joint needs regarding school locations, ensuring due consideration of environment impact and other siting factors, and encouraging residential and mixed-income residential development near school sites.
2. **Long-Term Data-Driven Planning:** Engage in long-term planning, based on data including projected student enrollment, demographics, residential density of children, anticipated development, and student transportation costs. Provide a substantial role for public input.
3. **Account for All Costs:** Consider all costs and benefits of different options, not only the cost of construction and land acquisition, but also the cost of required street and utility infrastructure, transportation to the site, and disposal of closed facilities; assess costs and benefits not only for the school district, but also for students, families, staff, local jurisdictions, and the community.
4. **Co-Location and Shared Use:** Consider making it feasible for students and the larger community to share resources (e.g., libraries, gymnasiums, parks, fields) by locating facilities near to each other and, where desired, through joint use agreements detailing use and responsibility will be shared.
5. **Preference for Renovation:** Consider renovating existing facilities before building new, especially where historic facilities are in question.
6. **Diverse, Walkable Schools through School Siting and Assignment Policies:** Work toward schools that allow students and staff to walk and bicycle, and serve a student body that represents the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the community's students and families. Ensure that both school location and also student attendance zones/assignment policies support walkability and diversity.
7. **Equity in School Facilities:** In weighing determinations about school construction, closures, and rehabilitation, consider equity of school facilities to avoid providing some students with a learning environment that is inferior to that provided to others.
8. **Health Impacts:** Take all health impacts of proposed sites into account (through a health impact assessment or another methodical analysis of health impacts), including the location's supportiveness and safety for physical activity; air pollution and asthma levels; past or present toxic contamination of site or nearby areas; and nearby sources of pollution or toxic contaminants, such as highways, industrial facilities, or pesticide applications.
9. **Safe Routes to School:** Support Safe Routes to School¹ programs to maximize opportunities for walking and biking to school.
10. **Safe Infrastructure for Walking, Bicycling, and Public Transportation in School Vicinity:** Improve the safety and convenience of travel by foot, bike, and public transportation near schools and on school property by providing safe infrastructure.

¹ For more information about safe routes to school programs, see websites for the National Center for Safe Routes to School (www.saferoutesinfo.org) and Safe Routes to School National Partnership (www.saferoutespartnership.org).