



# *Effects of Overpopulation: Education*

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*"We are honored and trusted with the responsibility of ensuring our next generation is equipped to participate in the American Dream."*

*— U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings*

## **Overcrowded Schools**

National Center for Education Statistics reports:

- Dramatic increases in enrollment due to the "baby-boom echo," immigration, and migration have led many schools to enroll far more students than they were designed to accommodate.
- Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools rose 22 percent between 1985 and 2005. The fastest public school growth occurred in the elementary grades (prekindergarten through grade 8), where enrollment rose 24 percent over this period, from 27.0 million to 33.5 million. Public secondary school enrollment declined 8 percent from 1985 to 1990, but then rose 31 percent from 1990 to 2005, for a net increase of 20 percent.

The article *The Crisis, Overcrowding in California School: An Epidemic that is Getting Worse* by Just Schools California – UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access reported:

- 1 of 3 California students attends an overcrowded school.
- California has more students per class than any state except Utah.
- Overcrowded California schools enroll up to 5 times the number of students they were built to serve. 4200 students attend South Gate Middle School in Los Angeles—a school designed for 800.
- Most students in overcrowded schools are Latino and still learning English; most overcrowded schools are in poor neighborhoods.
- By 2009, California will need schools for 1 million more students.

According to The Federation for American Immigration Reform's (FAIR) article, *Immigration and School Overcrowding*:

- The U.S. school-aged population has reached an all-time high of 55 million. Between 1990 and 2000, enrollment increased by 14 percent. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the size of the student body will almost double by 2100. Yet without school-age immigrants (about 250,000 a year) and the children of immigrants (about 725,000 a year), school enrollment would not be rising at all.

FAIR's publication *No Room To Learn: Immigration and School Overcrowding* stated:

- About 14 percent of schools exceed their capacity by six to 25 percent, and eight percent exceed it by more than 25 percent. To alleviate overcrowding, more than one-third of schools use portable classrooms, and one-fifth hold classes in temporary instructional space, such as cafeterias and gyms.
- Where is the growth in the school-aged population coming from? U.S. Census Bureau figures show that immigration has been responsible for almost 70 percent of population growth in the last decade; immigrants arriving since 1994 and their descendants will account for two-thirds of future population growth.

The National School Boards Association website cites:

- A report released March 20 by the Virginia-based Center for Health, Environment, and Justice says many school districts across the nation are building schools on unsafe land, which could pose health risks to students and staff. The report calls for stricter federal and state guidelines to prevent schools from being built on polluted land or near industrial sites.
- One example cited by the group is the Belmont Learning Center in Los Angeles, which was being built on a former oil field and industrial site. The school district decided last year not to complete the school after spending more than \$125 million on the project.
- Another example is River Valley High School in Marion, Ohio, which was built on the site of an Army depot which had been used as a dump for solvents and automotive lubricants. There have been high rates of leukemia among the school's alumni.

## Costs

The National Center for Education Statistics reports:

- In the 2003-04 school year, English language learner (ELL) services were provided to 3.8 million students. California and Texas had the largest reported number of students receiving ELL services. In California, there were 1.6 million students who received ELL services; and in Texas, there were 0.7 million students who received ELL services.

A report by the Office of the Utah Legislative Auditor General found:

- For fiscal year 2006, we estimate that between \$54.9 million and \$85.4 million of state and local expenditures went toward the public education of undocumented children. This estimated expenditure range excludes federal funding.

According to FAIR's article, *Immigration and School Overcrowding*:

- The growth in federal grants for special language programs has more than doubled, from \$157 million in 1995 to \$460 million in 2002.
- Rather than being used to improve the quality of education for current students, communities' limited tax dollars are instead being diverted to build new schools to accommodate population growth and to meet the special needs of immigrant children. Including special programs such as bilingual education, which can cost nearly 50 percent more than regular schooling, immigration costs the taxpayers over \$24 billion a year in education costs.

FAIR estimates the total combined costs for state & local governments to educate illegal aliens is \$7,390,703,257. ("Note that these costs are based only on average per-pupil costs and do not account for the substantial additional costs of providing English as a second language/bilingual education/Limited English Proficient programs.")

From the National Center for Education Statistics:

- Number and percentage of public elementary and secondary students served in English Language Learner (ELL) Programs in 14 of the largest districts in the United States, by school district, school year 2001–02

Name of reporting district	State	Number of Students Served in ELL Programs	Percentage of Students Served in ELL Programs
Santa Ana Unified	CA	39,934	64.5
Garden Grove Unified	CA	24,847	49.9
Los Angeles Unified	CA	307,594	41.8
Oakland Unified	CA	19,362	36.2
Dallas Independent School District	TX	54,224	33.2
Long Beach Unified	CA	31,697	32.9
San Francisco Unified	CA	18,037	30.8
Fresno Unified	CA	24,491	30.2
El Paso Independent School District	TX	18,789	29.9
Sacramento City Unified	CA	15,389	28.8
Houston Independent School District	TX	59,904	28.4
San Diego City Unified	CA	38,867	27.4
Fort Worth Independent School District	TX	20,730	25.7
Denver County	CO	18,336	25.3

According to *Growth Spurt: 30th Annual Official Education Construction Report*, American School and University:

- The amount of construction put in place in 2003 by the nation's education institutions reached an all-time high, even as spending in other areas was curtailed significantly. According to *American School & University's* 30th annual Official Education Construction Report, school districts and colleges spent \$48.1 billion on construction in 2003. The amount represents an almost 20 percent increase in spending compared with 2002. And there is little sign that the robust spending on construction will slow anytime soon, as almost \$150 billion is projected to be spent over the next three years.
- School districts reversed a year-earlier slowdown by putting in place \$28.6 billion worth of construction, an 18 percent increase over 2002. New construction accounted for 61 percent of the dollars spent as districts continue to scramble to provide space for the influx of students.

Negative Population Growth – NPG – is a national membership organization founded in 1972 to educate the American public and political leaders about the detrimental effects of overpopulation on our environment, resources and quality of life. NPG advocates a smaller and truly sustainable United States population accomplished through voluntary incentives for smaller families and reduced immigration levels.

We are pleased to provide to you this fact sheet as part of our *Effects of Overpopulation* educational series. We sincerely hope you will use this information in your classroom in order to educate your students regarding the detrimental effects of an overpopulated nation. We also welcome your feedback on how to make this series more effective in reaching today's youth.