

One Public School Child for Every Three Homes

Special Studies May 1, 2020

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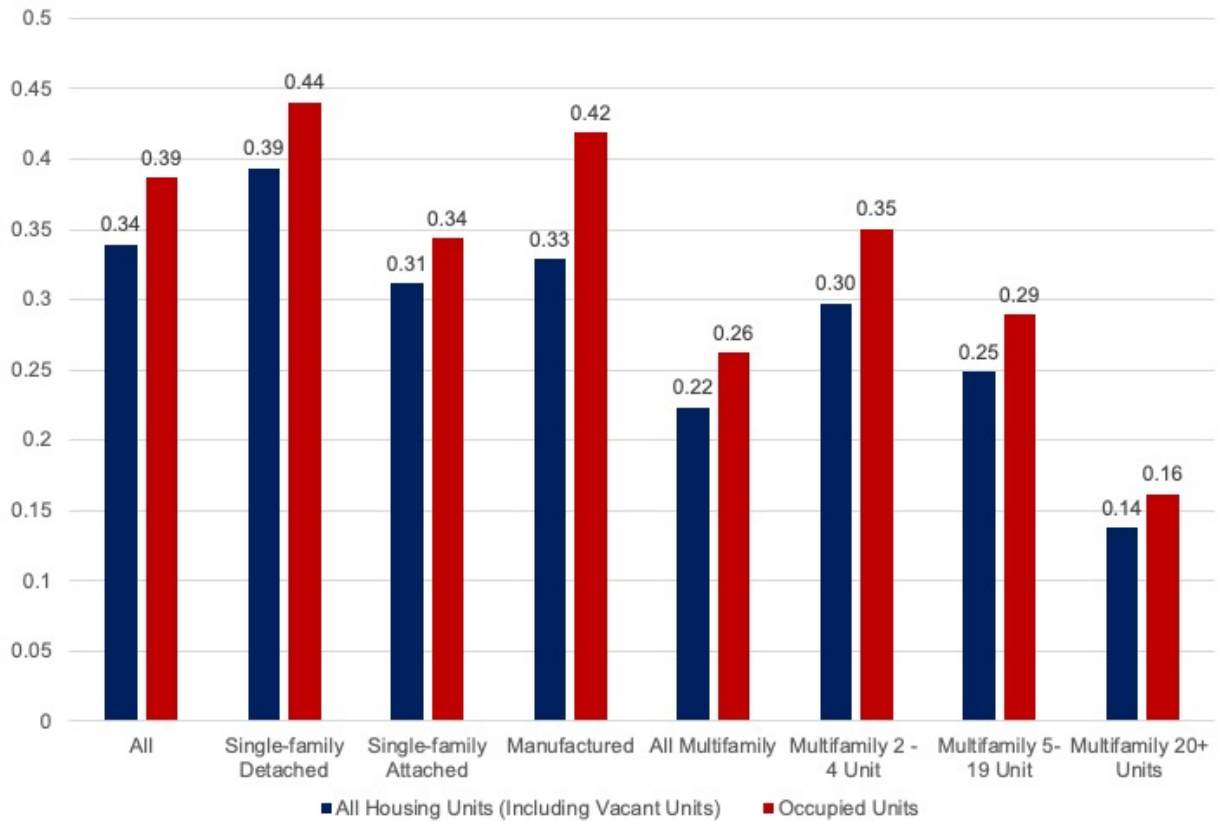
NAHB Economics and Housing Policy Group

Public education accounts for almost 40% of local government direct expenditures per housing unit, based on [data](#) from the Census of Government. School impact fees on new construction are typically determined in part by assumptions about the number of children in public schools per housing unit. The most recent 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) data show that, on average, there is approximately one public school child for every three housing units in the U.S. This special study looks at these data in more detail, showing the number of public school children in different types of homes, with separate statistics for recent movers and new construction, and a complete set of results for each state.

Under One Public School Child for all Structure Types

The 2018 ACS data indicate that there is far less than one school age child attending public school per housing unit, on average. The average across all housing units in the U.S. (including both occupied and vacant ones) is 0.34 per housing unit. That is a little over one public school child for every three homes. Among all structure types, single-family detached housing has the highest average number per unit (0.39), followed by manufactured housing (0.33), single-family attached (0.31), and multifamily (0.22). Larger multifamily properties have fewer public school children per unit. This number is only 0.14 per unit for multifamily buildings with 20 or more units, compared to 0.25 per unit for buildings with 5-19 units, and 0.30 for 2 - 4 unit buildings (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Number of Public School Children
By Structure Type**



If vacant units are excluded, the average number of public school children per occupied unit will be slightly higher by definition: 0.39 across all structure types. The averages are 0.44 public school child per occupied unit for single-family detached, 0.34 per occupied unit for single-family attached, 0.42 for manufactured housing and 0.26 for multifamily (Table 1).

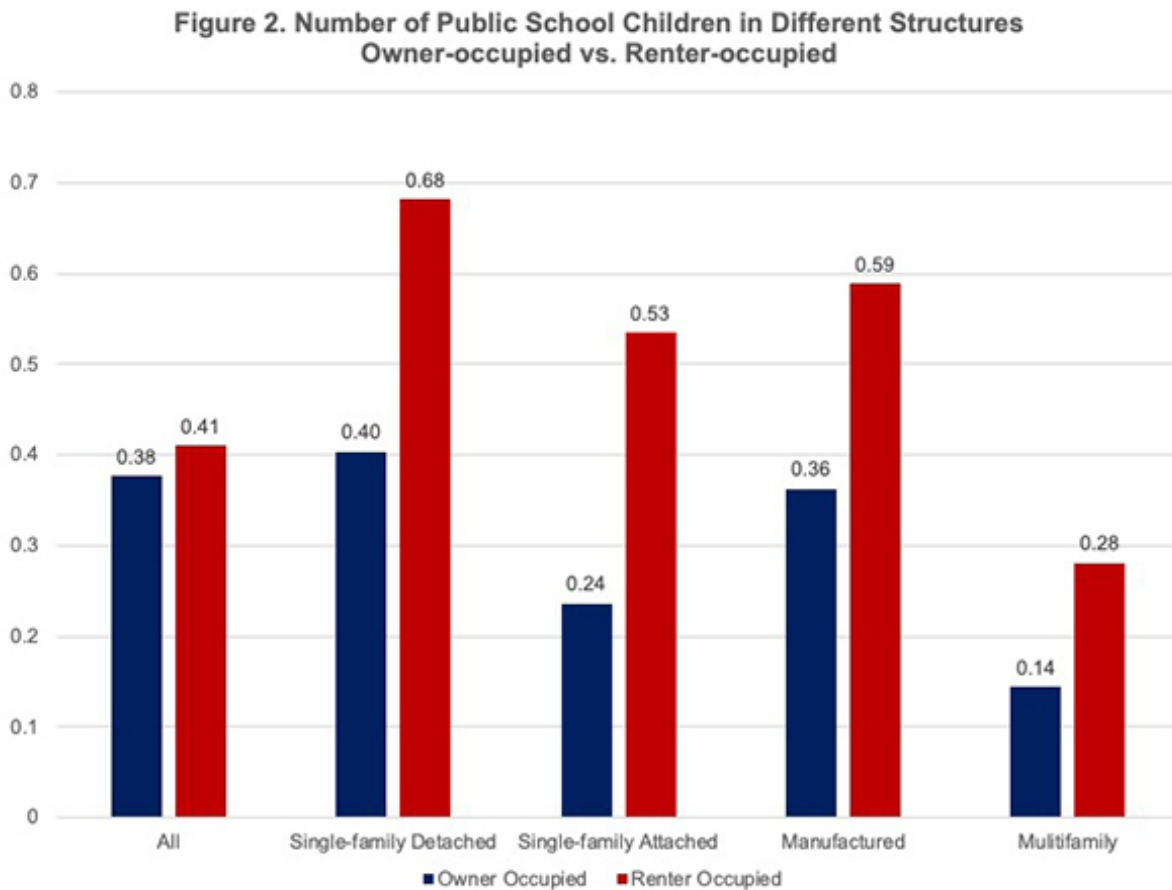
**Table 1. Average Number of Public School Children per Housing Unit
By Structure Type**

	All	Single-family Detached	Single-family Attached	Manufactured
All Housing Units	0.34	0.39	0.31	0.33
New Construction	0.32	0.43	0.21	0.34
Existing Homes	0.34	0.39	0.31	0.33
All Occupied Units	0.39	0.44	0.34	0.42
Recent Movers	0.35	0.50	0.37	0.44
Into New construction	0.37	0.51	0.24	0.35
Into Existing Homes	0.35	0.50	0.38	0.44
Non-movers	0.39	0.44	0.34	0.42
Owner Occupied Units	0.38	0.40	0.24	0.36
Recent Movers	0.39	0.44	0.21	0.32
Into New construction	0.45	0.50	0.22	0.33
Into Existing Homes	0.38	0.43	0.21	0.32
Non-movers	0.38	0.40	0.24	0.37
Renter Occupied Units	0.41	0.68	0.53	0.59
Recent Movers	0.33	0.61	0.47	0.55
Into New construction	0.22	0.54	0.28	0.34
Into Existing Homes	0.33	0.61	0.47	0.55
Non-movers	0.44	0.70	0.56	0.60
	All Multifamily	2-4 Unit Multifamily	5 - 19 Unit Multifamily	20+ Unit Multifamily
All Housing Units	0.22	0.30	0.25	0.14
New Construction	0.12	0.25	0.17	0.06
Existing Homes	0.22	0.30	0.25	0.14
All Occupied Units	0.26	0.35	0.29	0.16
Recent Movers	0.21	0.30	0.23	0.12
Into New construction	0.15	0.33	0.21	0.09
Into Existing Homes	0.21	0.30	0.23	0.12
Non-movers	0.28	0.36	0.31	0.18
Owner Occupied Units	0.14	0.24	0.11	0.07
Recent Movers	0.11	0.21	0.09	0.04
Into New construction	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.02
Into Existing Homes	0.11	0.22	0.09	0.04
Non-movers	0.15	0.24	0.11	0.07
Renter Occupied Units	0.28	0.38	0.31	0.18
Recent Movers	0.21	0.31	0.24	0.12
Into New construction	0.15	0.37	0.22	0.09
Into Existing Homes	0.21	0.31	0.24	0.12
Non-movers	0.30	0.40	0.34	0.20

Owner-occupied Units Have Fewer Public School Children

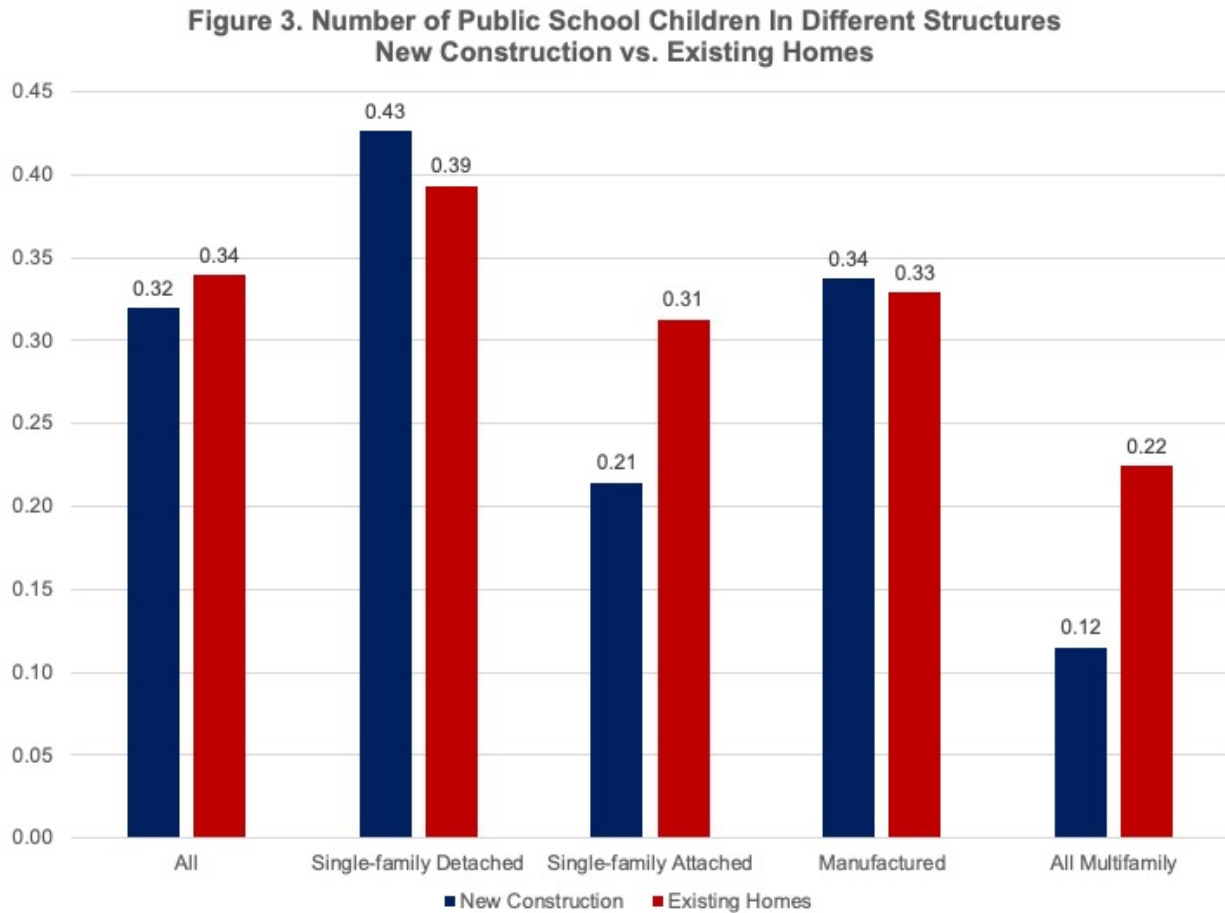
The 2018 ACS data show that owner-occupied units have fewer public school children than renter-occupied units for all structure types. Figure 2 shows that, on average, there is 0.38 public school children per owner-occupied unit and 0.41 per renter-occupied unit.

The difference between the average number of public school children in owner-occupied and renter-occupied units is larger for single-family, including both detached and attached units¹, than for multifamily. There is 0.40 public school children per owner-occupied single-family detached unit, compared to 0.68 per renter-occupied one. For multifamily, there is only 0.14 public school children per owner-occupied unit, compared to 0.28 per renter-occupied unit.



New Construction Has Fewer Public School Children

In general, new homes (built in 2017 or 2018), have slightly fewer children attending public schools than existing homes, built before 2017 (Figure 3). Only 0.32 public school children per new construction, compared to 0.34 per existing home. Among all new construction, single-family detached homes have the largest average number per unit (0.43), followed by manufactured housing (0.34), single-family attached (0.21), and multifamily (0.12).

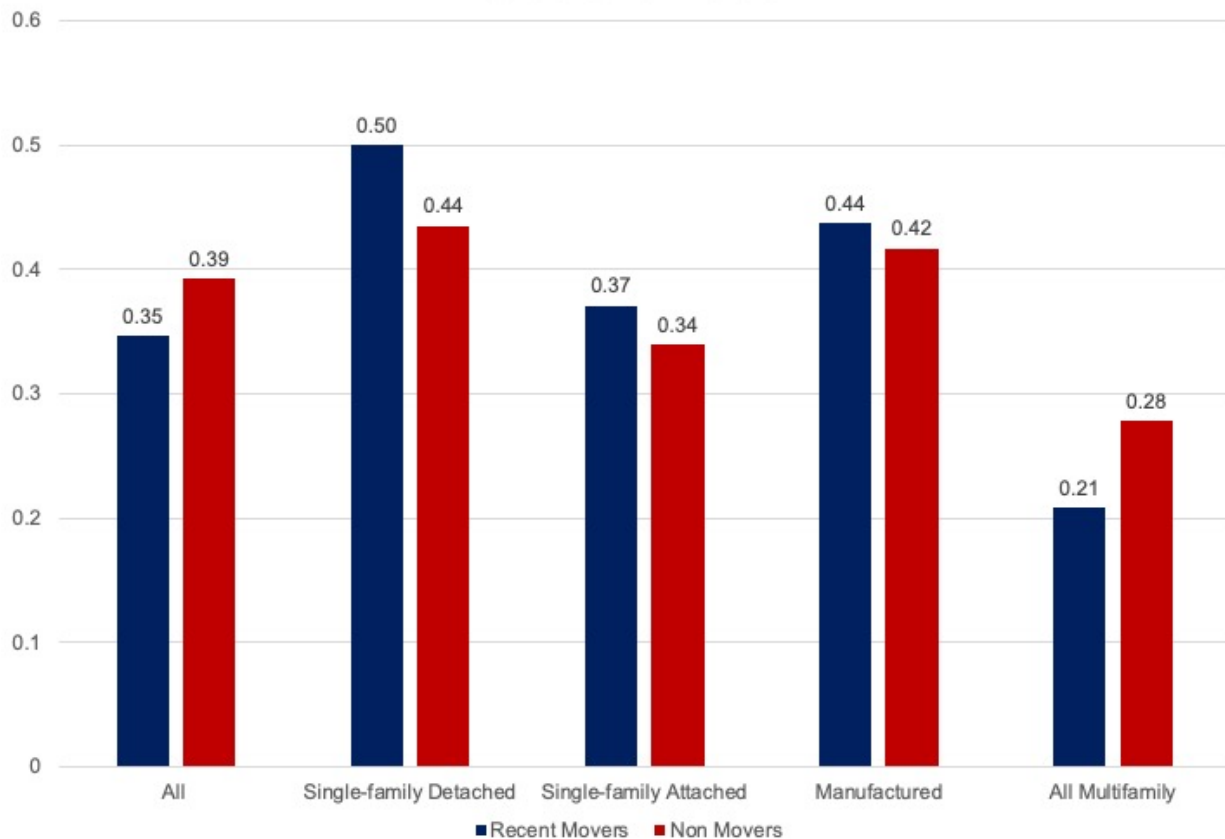


The differences between number of public school children in new and existing homes vary across residential structure types. There are slightly more public school children in new than existing homes for single-family detached and manufactured housing. 0.43 public school child per newly built single-family detached, compared to 0.39 per existing unit. When it comes to other types of structures, such as single-family attached and multifamily, the number of public school children per unit is much lower in new than in existing homes. For single-family attached, there is 0.21 public school child per new homes, but 0.31 per existing home. The numbers are 0.12 per new and 0.22 per existing home for multifamily units.

Fewer Number of Public School Children per Recent Mover Household

On average, there are fewer public school children per recent mover household, living in the same unit for less than a year, than per non-mover household: 0.35 per mover household vs. 0.39 per non-mover household. For particular types of structures, however, the opposite is true. The only type of structure with fewer public school children per recent mover households is multifamily: 0.21 per recent mover household compared to 0.28 per non-mover. Figure 4 also shows there is one child attending public school for every two households who recently moved into single-family detached units, but only one for every five households moving into multifamily units.

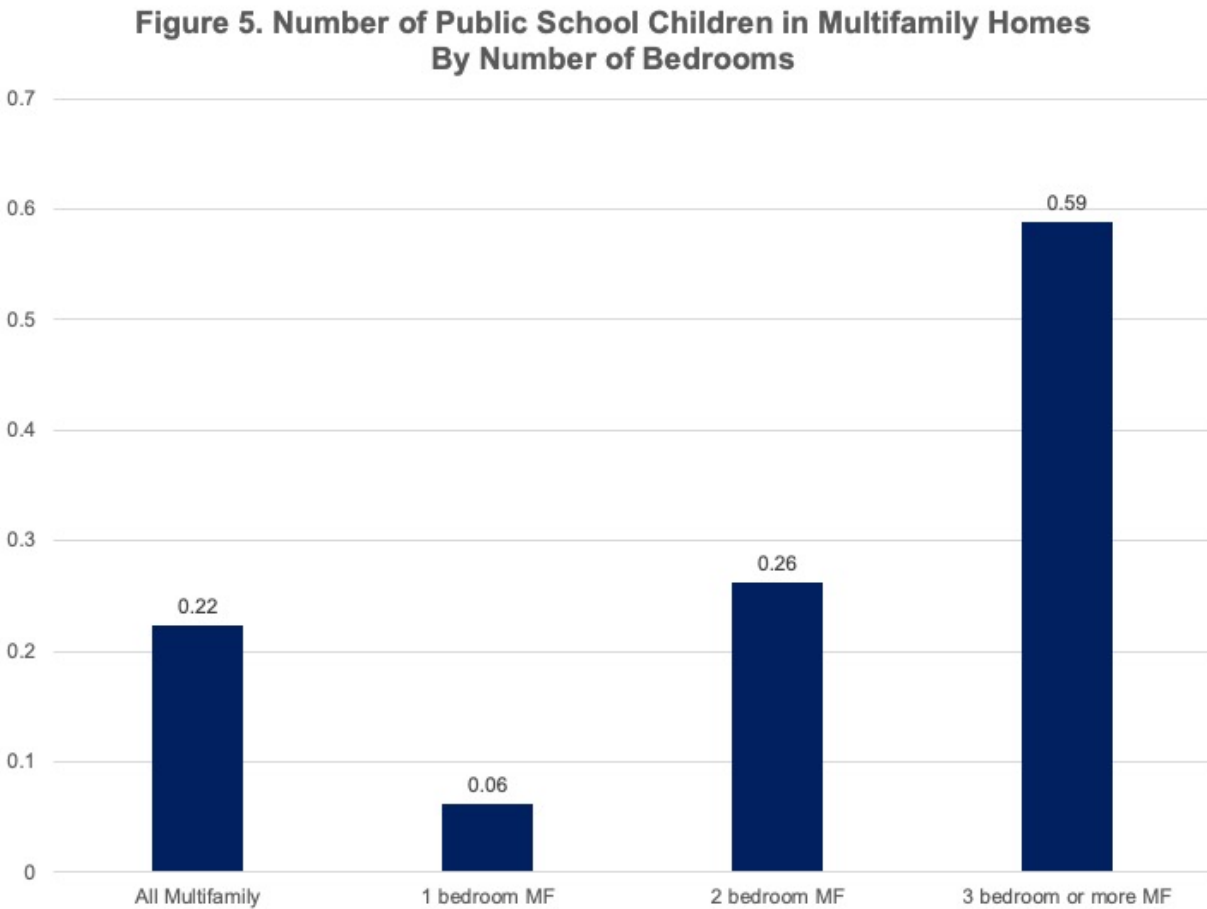
Figure 4. Number of Public School Children in Different Structures Movers vs. Non-movers



Fewest Number of Public School Children in One Bedroom Multifamily Homes

Figure 5 shows that the average number of public school children per unit increases with the number of bedrooms in multifamily homes. Multifamily homes with 1 bedroom or less have the least average number of children per unit (0.06), followed by 2 bedroom units (0.26) and three or

more bedroom unit (0.59). It is important to note that multifamily units with 3 or more bedrooms account for only a small share of all multifamily completions.



Renter-occupied multifamily units, on average, have more children attending public school than owner-occupied units among irrespective of the number of bedrooms (Table 2). The biggest difference between renter-occupied and owner-occupied units comes from multifamily units with 3 bedrooms or more: 0.31 per unit for owner-occupied vs. 0.83 for renter-occupied.

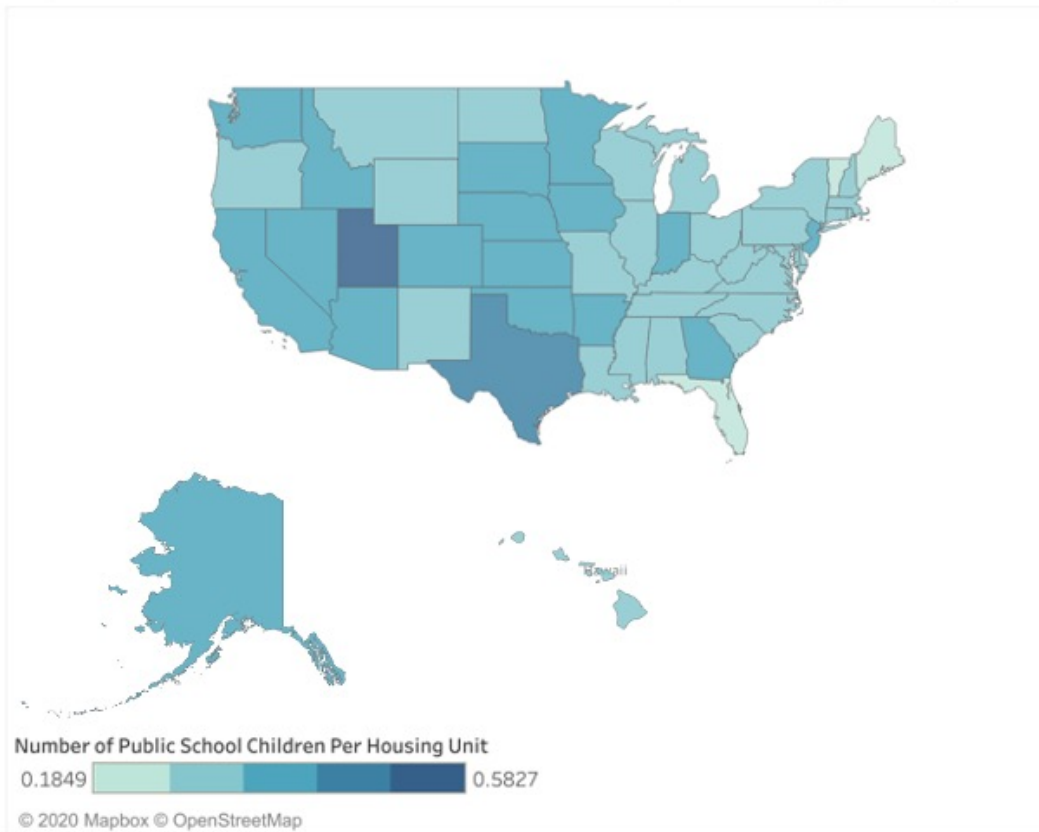
**Table 2. Average Number of Public School Children per Multifamily Unit
By Number of Bedrooms**

	All	One Bedroom	Two Bedrooms	Three Bedrooms or More
All Housing Units	0.22	0.06	0.26	0.59
New Construction	0.12	0.02	0.12	0.40
Existing Homes	0.22	0.06	0.26	0.59
All Occupied Units	0.26	0.07	0.31	0.69
Recent Movers	0.21	0.05	0.26	0.66
Into New construction	0.15	0.03	0.16	0.61
Into Existing Homes	0.21	0.05	0.26	0.66
Non-movers	0.28	0.08	0.32	0.69
Owner Occupied Units	0.14	0.04	0.10	0.31
Recent Movers	0.11	0.03	0.07	0.29
Into New construction	0.03	0.18	0.03	0.00
Into Existing Homes	0.11	0.03	0.08	0.30
Non-movers	0.15	0.04	0.10	0.31
Renter Occupied Units	0.28	0.07	0.35	0.83
Recent Movers	0.21	0.05	0.27	0.70
Into New construction	0.15	0.03	0.16	0.71
Into Existing Homes	0.21	0.05	0.27	0.70
Non-movers	0.30	0.08	0.38	0.87

Number of Public School Children per Housing Unit by State

The number of children attending public school per housing unit varies widely across states. Figure 6 shows that states in New England have relatively fewer average number of public school children present in the units.

Figure 6. Number of Public School Children per Housing Unit by State



Vermont has the smallest average number with 0.21 public school child per housing unit, followed by Maine (0.23), Florida (0.25), and New Hampshire (0.27), as shown in Table 3. Only 0.18 child going to the public education system per housing unit in the District of Columbia. However, D.C. is generally different from the states, as it is entirely urban. States with the largest average number of children attending public schools are Utah with 0.58 public school child per unit, and Texas with 0.43 per unit, far above the national average of 0.34 per unit.

Table 3 States (Including District of Columbia) with the Fewest Public School Children per Housing Unit

	All Housing Units
District of Columbia	0.18
Vermont	0.21
Maine	0.23
Florida	0.25
New Hampshire	0.27
West Virginia	0.28
Rhode Island	0.28
Delaware	0.28
Alabama	0.29
Pennsylvania	0.29

Table 4 shows the states with the fewest number of public school children in single-family detached units. Vermont has the fewest per unit (0.22), followed by Maine (0.24), West Virginia (0.29), Delaware (0.30), and Alabama (0.30). These states are also the states with the fewest number of children in all housing units (Table 3).

Table 4 States (Including District of Columbia) with the Fewest Public School Children per Single-family Detached Unit

	Single-family Detached
Vermont	0.22
Maine	0.24
West Virginia	0.29
Delaware	0.30
Alabama	0.30
Louisiana	0.31
New Hampshire	0.31
Florida	0.32
South Carolina	0.32
Rhode Island	0.32

States with the fewest average number of children attending public school per multifamily unit are not concentrated in one regional areas (Table 5). States with the fewest number of public school children per multifamily unit are Wyoming with only 0.08 per multifamily unit, West Virginia (0.12), Pennsylvania (0.13), North Dakota (0.14), the District of Columbia (0.14), and Vermont (0.14).

Table 5 States (Including District of Columbia) with the Fewest Public School Children per Multifamily Unit

	All Multifamily
Wyoming	0.08
West Virginia	0.12
Pennsylvania	0.13
North Dakota	0.14
District of Columbia	0.14
Vermont	0.14
Kansas	0.15
Montana	0.15
Missouri	0.15
Ohio	0.15

NAHB provides a complete set of detailed tables on the number of public school children in different types of homes for each individual state (including the District of Columbia) in the Appendix. It is available in the “Additional Resources” box at the top of the online version of the article.

¹ Single-family attached homes refer to a residential structure consisting of two or more attached units which must be separated from adjacent unit by a ground-to-roof wall and have individual heating and utility systems, such as rowhouses, duplexes, townhouses.