

## Addendum to Instructions for Part 2

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### Question 2A

#### Smart Growth – Smart Schools

Has the district considered smart growth concepts with relation to educational facilities and the impact of sprawl in developing and planning for the construction of a new school in the community?

**What is suburban sprawl?**

Suburban sprawl is irresponsible, poorly planned development that destroys green space, increases traffic, crowds schools and drives up taxes.

**What is smart growth?**

Smart growth is intelligent, well-planned development that channels growth into existing areas, provides public-transportation options and preserves farmlands and open space.

**What is smart school planning?**

The U.S. Department of Education has endorsed a set of national design principles that have been published in [\*Schools as Centers of Community: A Citizens Guide to Planning & Design\*](#). Smart planning for education means taking a responsible look at these six principles and other alternate visions to design schools that enhance teaching and learning; serve as center of community; result from a planning/design process involving all stakeholders; provide for health, safety and security; make effective use of all available resources and allow for flexibility and adaptability to changing needs.

In considering the construction of new schools, renovations or additions it should be noted that older school buildings may be successfully adapted to new technology and the latest education mandates.

In addition, educational facilities should not encourage “sprawl” development. They should not be located in agricultural preservation areas unless other options are not viable and the project’s development will have no negative effect on future growth and development in the area.

If possible, projects should encourage revitalization of existing facilities and consideration should be given to locating facilities in a locally designated growth area that is served by existing or planned water, sewer, and other public infrastructure.

The district should encourage the local school expansion planning committee to review the school policy reform recommendations that have been offered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the report [\*Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl: Why Johnny Can’t Walk to School\*](#). The National Trust for Historic Preservation, in an effort to move smart school goals forward, offers the following recommendations:

## **Top Twelve Policy Recommendations**

1. Put historic neighborhood schools on a level playing field with new schools. Eliminate funding biases that favor new construction over school renovation and good stewardship.
2. Eliminate arbitrary acreage standards that undermine the ability of established communities to retain or upgrade (or replace on the same site when necessary) historic older schools that could continue to serve as centers of community.
3. Avoid “mega-school sprawl” – massive schools in remote locations that stimulate sprawl development and are accessible only by car or bus.
4. Develop procedures for accepting land donated by developers for new schools. Land in “sprawl locations” that are inappropriate for schools should be rejected.
5. Encourage school districts to cooperate with other institutions – e.g., government agencies, nonprofits, churches and private businesses – to share playgrounds, ball fields, and parking as well as to provide transit services, when appropriate.
6. Establish guidelines, training programs and funding mechanisms to ensure adequate school building maintenance. Create disincentives for school districts to defer needed maintenance and allow buildings to fall into disrepair.
7. Require feasibility studies comparing the cost of new schools with those of renovating existing schools before new schools are built and existing ones abandoned. Hire only architects with experience in rehabilitation work to conduct such studies. These studies should also consider the impact of a school’s closing on existing neighborhoods, long-term transportation costs, and municipal service burdens. Finally, these studies must be presented to the public for comment before projects move forward. If they are presented only to the superintendent and school facilities committee, their use is limited.
8. Re-examine exemptions given to local school districts from local planning boards, zoning and growth management laws.
9. Work to ensure that a minimum of 50% of the students can walk or bike to school in cities, towns and suburbs. Promote safe-routes-to-school legislation in the states.
10. When a historic school cannot be preserved and reused, school districts and/or local governments should implement plans for the building’s adaptive use or replacement so that it does not become a source of blight in the neighborhood.
11. Promote “smart codes” legislation to encourage the rehabilitation and modernization of historic schools as well as other still serviceable buildings.
12. Provide education and training in school renovation techniques and options for school facility planners, contractors, private consultants, architects, school board members, municipal officials and others.