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Tracking the K-12 student population in NYC

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CITY OF NEW YORK
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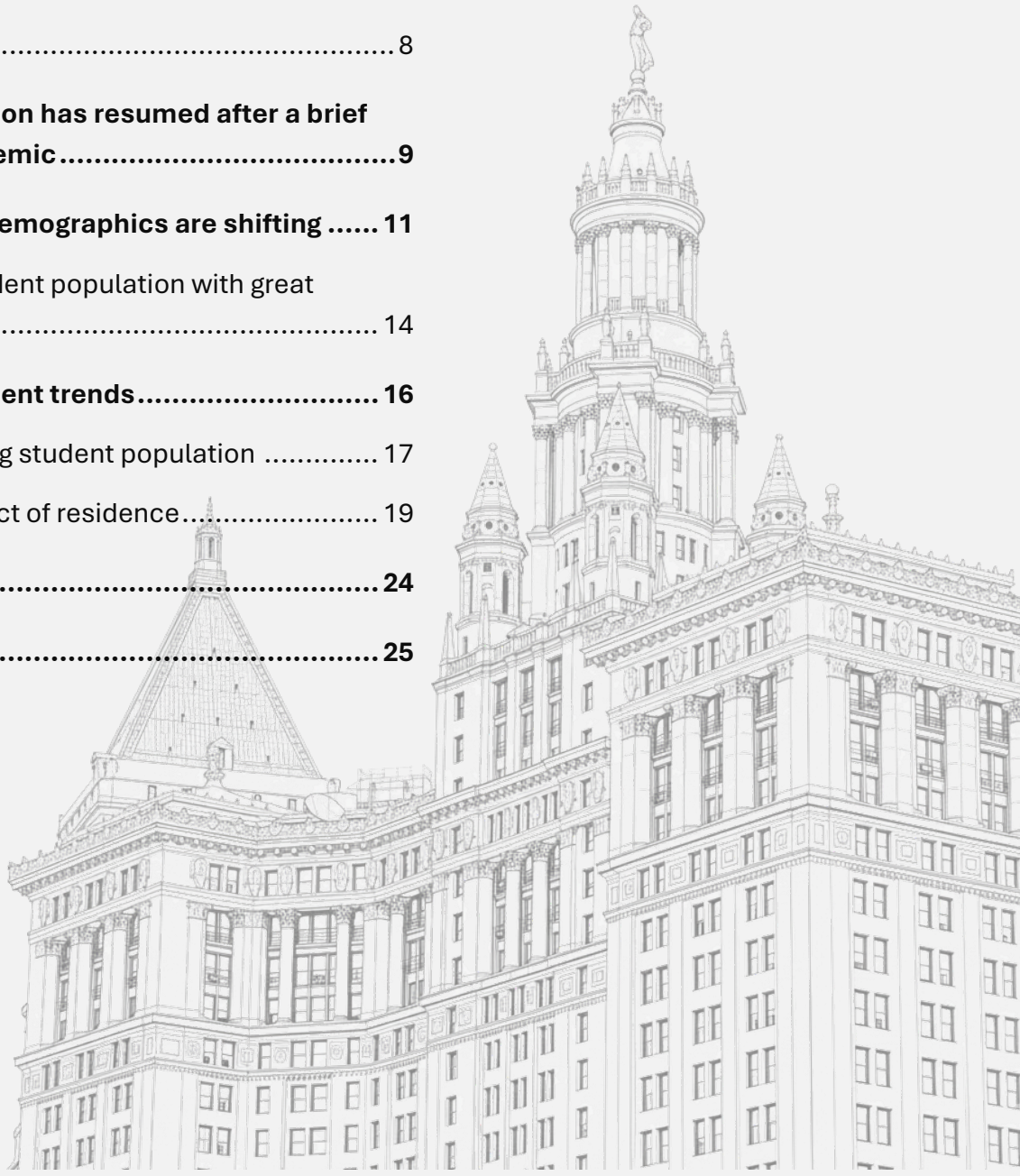


Executive Summary

Over the last decade, New York City's K-12 student population has decreased dramatically. There are significantly fewer students across the City than there were a decade ago and NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) have seen a steep drop in enrollment. In SY2025-26, NYCPS saw its steepest drop in enrollment since the pandemic, losing 21,793 students, a three percent year-to-year decline of students.

There are many factors that impact school enrollment, from individual family decisions to population-level macro-trends. During the timeframe examined in this report, the number of children born each year in NYC has declined steadily, which is one contributing factor to decreasing school enrollment. Other factors like families with children leaving NYC and shifts in immigration patterns have also likely had an impact on NYCPS enrollment. This resource presents foundational school enrollment data to help New Yorkers understand the state of the student population in our education system.

Key Findings

- K-12 enrollment in NYCPS declined by 19% from SY2013-14 to SY2025-26, and enrollment is projected to continue to decline.
- In SY2025-26, NYCPS saw its steepest drop in enrollment since the pandemic, with a decrease of 21,793 students, a 3% year-to-year decline.
- The decline in NYCPS enrollment largely reflects a broader decrease in the number of school-aged children in New York City – not increased enrollment in other school types.
- Every NYCPS school district has seen declines in total students, but there is variation in the scale of these declines.
- As total enrollment declines, NYCPS is serving a student population with substantial needs: the numbers of students with disabilities and English language learners are increasing. Approximately 73% of students were in poverty and 14% were homeless or in temporary housing.
- Black students made up 26% of NYCPS students in SY2013-14. In SY2025-26, that proportion was 19%.

    a. This reflects a decline in the overall Black student population and the larger decline in the Black population within the City.

    b. The proportion of Black students in NYCPS schools and charter schools combined decreased from 28% in SY2013-14to 23% in SY2025-26.

- The steepest drop in enrollment is between 5th grade and 6th grade, when parents need to decide where to send their kids to middle school.
- The rapid growth of charters was mostly before SY2020-21. Between SY2013-14 and SY2020-21, charter school enrollment increased by 66,107 students, with year-over-year increases as much as 18% from SY2013-14 to 2014-15. Since SY2021-22, the year-over-year growth in charter enrollment has never been above 4%, and most years has been less than 2%.
- Elementary and middle school charter enrollment is concentrated in the South Bronx, Northern Manhattan, and Central Brooklyn. These concentrations have changed little in the past five years.

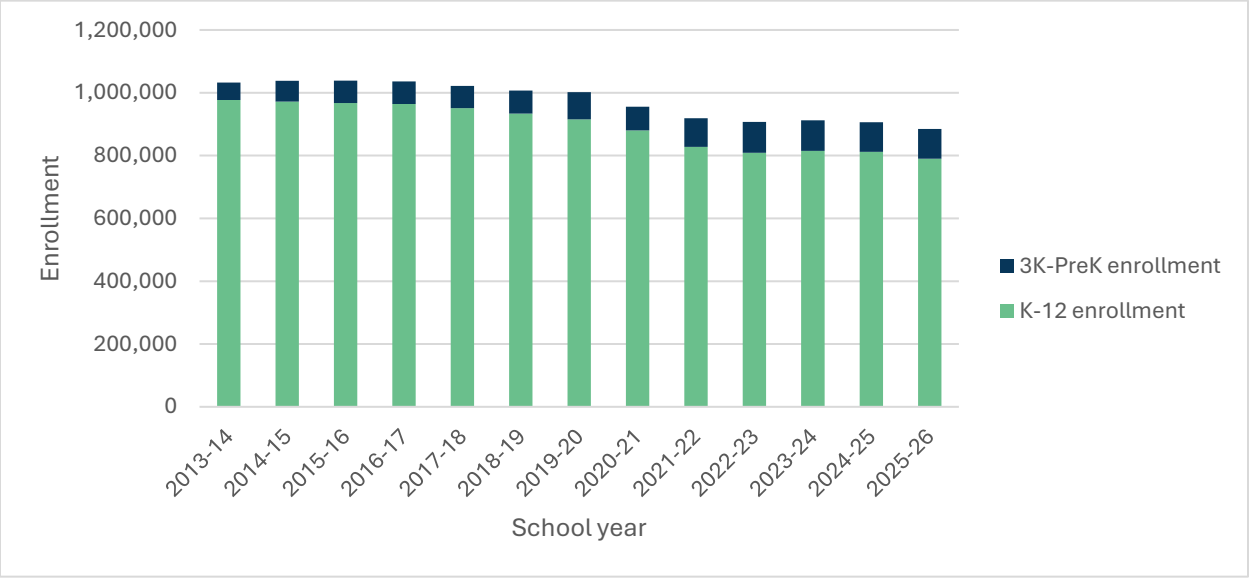
Enrollment in NYC Public Schools is in decline

NYCPS schools have seen a long-term decrease in enrollment. Between SY2013-14 and SY2025-26, total enrollment decreased by 147,930.

Over this period, enrollment in 3K and Pre-K increased from 55,734 in SY2013-14 to 94,726 in SY2025-26 as a result of the expansion of both programs across the city.

When 3K and Pre-K students are excluded from the count, the enrollment decrease is even more pronounced. NYCPS K-12 enrollment decreased by 19% (nearly 187,000 fewer students) between SY2013-14 and SY2025-26.

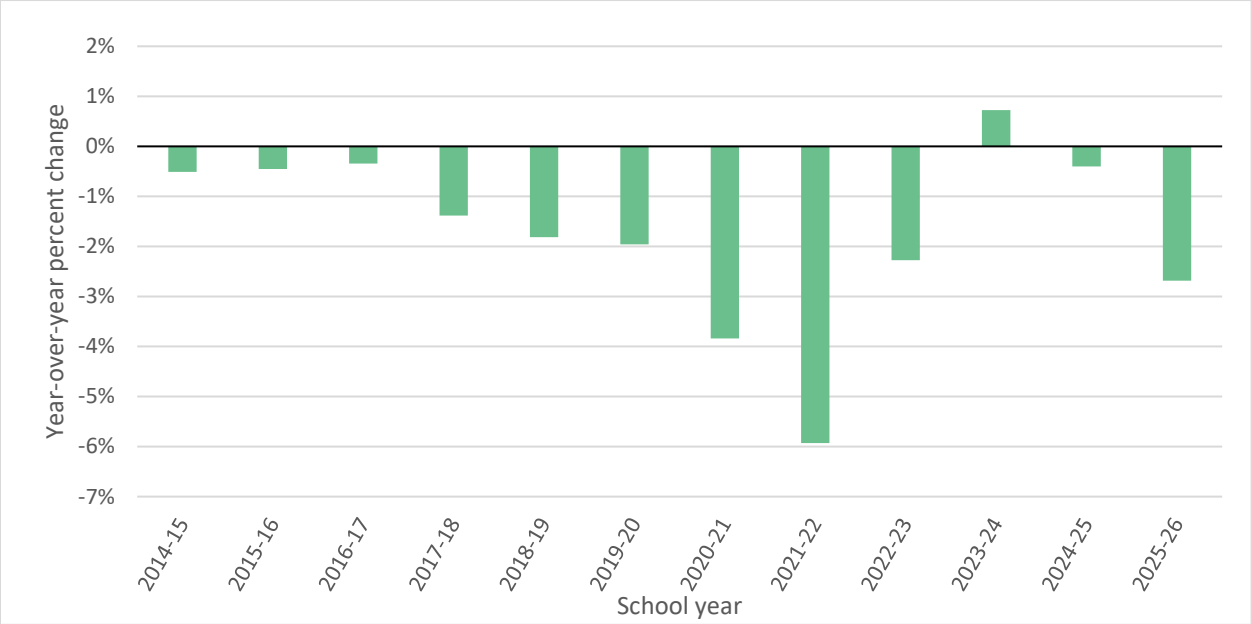
Total enrollment in NYCPS by grade level



Source: NYCPS Demographic Snapshot. Note: These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79.

In SY2025-26, NYCPS saw its steepest drop in enrollment since the pandemic, with a decrease of 21,793 students, a 3% year-to-year decline.

Year-over-year change in NYCPS K-12 Enrollment

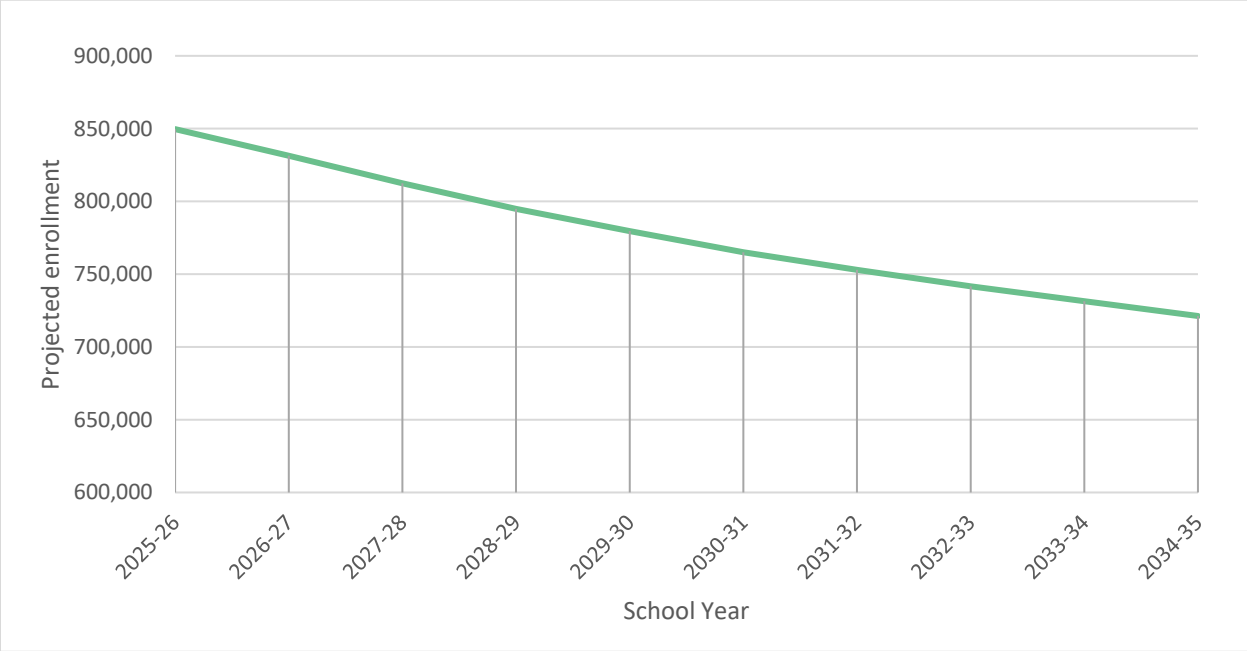


Source: NYCPS Demographic Snapshot. Note: These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79.

In recent years, enrollment has been impacted by unique events: a pronounced drop in enrollment during the pandemic, the return of families and students to school following the pandemic, and the arrival of a large number of students seeking asylum. The sharp decrease in the most recent year suggests that without these temporary anomalies, NYCPS enrollment has returned to a declining trend.

The School Construction Authority projects total enrollment will decline by an additional 128,000 from SY2025-26 to SY2034-35.

Projected NYCPS total enrollment



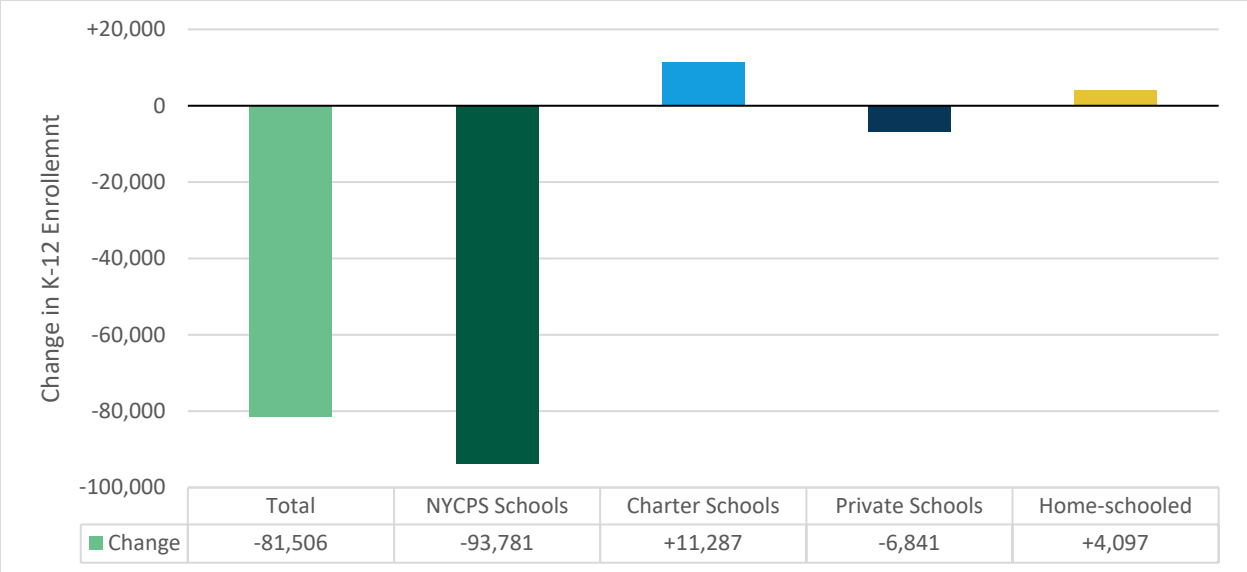
Projected Pre-K-12 enrollment in NYCPS schools. This projection excludes students educated off-site and District 75 students. Source: School Construction Authority https://www.nycsca.org/Community/Capital-Plan-Reports-Data#Demographic-Projection-68

Most of the change in NYCPS enrollment is because there are fewer students overall in NYC

The decrease in NYCPS enrollment in the past five years cannot be attributed entirely to a shift to other types of schools. Rather, a decline in the total population of students across the City is driving enrollment decreases.

- The overall population of kindergarten through 12th grade students in public, private, and charter schools in NYC declined 81,506 from SY2020-21 to SY2025-26.
- Charter enrollment has largely leveled out over time.
    - Between SY2013-14 and SY2020-21, charter enrollment increased by 66,107 students.
    - From SY2020-21 to SY2025-26, charter enrollment increased 11,287.
- Private schools have seen a drop in enrollment of 6,841 students since SY2020-21.
- There were 13,079 homeschooled students in NYC in SY2025-26. This represents a fourfold increase since SY2015-16 and represents one percent of NYC's total student population.

Change in number of students, SY2020-21 to SY2025-26

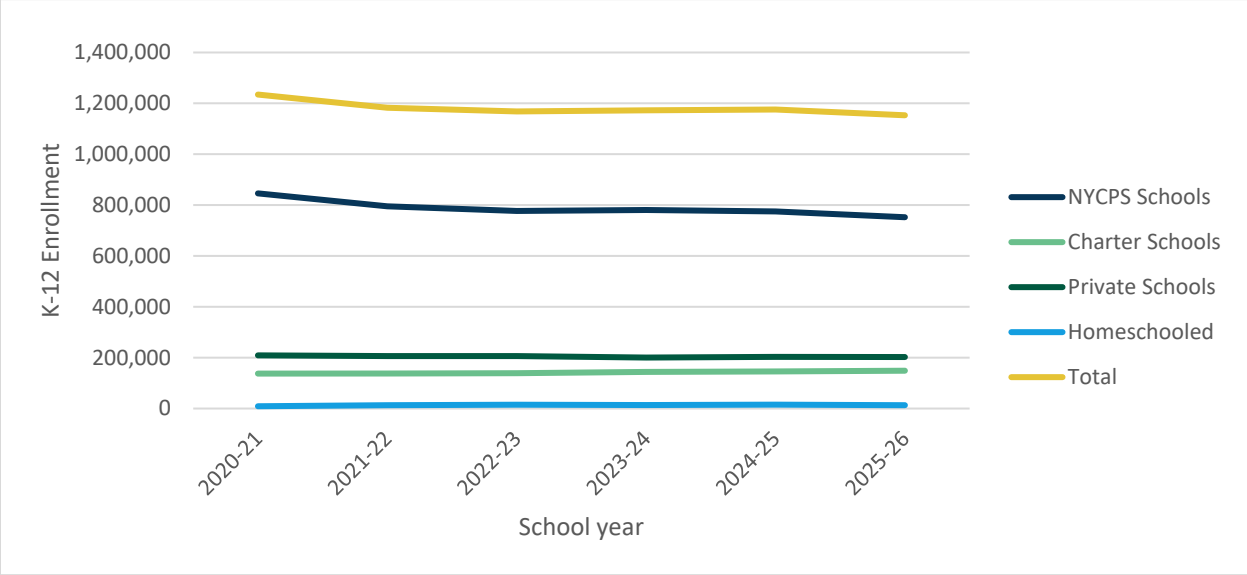


	Total	NYCPS Schools	Charter Schools	Private Schools	Home-schooled
Change	-81,506	-93,781	+11,287	-6,841	+4,097

Sources: NYSED IRS Children Instructed at Home data & NYCPS District Planning Data. NYCPS total includes students in all schools, including districts 75 and 79

Since SY2020–21, NYCPS enrollment has declined in step with overall student enrollment, while enrollment in other school types has remained relatively stable.

Change in number of students by school type by year



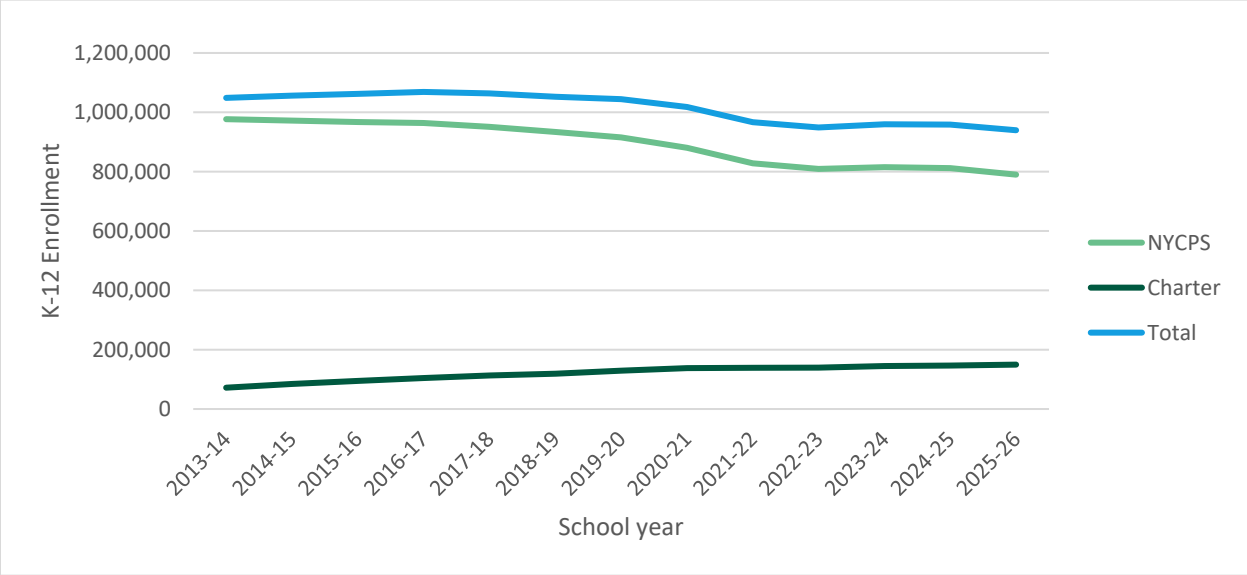
Sources: NYSED IRS Children Instructed at Home data & NYCPS District Planning Data. NYCPS total includes students in all schools, including districts 75 and 79

Charter and homeschool enrollment do not account for NYCPS decreases

Charter

After steady increases in enrollment in the last decade, charter school enrollment has been nearly level in the past five years.

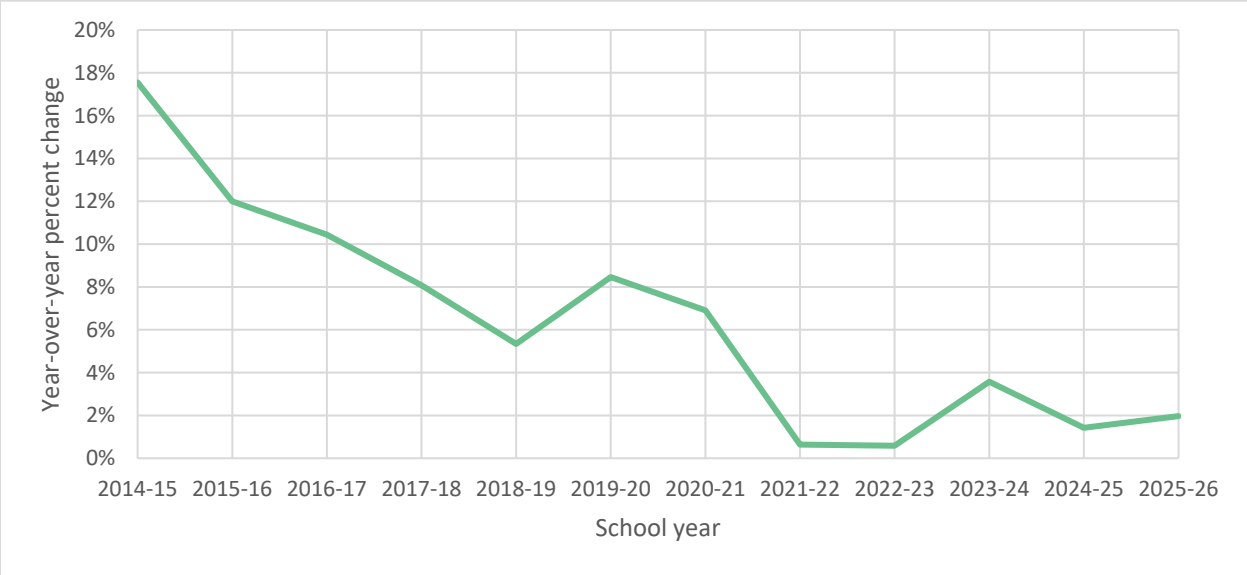
NYCPS and charter enrollment by year



Source: NYCPS Demographic Snapshot. These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79.

The rapid growth of charters was mostly before SY2020-21. Between SY2013-14 and SY2020-21, charter school enrollment increased by 66,107 students, with year-over-year increases as much at 18% from SY2013-14 to 2014-15. Since SY2021-22, the year-over-year growth in charter enrollment has never been above 4%, and most years has been less than 2%.

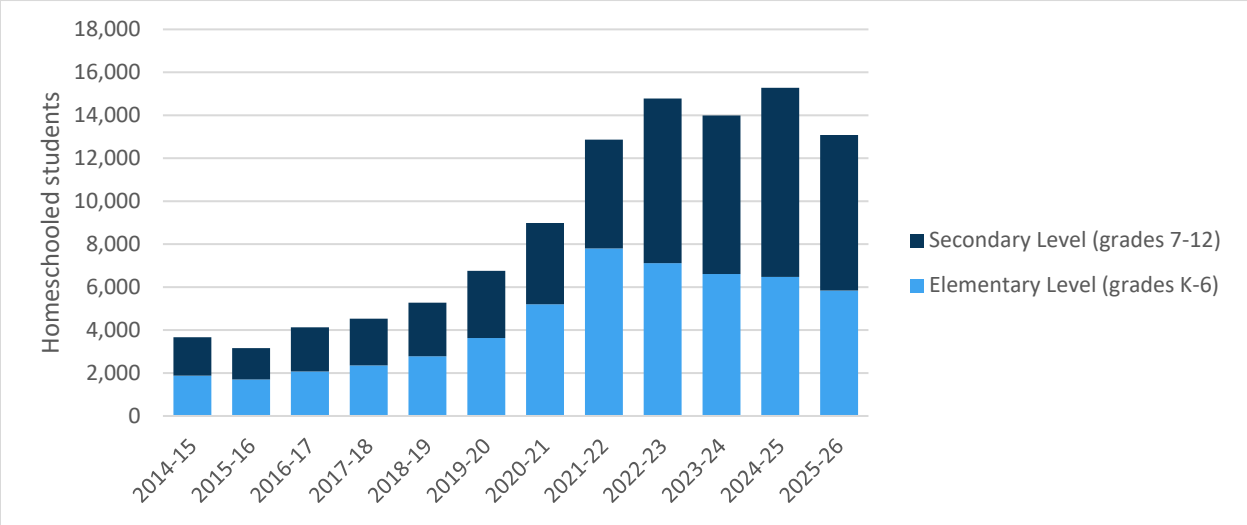
Year-over-year change in charter school enrollment



Homeschool

The number of students homeschooled has notably increased over the past decade, with growth starting before the pandemic and notching sharply upward starting in SY2021-22.

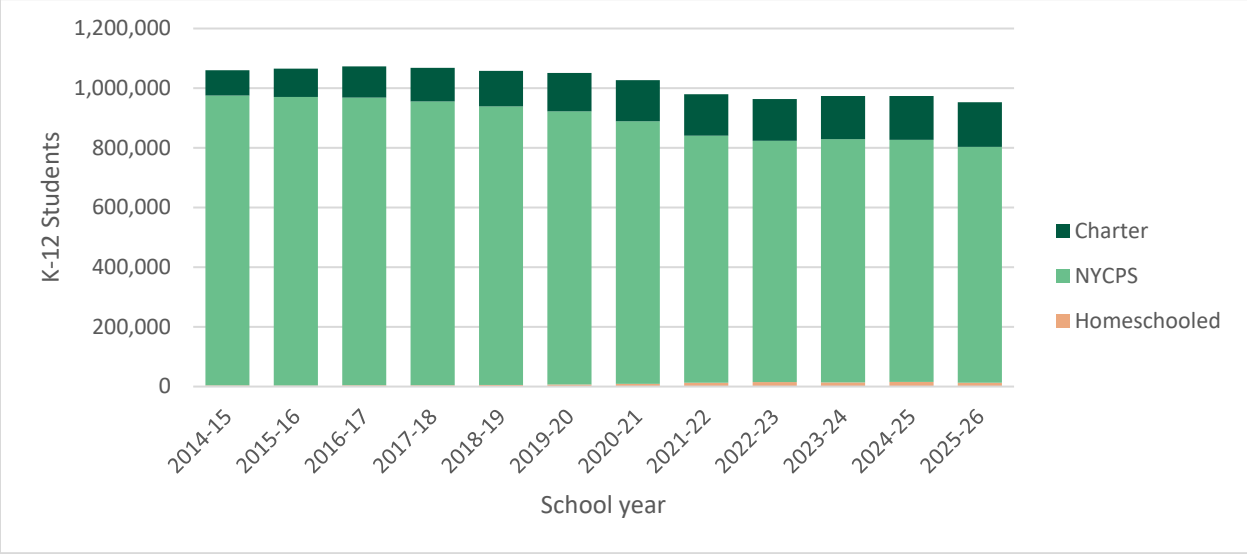
Homeschooled students in New York City by grade level



Source: NYSED IRS Children Instructed at Home

However, this student population is still very small relative to overall student enrollment.

Students in NYCPS schools, charter schools, and homeschooled



Sources: NYSED IRS Children Instructed at Home data & NYCPS Demographic Snapshot

Grade-to-grade attrition has resumed after a brief shift during the pandemic

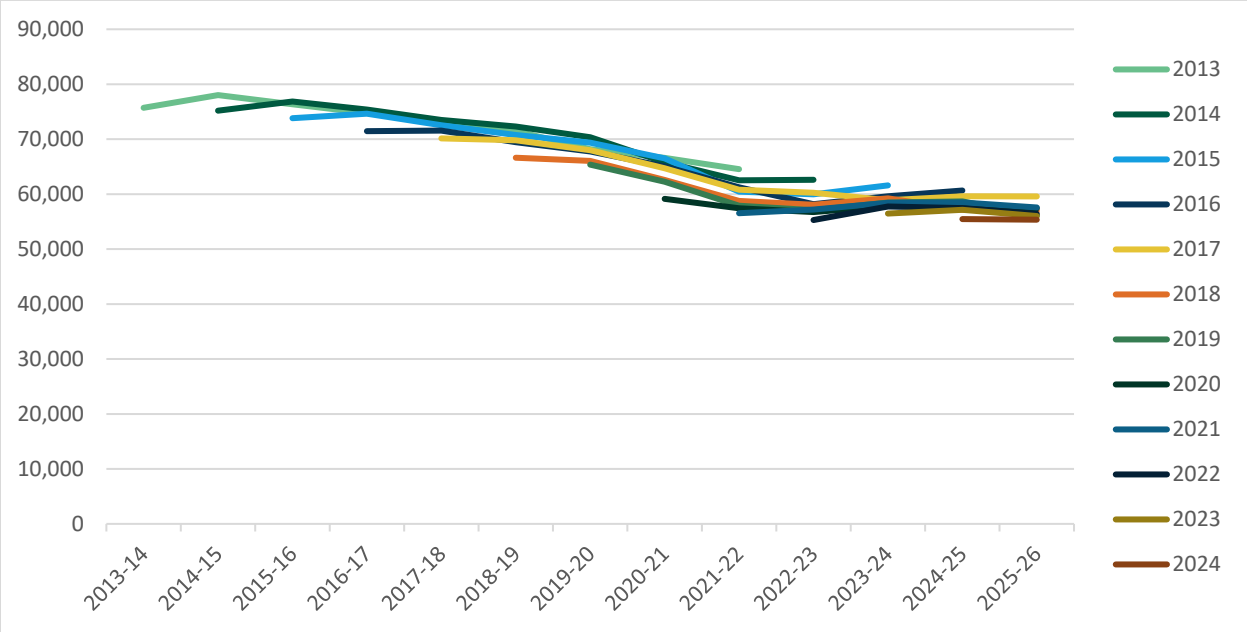
Prior to the pandemic, each kindergarten class was typically smaller than the previous years and, from first grade on, each cohort of students was typically smaller each successive school year.

That pattern shifted temporarily from SY2020–21 to SY2023–24. Kindergarten cohorts were similar in size from year to year, with some small increases. This growth likely reflected both the arrival of asylum-seeking students and families and a rebound from smaller kindergarten classes during the pandemic.

Data from the most recent school year shows a flattening trend and perhaps a return to an earlier attrition pattern. Last year's kindergarten class was somewhat smaller than the prior year, and all cohorts showed a slight decline in enrollment.

Note: Cohort analysis is limited to grades Kindergarten through grade 8 because of apparent anomalies in the data for high school grades.

NYCPS enrollment by cohort by year



Source: NYCPS Demographic Snapshot. These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79.

NYCPS enrollment by cohort by grade

Cohort (K start year)	Grade								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2013	75,705	78,023	76,348	74,744	73,335	71,476	68,163	66,605	64,546
2014	75,200	76,856	75,402	73,506	72,314	70,361	65,811	62,516	62,601
2015	73,811	74,638	72,531	70,751	69,359	66,505	60,449	59,966	61,602
2016	71,468	71,562	69,440	67,757	65,052	61,244	58,173	59,614	60,669
2017	70,143	69,805	67,985	64,711	60,816	60,261	58,888	59,620	59,594
2018	66,626	66,041	62,573	58,767	58,070	59,237	57,155	56,956	
2019	65,370	62,262	57,899	57,071	58,471	58,681	56,074		
2020	59,143	57,424	56,737	57,848	57,914	57,418			
2021	56,529	57,198	58,423	58,485	57,571				
2022	55,288	57,755	57,448	56,404					
2023	56,471	57,149	56,017						
2024	55,461	55,350							
2025	52,525								

Cumulative change in enrollment by cohort by grade

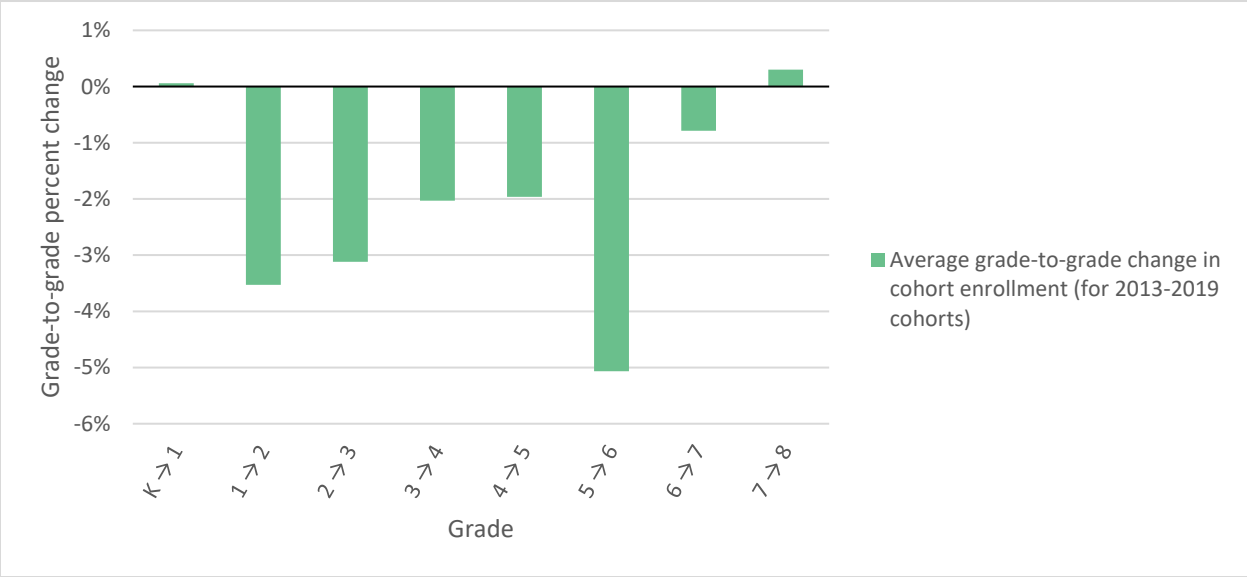
Cohort (K start year)	Grade								
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2013	-	3.1%	0.8%	-1.3%	-3.1%	-5.6%	-10.0%	-12.0%	-14.7%
2014	-	2.2%	0.3%	-2.3%	-3.8%	-6.4%	-12.5%	-16.9%	-16.8%
2015	-	1.1%	-1.7%	-4.1%	-6.0%	-9.9%	-18.1%	-18.8%	-16.5%
2016	-	0.1%	-2.8%	-5.2%	-9.0%	-14.3%	-18.6%	-16.6%	-15.1%
2017	-	-0.5%	-3.1%	-7.7%	-13.3%	-14.1%	-16.0%	-15.0%	-15.0%
2018	-	-0.9%	-6.1%	-11.8%	-12.8%	-11.1%	-14.2%	-14.5%	
2019	-	-4.8%	-11.4%	-12.7%	-10.6%	-10.2%	-14.2%		
2020	-	-2.9%	-4.1%	-2.2%	-2.1%	-2.9%			
2021	-	1.2%	3.4%	3.5%	1.8%				
2022	-	4.5%	3.9%	2.0%					
2023	-	1.2%	-0.8%						
2024	-	-0.2%							
2025	-								

Source: NYCPS Demographic Snapshot. These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79.

The shock of the pandemic is seen across all cohorts: for all cohorts the greatest decrease in enrollment—an average 13% decline year over year—was from SY2019-20 to SY2020-21, regardless of the grade level at that time.

Across all cohorts irrespective of school year, the steepest drop in enrollment is at the beginning of middle school, between 5th grade and 6th grade. The year-over-year attrition averages 5% from 5th to 6th grade across the cohorts for which these data are available (the cohorts that began kindergarten in the fall of SY2013-14 through the fall of SY2019-20). 6th grade classes are on average 15% smaller than kindergarten classes.

Average grade-to-grade change in cohort enrollment



Source: NYCPS demographic snapshot. Note: includes cohorts which began Kindergarten in SY2013-14 through SY2019-20, as those are the cohorts for which data are available through grade 6

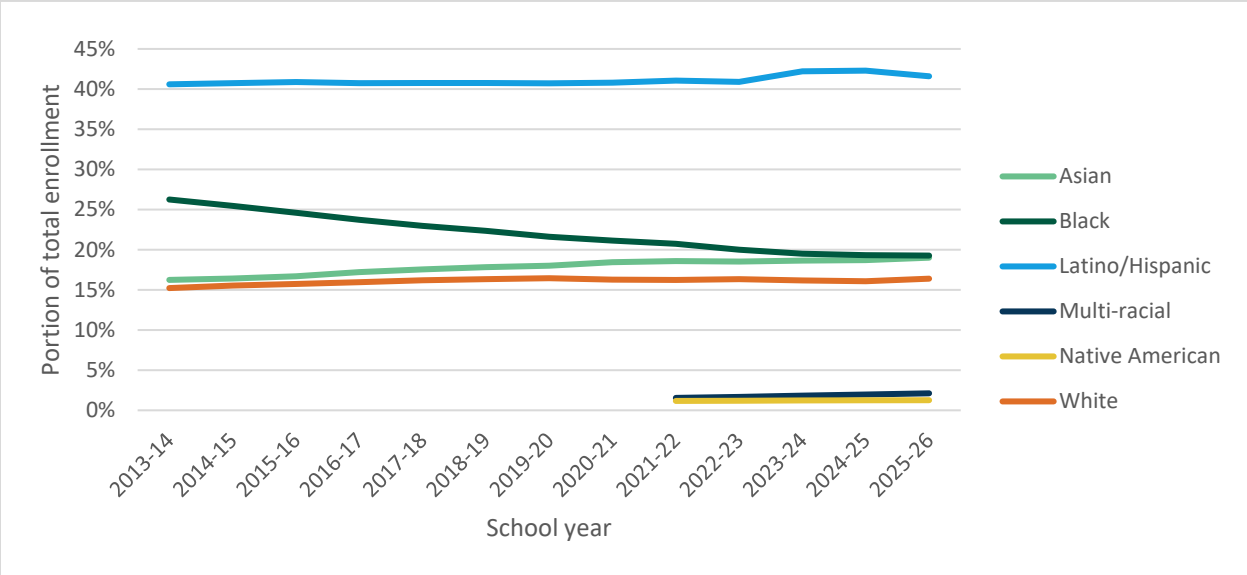
Student population demographics are shifting

The distribution of students by race in NYCPS has shifted since SY2013-14.

- Black students made up 26% of NYCPS students in SY2013-14. In SY2025-26, that proportion was 19%.
    - This reflects a decline in the Black student population and the larger decline in the Black population within the City.
- The proportion of Black students in NYCPS schools *and* charter schools combined decreased from 28% in SY2013-14 to 23% in SY2025-26.

- The proportion of Asian students in NYCPS schools increased from 16% to 19%.
- Hispanic/Latino students increased marginally from 41% to 42%, with a notable uptick in recent years likely related to asylum seeker arrivals.
- The proportion of white students increased slightly from 15% to 16%.

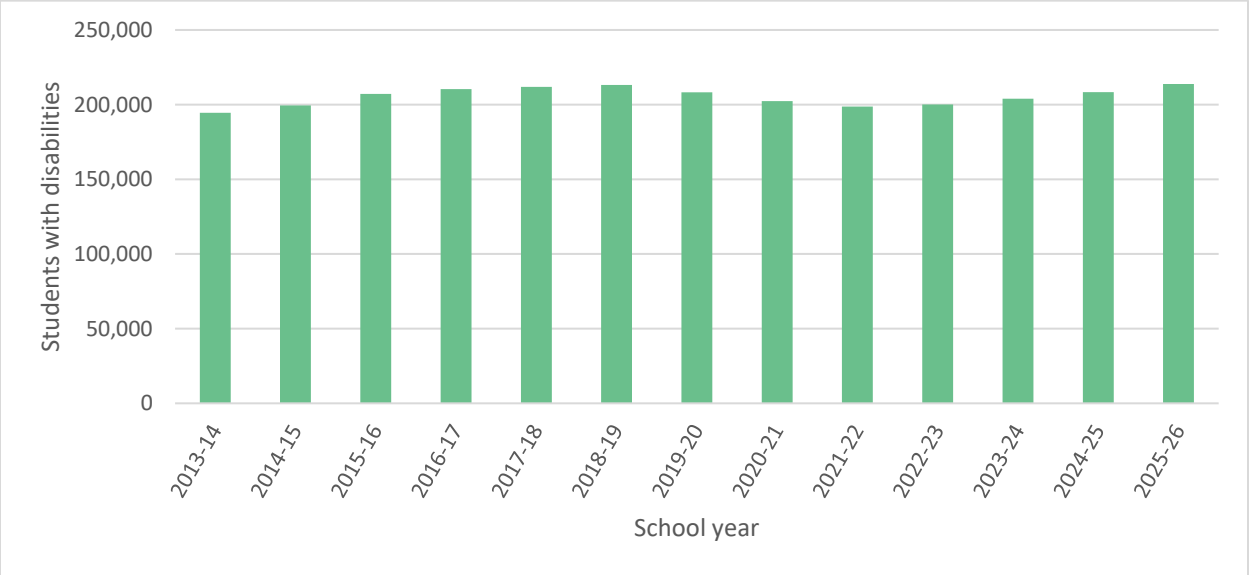
Portion of students by race/ethnicity by year, NYCPS schools

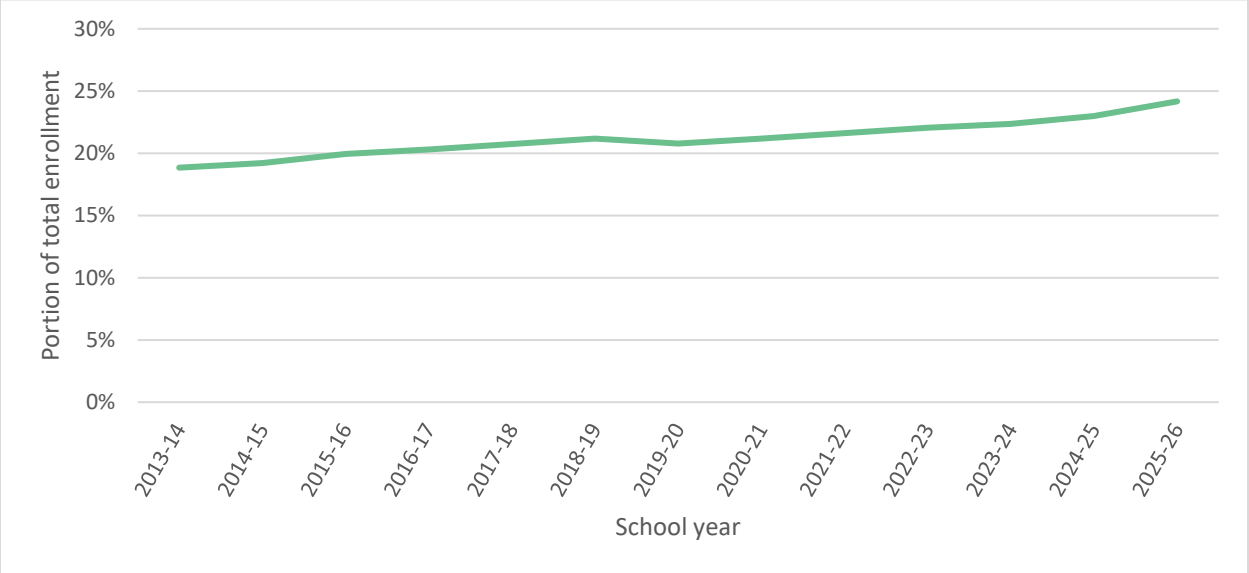


Source: NYCPS Demographic snapshot. These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79. Note: Native American and Multi-racial categories were not included in these data before SY2021-22.

There has been an increase in students with disabilities in NYCPS, both as a proportion (since SY2013-14) and in absolute number (since SY2021-22). The number of students with disabilities increased by 19,232 from SY2013-14 to SY2025-26, while the proportion increased 5 percentage points, from 19% to 24% of total NYCPS students. These statistics include only students with disabilities who attend a NYCPS school (including District 75) but exclude students at private and charter schools.

Number and portion of students with disabilities

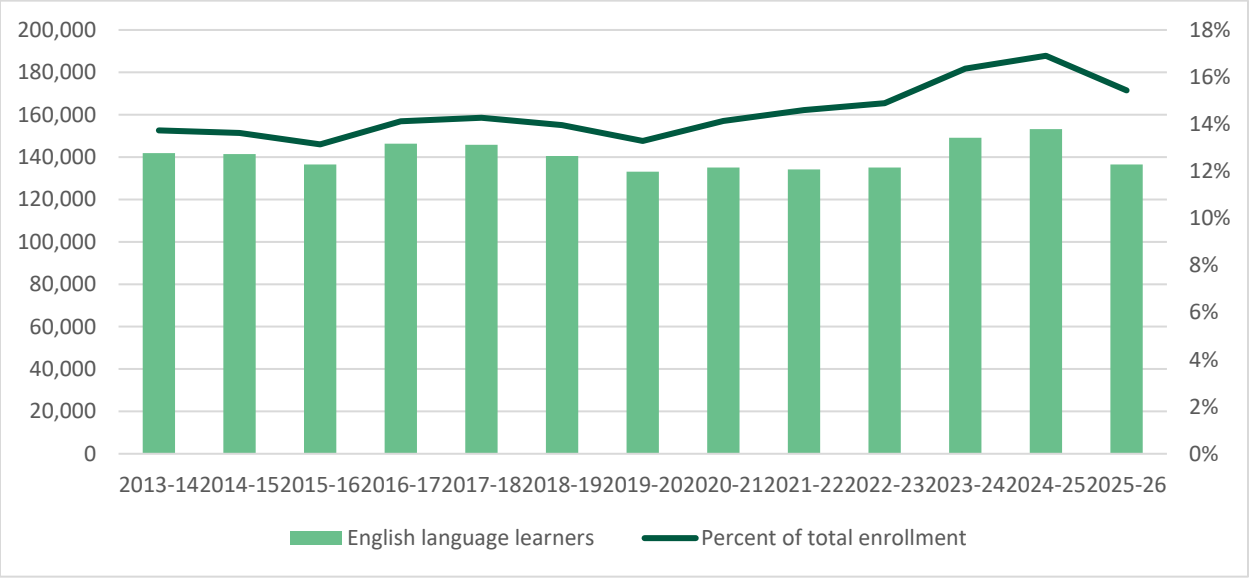




Source: NYCPS Demographic Snapshot. These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79.

The number and portion of students who are English Language Learners peaked in SY2024-25, at 153,190 students, 17% of total enrollment, likely related to asylum seeker new arrivals. Although ELL enrollment declined the following year, ELL students still made up 15% of enrollment, slightly above the level typical over the past decade.

Number and portion of students who are English language learners

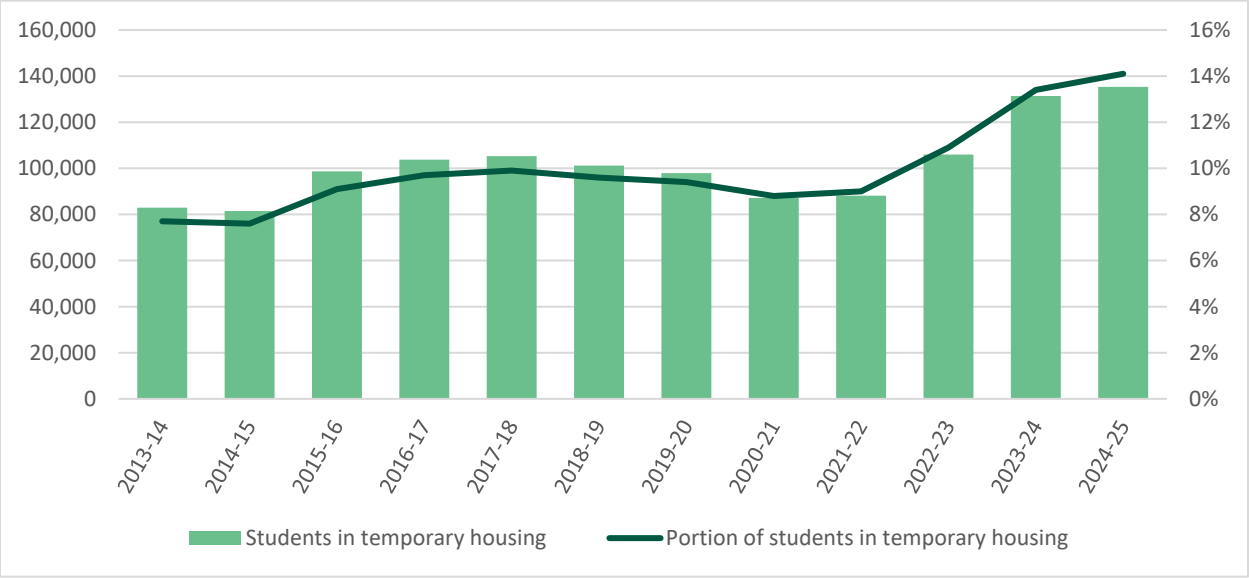


Source: NYCPS Demographic Snapshot. These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79.

NYCPS serves a student population with great economic need

Since SY2023-24, NYCPS's Fair Student Funding formula has provided additional funding for students in temporary housing. Because funding depends in part on identifying these students, improved tracking and recordkeeping may explain some of the recent increase in reported numbers. Even so, the 135,000 students—14% of the student body—recorded as experiencing housing insecurity underscores both the affordability challenges facing New York City families and the urgent needs of NYCPS students.

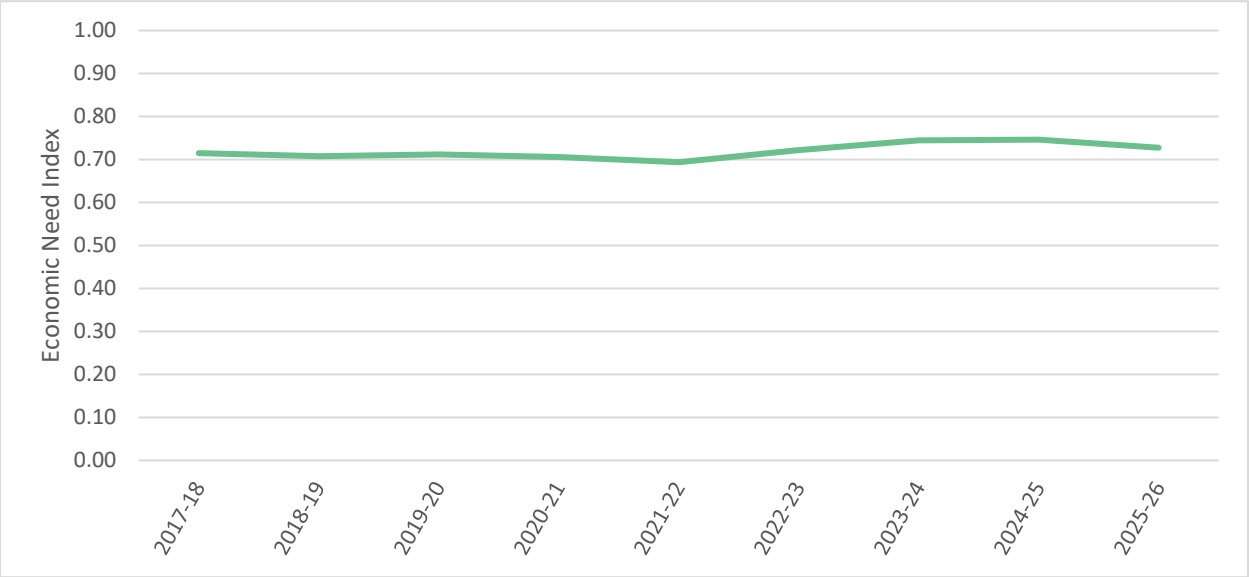
Students in temporary housing



Note: as of SY2024-25. Source: NYCPS Students in Temporary Housing report

NYCPS computes an Economic Need Index, a composite estimating the portion of students who receive public benefits or are below the poverty level. Nearly three in four NYCPS students are estimated to fall under this threshold of economic hardship. The rate has increased slightly over the past decade.

Economic Need Index



Source: NYCPS Demographic Snapshot. These totals include all students in NYCPS schools, including districts 75 and 79.

District-level enrollment trends

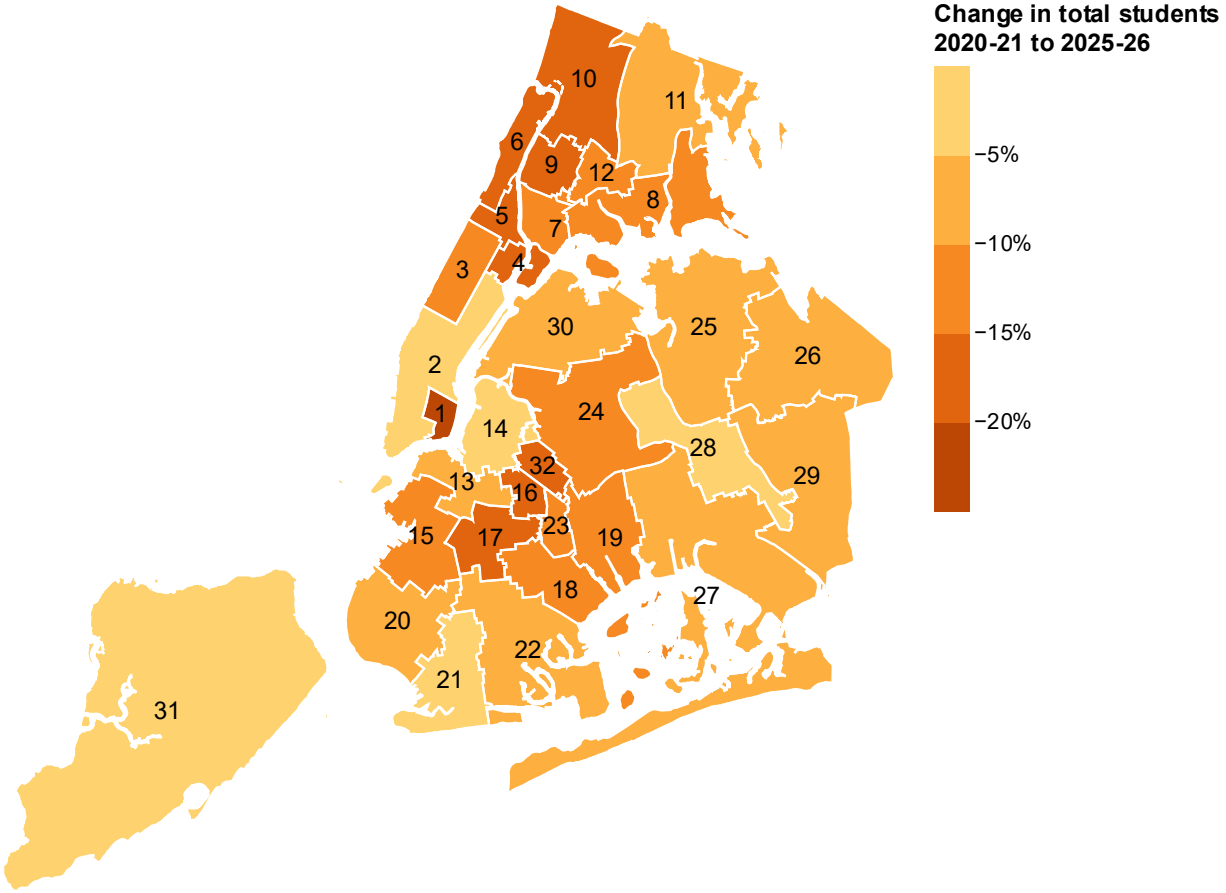
While many of the big picture enrollment trends are directionally consistent from district to district, there is some variation in the pace and direction of change in different areas of the city.

- NYCPS is losing "student share"—the proportion of elementary and middle school students attending NYCPS—in most districts.
    - Where NYCPS is gaining student-share—in districts 1, 3, 16, and 23—it is because other types of schools have seen greater enrollment declines than NYCPS schools.
- The portion of students attending NYCPS is highest in Queens districts 25 and 26 and lowest in Brooklyn districts 14 and 17, Manhattan district 5, and the Bronx district 7.
- Elementary and middle school charter enrollment is concentrated in the South Bronx, Northern Manhattan, and Central Brooklyn. These concentrations have changed little in the past five years.

Note: District-level analysis is limited to grades Kindergarten through grade 8 because the source NYCPS district planning data only details elementary and middle school students at the district level.

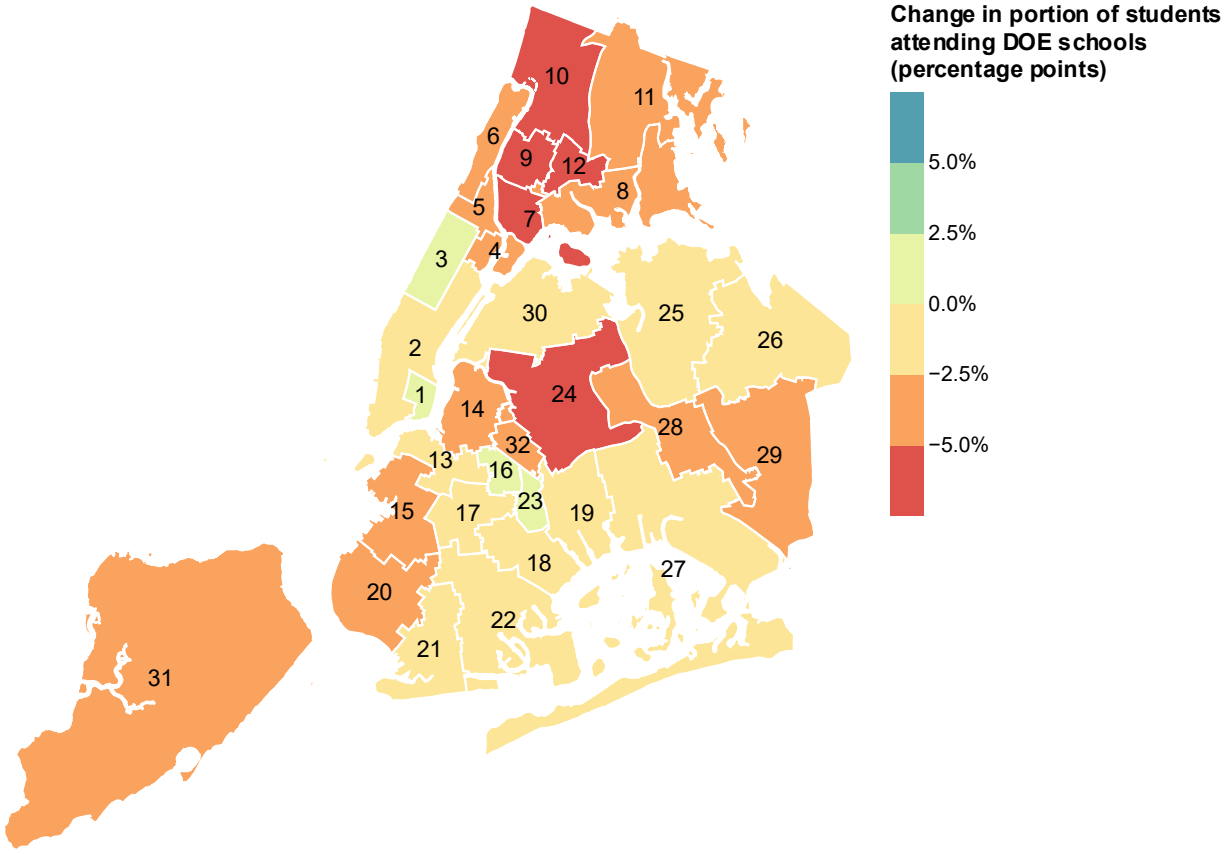
Every district is losing student population

Change in enrolled K-8 students (in NYCPS, charter, or private schools), by district of residence



Source: NYCPS District Data Summaries

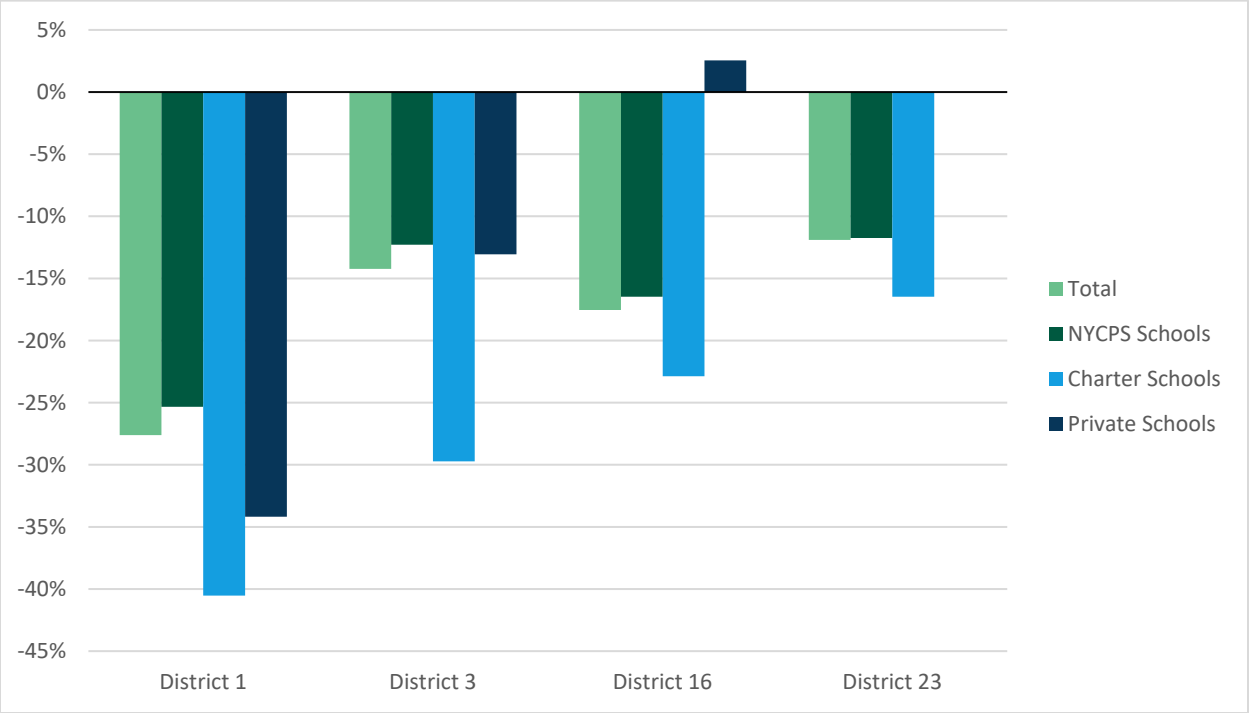
NYCPS is losing student-share in most districts



Where NYCPS is gaining in the *proportion* of students, its total enrollment is still declining, but other school types are seeing enrollment decline *faster*.

These data only track total student populations—not the movements of individual students. But the declines across all school types suggest broad declines in the school-age population from these neighborhoods, with proportionally more students who were in charters leaving these districts or charter schools enrolling smaller cohorts.

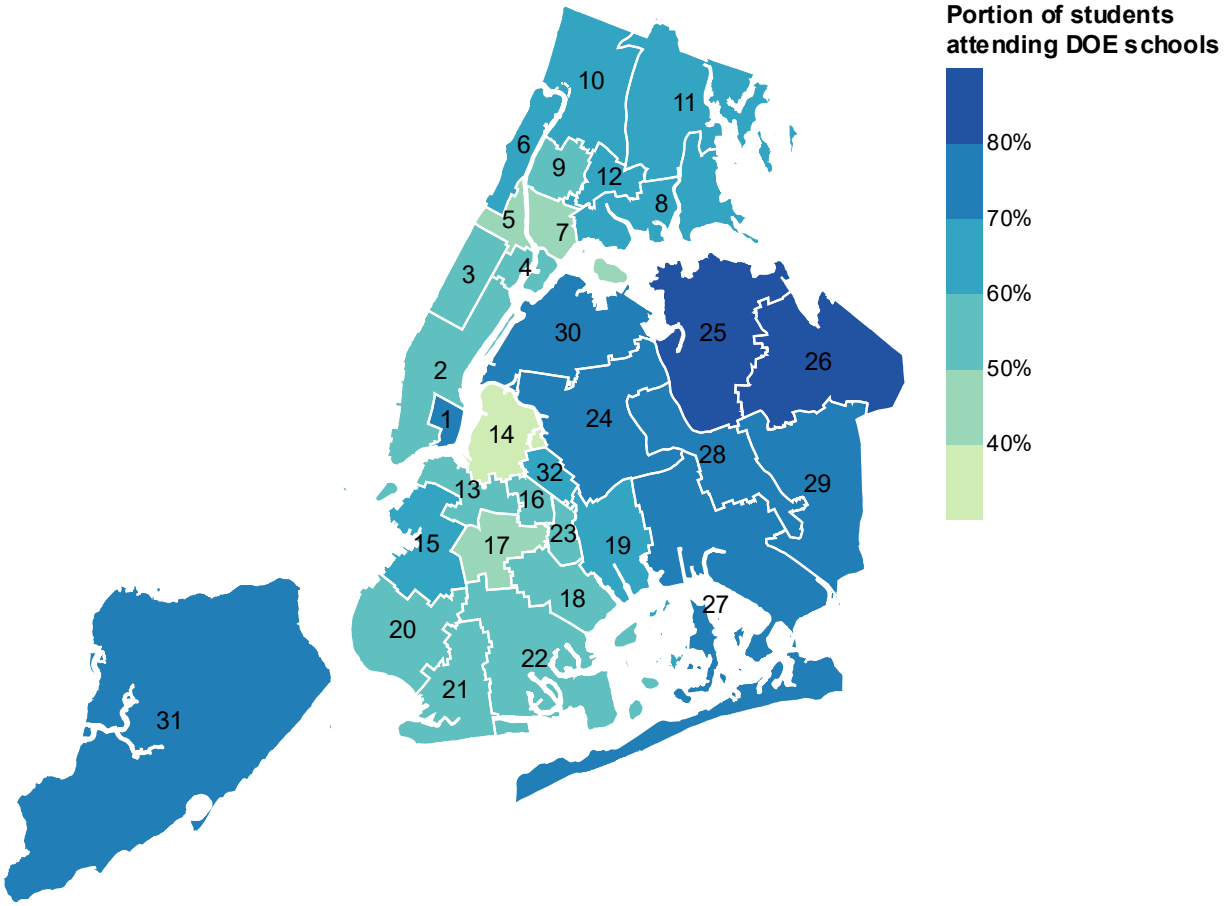
Percent change in number of students by school type, 2020-21 to 2025-26



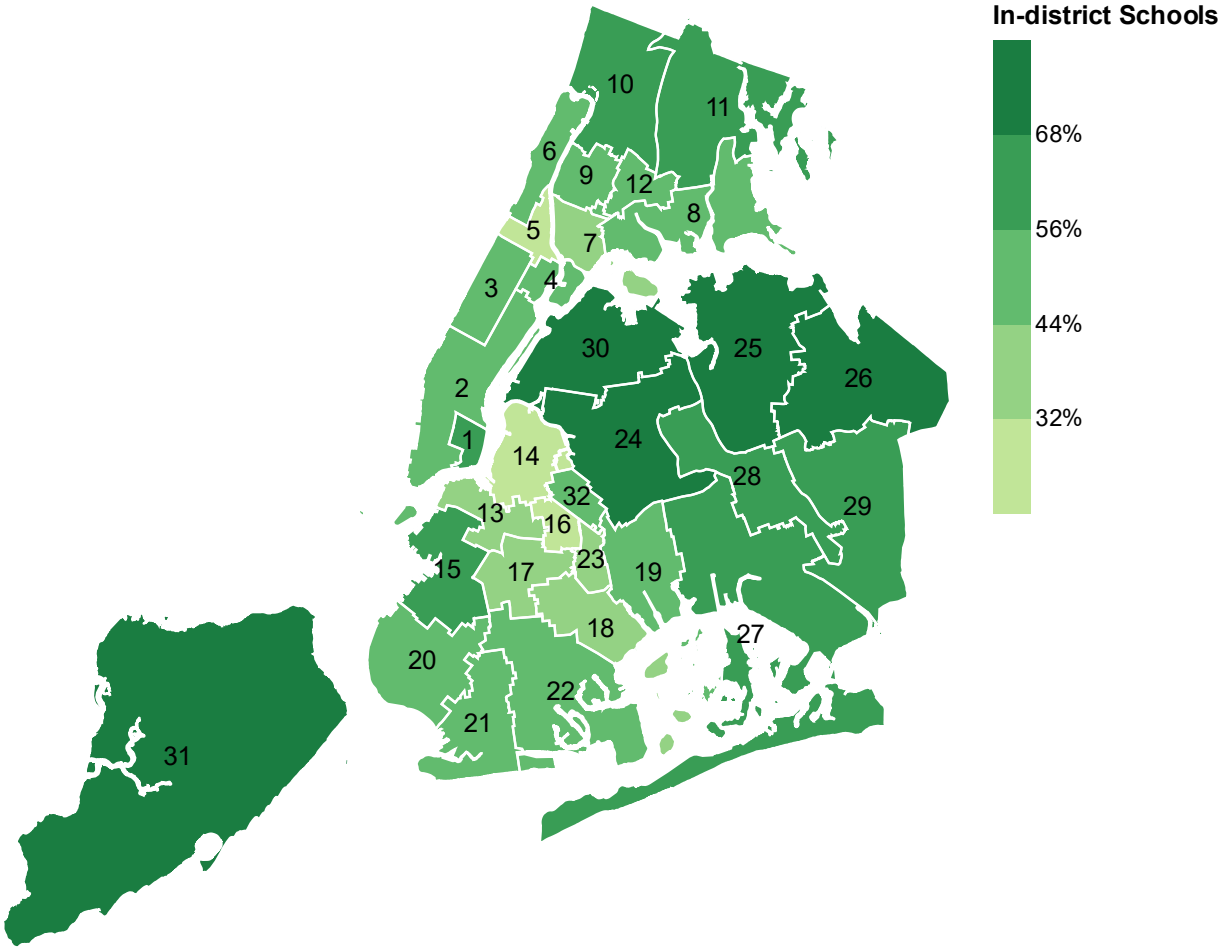
School type by district of residence

These maps show the share of elementary and middle school students living in each district who attend NYCPS, charter, or private schools. For NYCPS students, the maps distinguish between those attending a school in their district of residence and those attending an NYCPS school in another district.

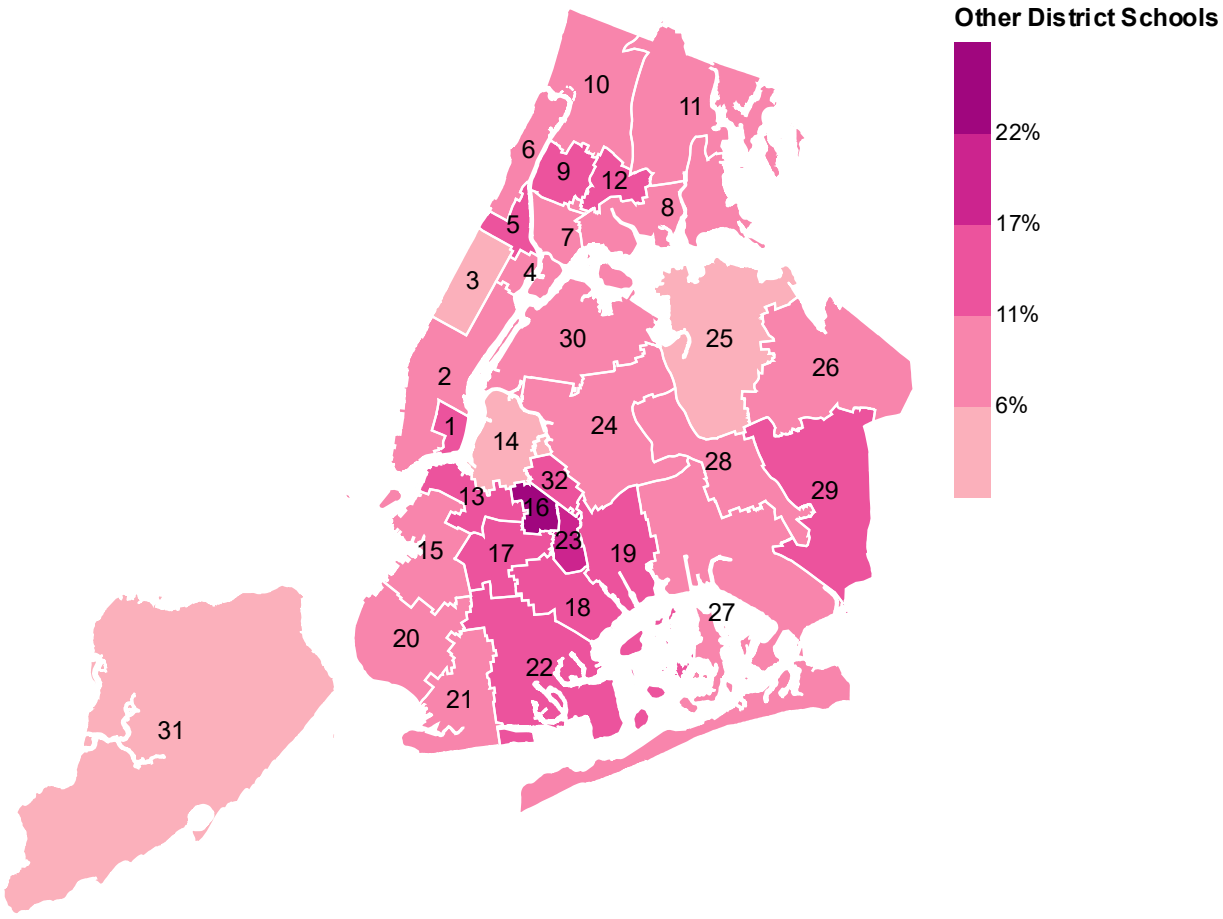
Portion of elementary and middle school students at NYCPS schools



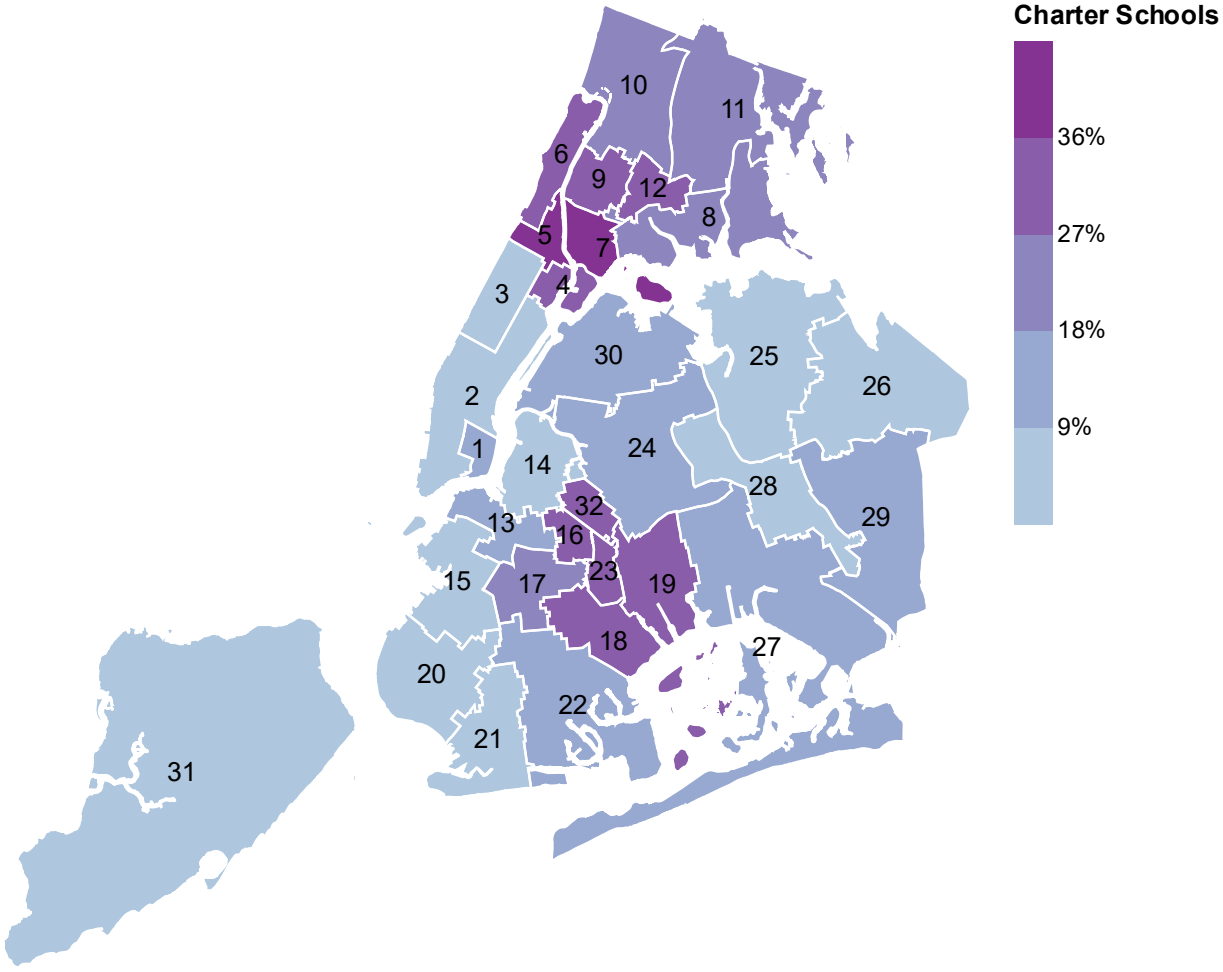
Portion of elementary and middle school students at in-district NYCPS schools



Portion of elementary and middle school students at out-of-district NYCPS schools



Portion of elementary and middle school students at charter schools



Data Sources

The primary source of data on NYCPS and charter school enrollment was the Demographic Snapshot at the district level, published by NYCPS. These data are published annually and are available in a consistent format (allowing year-to-year comparisons) from SY2013-14. For this compendium, Demographic Snapshot files covering several years were combined and normalized.

- The most recent data, covering SY2021-22 through SY2025-26 is available here: https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/students-and-schools/school-quality/information-and-data-overview (This current file also includes important annotations about the data.)
- Data from previous years are available on NYC OpenData:
    - 2020-2021: https://data.cityofnewyork.us/resource/mc73-t4fs
    - 2015-2020: https://data.cityofnewyork.us/resource/8jzu-ady5
    - 2013-2015: https://data.cityofnewyork.us/resource/m2z7-dx25

Combined data are available for download here: https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/demographic_snapshot_data.csv

Data on NYCPS, charter, and private school enrollment by district are from NYCPS Office of District Planning's District Data Summaries. NYCPS publishes a separate report with data for each district, available here: https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/space-and-facilities/district-planning/2026-2027-district-data-summaries. For this compendium, key data tables were extracted from reports for each district and combined into a single dataset, available here: https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/demographic_snapshot_data.csv

These data include student share breakdowns at the district level only for elementary and middle school levels (high school students are segmented at the borough level), so district level student share analysis above includes only elementary and middle school students.

Data on homeschooled students are available from NYSED here: https://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/HomeSchooled/home.html

Data on students in temporary housing are available from NYCPS Students in Temporary Housing Reports, available here: https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/government-reports/students-in-temporary-housing-reports

Projections of future enrollment are from School Construction Authority, available here: https://www.nycsca.org/Community/Capital-Plan-Reports-Data#Demographic-Projection-68

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