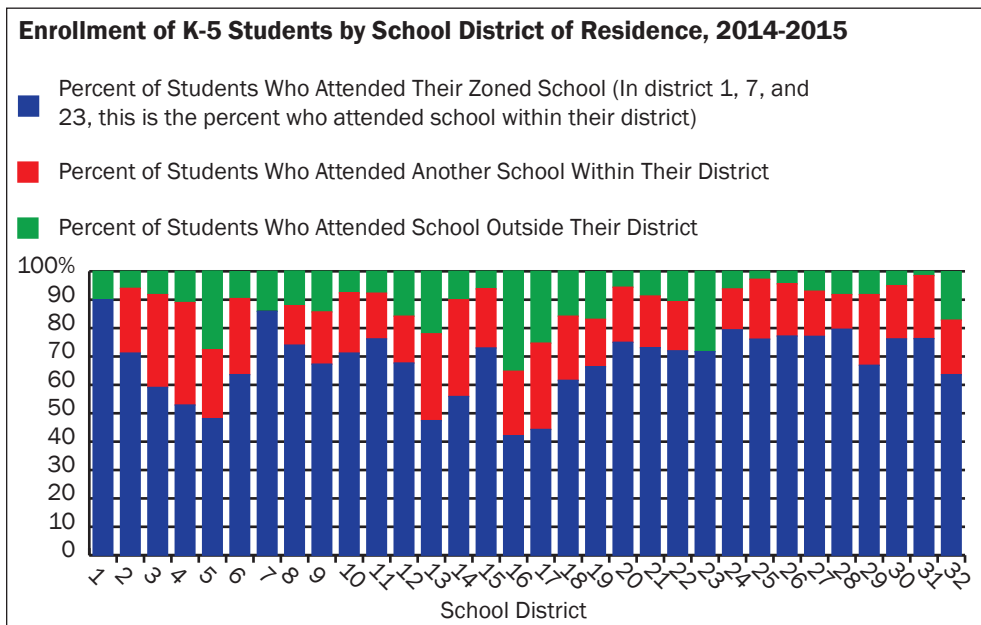
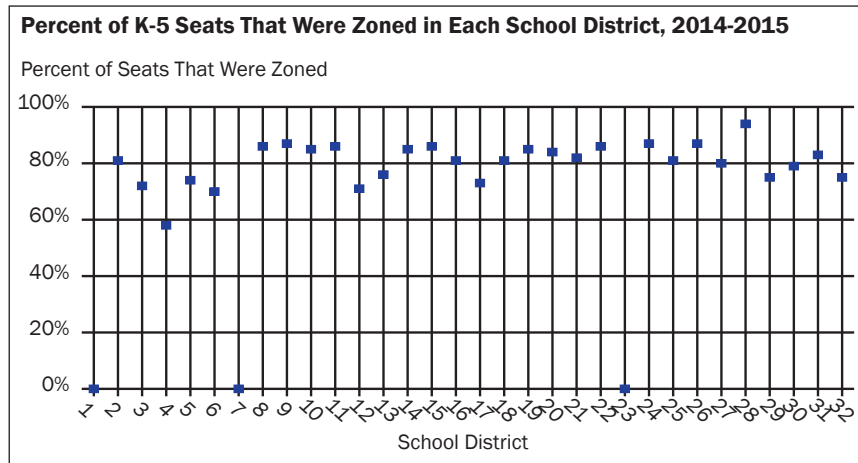


How Much Does Residence Limit the Types of New York City Traditional Public Schools That People Choose?

Efforts to rezone elementary schools to increase socioeconomic integration and ease overcrowding can spark vigorous debate in the affected communities. But admissions methods vary across the 32 school districts, and even among individual schools within districts. What percent of elementary school seats are zoned—school zones are geographic areas from which a school gives students who live within its boundaries first priority for admission—and how often do families find public school seats outside of their local school zone?

- In all but three districts, the majority of seats available to students in grades K-5 are zoned. The share of zoned seats ranges from a minimum of 58 percent in Community School District 4 to a maximum of 94 percent in district 28. Three districts—1, 7, and 23—offer full choice at the elementary school level; therefore, none of their elementary seats are zoned.
- Citywide, more than three quarters of all K-5 seats, 77 percent, are zoned. But families do seek out and obtain placement in public schools other than their local zoned school. Rules for accepting out-of-zone students vary by school and district, but many families do find these placements. In examining these placements, we exclude students who attend charter schools, and we analyze placements based on the district in which a student resides.



- Many families find placement in public schools other than their zoned school. The share of students who attend another school in their district ranges from 12 percent in district 28 to 36 percent in district 4. Similarly, the share that attends school outside their district ranges from 2 percent in district 31 (covering all of Staten Island, separated from every other district by New York Harbor) to 35 percent in district 16.
- Citywide, 71 percent of all K-5 students attended their zoned school, but 29 percent did not. The department’s authority to adjust school zones, and capacity limits at some in-demand zoned schools, means that residing at a particular address may not guarantee a seat in a particular school. At the same time, the system’s ability to engineer the mix of students through zoning faces limitations as parents avail themselves of other options.

SOURCE: IBO analysis of Department of Education of school year 2014-2015 school enrollment data

Share on    

Prepared by Stephanie Kranes
New York City Independent Budget Office