District 15 Diversity Plan Evaluation & Reflection

New York State Integration Project Grant Report

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D15 Diversity Plan
Evaluation & Reflection
June 2024

Prepared for the District 15 Community

Produced by WXY Studio

Many thanks to the:
District 15 Leadership Team,
D15 Community Education Council,
Students, Parents/Caregivers, Teachers,
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process and shared their insights and
reflections.

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Letter from the Chancellor

I often like to say that the whole world lives in New York City. We speak 180 languages in our public schools, and we serve students from all over the globe.

Yet that diversity is not always represented in our classrooms, and when it's not, it's a missed opportunity. To become the leaders of tomorrow, our students need to learn from each other, to hear new perspectives, and to develop respect and appreciation for New Yorkers' myriad backgrounds and cultures.

I'm so proud of the work reflected in this evaluation report, which encompasses many of my core beliefs: that family and community input should drive decision-making, that all students deserve diverse, high-quality learning environments close to home, and that we need to constantly reflect on our progress to ensure continuous improvement.

District 15 has made significant strides in integrating its middle schools, and there is still much work to be done. This report offers a critically important look at this historic initiative, highlighting successes, challenges, and recommendations for moving forward. It is also especially poignant in light of the 70th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court case.

I encourage the District 15 community to use this evaluation to further refine and strengthen its approach to school integration, providing a roadmap and model for other districts to follow. Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and I'm glad to see it uplifted and prioritized in District 15.

David C. Banks
Chancellor, NYC Public Schools

NYC Public Schools
Chancellor David C. Banks

District 15 Diversity Plan Evaluation & Reflection

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

May 2024 marks the 70th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. In the time since, New York City has continued to be among the most segregated school systems in the country (Kucsera 2014). Even in the ten years after the landmark decision, segregation in NYC schools continued to worsen. Protests proliferated in 1964, with nearly half a million New York City students boycotting schools as a part of the school protests of 1964 (Cochran n.d.). Policy debates focused primarily on school zones and busing, though ultimately, there was little actual change. In the 1960s, some Black communities and communities of color shifted their efforts to focus on community control of schools.

Following school enrollment declines through the 1970s and 1980s, particularly at the middle and high school levels, the 1990s saw some districts start to move away from zoned middle schools and towards "school choice," allowing families to select schools. In an effort to make acceptance more competitive, many middle schools in the 2000s began using "screens" such as test scores, grades, absentee records, and admissions tour attendance. This new policy resulted in significant change in Brooklyn's Community School District 15. More high-income students began to attend some of the district's middle schools, raising concerns that screens were contributing to increasing segregation.

DOE socioeconomic measure

Socioeconomic status in this report are calculated based on DOE's current measure for students in poverty. Prior to 2017, DOE measured student socioeconomic status based on Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) qualification. In 2017, NYC DOE began providing free lunch for all public school students and adjusted their measure for students in poverty. Developed in 2017-18, the D15 Plan used the FRL measure to identify the proportion of low-income students, which was 52% at the time.

District 15

From Red Hook and Sunset Park to Park Slope, Cobble Hill, and Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn's Community School District 15 reflects a broad spectrum of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. When the D15 Plan process began in 2017, the overall composition of D15 middle school students was 56% lower-income and 44% higher-income students. This is fairly unusual in New York City, where in 2017 and 2022 half of the 32 community school districts serve more than 80% low-income students (DOE June Biographic Data, 2017 & 2022). District 15 elementary schools rank as the most segregated across all NYC school districts, reflecting underlying neighborhood segregation.

In response to increasing segregation of D15 schools and years of school community advocacy to address this concern, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) approved a community-based engagement process during the school year (SY) 2017-18 to develop recommendations on how to meaningfully integrate D15 middle schools.

The development of the District 15 Diversity Plan (D15 Plan) aimed to set a precedent for DOE engagement and had several distinct features as outlined to the right. A Working Group which included principals, teachers, parents/caregivers, students, and representatives of local organizations, ultimately drafted the final recommendations based on community feedback.

In the summer of 2018, the DOE accepted all but four of the report's 64 recommendations (more information on the status of recommendations can be found in the Tracker in the Appendix). The D15 Plan's admissions policy recommendations focused on preserving families' school choice while also establishing a "priority in admission" for students who qualify as being either from low-income families, Multilingual Learners (MLL), or Students in Temporary Housing (STH). Admissions for middle school for SY 2019-20 marked the first year under the implementation of the D15 Plan. Throughout this report SY 2018-19 serves as a benchmark for the year prior to the implementation of the D15 Plan.

Distinct features of the D15 Diversity Plan

Several factors set this districtwide plan apart from similar initiatives at the time:

- D15 school communities had advocated for a plan for years before its development.
- There was extensive community engagement to inform its recommendations.
- The engagement process and development of the recommendations were guided by a Working Group made up of a range of stakeholders in the district.
- The plan noted a continued commitment to school choice, allowing families to rank any D15 middle schools.
- Recommendations outlined multiple implementation approaches, including the removal of screens and a priority lottery for students in low-income families, Multilingual Learners, and Students in Temporary Housing, collectively known as priority in admissions (PIA) students.
- The recommendations addressed both school integration policies and inclusion practices within schools.

Evaluation of the D15 Plan

One of the recommendations in the D15 Plan was to conduct periodic evaluations to understand how the D15 Plan has been implemented and how it has impacted school communities. While there have been select reports made by the District to the D15 Community Education Council (CEC), this is the first comprehensive evaluation of the D15 Plan. Funded by a New York State Integration Project (NYSIP) grant awarded to D15, this evaluation conducted by WXY Studio marks five years since the initial implementation of the D15 Plan. This evaluation is based on a combination of quantitative analysis, with data provided by the DOE, and qualitative analysis synthesized from a series of listening sessions, interviews, and a community survey.

This D15 Diversity Plan Evaluation & Reflection is structured into the following sections:

1. **Introduction**, which provides context on the D15 Plan and this evaluation.
2. **Process**, which outlines this evaluation's approach and methodology.
3. **Findings**, which are structured around the objectives of this evaluation.
4. **Appendix**, which includes a Tracker providing high-level status updates on the D15 Plan recommendations from 2018.

How to read this section:

The method of analysis is indicated by an icon next to each finding. A "▲" indicates findings synthesized from qualitative data sources, and a "●" indicates findings from quantitative sources.

Evaluation objectives

Several objectives guided the development of the D15 Diversity Plan Evaluation and Reflection process. The Executive Summary and Findings sections are organized by the first five of these objectives, with the sixth objective covered in the Appendix:

- *School Integration*: Analyze the impact of the D15 Diversity Plan on school integration.
- *Additional Impacts*: Highlight additional impacts related to the D15 Plan, such as transportation, overall enrollment, choice acceptance rates, and school utilization.
- *Academic Outcomes*: Analyze D15 academic outcomes for D15 students overall and D15 PIA students since the D15 Plan implementation.
- *Inclusive Practices*: Summarize reflections on the impact of the D15 plan on inclusive practices within D15 middle schools.
- *Implementation*: Summarize community feedback and reflections on the D15 Plan and its implementation.
- *Progress Update*: Provide a high-level progress update on the status of the D15 Plan and its recommendations.

A

The impact of the D15 Plan on levels of school integration

The findings below assess the impact of the D15 Plan on the 12 middle schools within D15 as it relates to school integration and school application choices in the middle school admissions process. One new D15 middle school in Sunset Park, set to open in SY 2024-25, will need to be included in future evaluations. A selection of key findings is shown here; for more information see section A in the Findings.

Key findings

- In the year before the D15 Plan, D15 middle schools ranked as the second most socioeconomically segregated among all school districts in New York City. By SY 2022-23, D15 middle schools ranked 19th out of 32 districts.

- D15 elementary schools remain the most socioeconomically segregated in NYC. The contrast between the D15 elementary and middle schools in part reflects residential segregation in D15 and highlights the effectiveness of the D15 Plan in countering this segregation at the middle school level.

- The District set a target range for each middle school of 40-70% priority in admissions (PIA) students based on the district average as a guidepost to measure progress under the D15 Plan. As of SY 2022-23, 10 out of 12 middle schools in D15 fall within the target range of PIA students, an increase of six schools (including one new school that opened in 2022) since the D15 Plan.

- Students list more schools when applying to middle school than before the D15 Plan, especially students without priority in admissions. Among students applying for middle school for SY 2022-23, 61% of students who do not have priority in admissions selected 11 or 12 schools on their applications, compared to 5% among students who applied for middle school for SY 2018-19.

- Two middle schools in Sunset Park remain socioeconomically isolated, with high proportions of PIA students.

B

Additional impacts of the D15 Plan

To examine additional impacts from the D15 Plan the Evaluation analyzed a number of factors including: districtwide average travel distances to school, middle school enrollment changes including among charter schools, proportion of students receiving their top choice schools in the middle school admissions lottery, experiences with the middle school admissions process, and changes in school utilization. A selection of key findings is shown here; for more information see section B in the Findings.

Key findings

● Districtwide, the average distance to school stayed constant. After the D15 Plan the average PIA student travels up to one short block (200 feet) farther to school than the average for all other students in D15– a slight increase from SY 2018-19 when the difference between average distance to school for PIA and all other students was less than 50 feet.

● Since 2018, middle school enrollment in D15 has declined by 11%, compared with a 14% decline for middle school grades citywide.

● Between SY 2018-19 and 2022-23, enrollment in charter schools within D15 declined by 1%, in contrast to the enrollment growth of 29% seen for charter middle schools citywide.

● After an initial decline, the proportion of students receiving one of their top three choices for middle school has increased each year since the D15 Plan and is now slightly higher than it was before the D15 Plan. In SY 2022-23, 85% of D15 middle school students received one of their top three choices compared with 84% in SY 2018-19.

● In SY 2022-23, 83% of PIA students received their top choice compared with 52% in SY 2018-19. In SY 2022-23, 46% of all other students received their top choice school, compared with 45% in SY 2018-2019.

▲ Many D15 guidance counselors observed a significant decrease in student stress and anxiety in the middle school admissions process after the D15 Plan.

● In SY 2022-23 school utilizations for D15 schools serving middle school grades are closer to the districtwide average than they were in SY 2018-2019. In SY 2022-23 the average difference in school utilizations from the district-wide average was 18%, compared with 21% in 2018-19. This indicates an increase in the balancing of resources and students across D15 middle schools since school funding is allocated on a per student basis.

C

Academic outcomes for D15 students overall and D15 PIA students

To evaluate academic outcomes while controlling for the impacts of COVID-19, this evaluation used an analysis methodology called Propensity Score Matching that compared test scores among D15 students with a peer comparison group; this is a process similar to analyses in NYC DOE's School Quality Snapshots. This comparison group is made up of students of the same grade with similar school environments, similar academic profiles, and similar backgrounds (PIA status versus all other students). The comparison group is an estimate of how D15 students may have performed academically had they attended middle school in another district in NYC.

Across all comparison group analyses, D15 cohorts had better academic outcomes than the comparison group – indicating that D15 students had better academic outcomes than they would have had if they attended school in a different district. A selection of key findings is shown here; for more information see section C in the Findings.

Key findings

- In SY 2022-23 25% of PIA students took Regents math exams, compared with 14% in SY 2018-19.
- D15 students in both SY 2022-23 and SY 2018-19 cohorts had higher scores on their math and English Language Arts (ELA) State tests compared with peers citywide. In SY 2022-23 D15 students overall had on average 7% higher scores in math and 5% in ELA relative to the comparison group. In SY 2018-19 D15 students' average scores were 8% higher in math and 7% higher in ELA.
- Students with priority in admissions in D15 in both SY 2022-23 and SY 2018-19 cohorts had higher scores on their State tests compared with peers citywide. In 2022-23 D15 PIA students state test scores were on average 7% higher in math and 5% higher in ELA than the comparison group. In SY 2018-19 D15 PIA students scores were 4% higher than the comparison group for both math and ELA.
- D15 students in both SY 2022-23 and SY 2018-19 cohorts met State standards on their State math and ELA exams at a higher rate compared with peers. In 2022-23, 58% of D15 students met State standards in math which was 9% higher than the comparison group; 61% met State standards in ELA which was 8% higher than the comparison group. In SY 2018-19 D15 students met State standards 13% more of the time in math and 11% more in ELA than did their peers in the comparison group.
- D15 students who took the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) in both SY 2022-23 and SY 2018-19 8th grade cohorts (all students and PIA students) were accepted to specialized high schools at a higher rate than the comparison group. In SY 2021-22, 22% of D15 SHSAT takers were accepted to a specialized high school, 11% higher than the comparison group. Among PIA students 8% of SHSAT takers were accepted to one or more specialized high schools, 3% higher than the comparison group. In SY 2018-19, D15 SHSAT takers were accepted to specialized high schools at a 9% greater rate than the comparison group; and D15 PIA SHSAT takers were accepted to specialized high schools only 1% more of the time than the comparison group.

D

D15 Plan impact on inclusive practices within D15 middle schools

In addition to the focus on middle school integration, the D15 Plan also proposed recommendations to support greater inclusion within D15 middle schools. Inclusive practices and outcomes include a range of initiatives such as curriculum that embraces broader cultural histories, restorative justice practices, and the fostering of more friendships across identities. Based on survey information and focus groups with students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and school administrators and data-gathering, several important findings emerged. A selection of key findings is shown here; for more information see section D in the Findings.

Key findings

● Suspensions in D15 have decreased significantly, whereas in other districts suspensions have increased significantly. This is true for both Superintendent and Principal suspensions.

▲ Many school administrators and teachers highlighted more representative staff as a continued priority, and some schools have made recent strides.

▲ Many students engaged in this evaluation report seeing the benefit of learning with peers who are different from themselves.

▲ Some school staff observed strides in student friendships across socioeconomic status and neighborhoods.

▲ Many students can identify strategies for navigating conflict with peers. Students engaged in this process pointed to guidance counselors, trusted teachers or staff, restorative justice practices, and/or the advisory period as key forms of support.

▲ Some students who have experienced disrespect or microaggressions from teachers desired more clarity and transparency on how to elevate these experiences to school leadership for consideration.

▲ Students at a few schools highlighted the need for more meaningful action steps around inclusion. Students encouraged schools to move beyond poster campaigns and host more dialogue with students on this districtwide integration plan as an entry point into identifying improvements needed in their school among both policy and practice.

▲ Many PTAs are working toward inclusive practices, though many request more support in the process.

▲ Some school administrators and teachers observed parents/caregivers across socioeconomic status learning from one another in parent spaces.

▲ Some school administrators, teachers, and parents observed more equity-focused work at their schools over the last five years.

●▲ The NYSIP grant and schools directly funded some inclusion training after the D15 Plan, though many desire more ongoing training.

E

Reflections on the D15 Plan and its implementation

Based on engagement across school communities, there was a range of feedback on how the D15 Plan was implemented, including guidance on monitoring, funding, and training.

District leadership reflected that districtwide integration plans should either decrease the number of recommendations to allow for more focused implementation and monitoring, or outline and train District leadership on how to track or evaluate recommendations. District leadership and some parents and school administrators shared that the NYSIP grant provided funding for some training and support after the implementation of the D15 Plan. In 2019, DOE funded an additional District staff member recommended in the D15 Plan: the DEI Coordinator.

In conversations with school leadership and staff, several reported that there has not been enough support in planning for and monitoring the implementation of the inclusion recommendations. Several members of school leadership, parents, students, and teachers noted the importance of ongoing training, and a few school communities reflected that training before the implementation of the D15 Plan would have been beneficial.

District leadership also shared that they aim to support and further the values of the D15 Plan, while also addressing family priorities across D15, especially priorities of students and families with marginalized identities. In the years following the D15 Diversity Plan, the District supported the work of two Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects, one in Sunset Park and one focused on Red Hook, Gowanus, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, and Boerum Hill. Facilitated by D15 parents, the projects highlighted a number of family priorities, including the importance of quality middle schools close to home and affinity spaces in education. The transition of P.S. 676 into a middle school in Red Hook in 2022 and the opening of a new Spanish and Mandarin dual language middle school in Sunset Park in 2024 both stemmed from recommendations from the PAR process. A selection of key findings is shown here; for more information see section E in the Findings.

Key findings

▲ Awareness of the D15 Plan ranges across communities, including among families with priority in admissions.

▲ Many students did not know about the D15 Plan, and some urged more student involvement in school-wide policy decisions around inclusion.

▲ Many school administrators reflected that school-specific plans for support and monitoring as part of districtwide integration planning would have been beneficial in the implementation of the D15 Plan.

▲● Many school leaders raised concerns around potential loss of federal Title I funding, where funding is available for schools where the proportion of low-income students is 60% or higher. The districtwide proportion of low-income students is slightly below 60% in D15. Two schools lost Title I funding before the D15 Plan, one has lost funding since the plan, and two more schools are nearing the cut-off.

▲ Many observed that DOE bus coordination challenges persist, and public transit safety concerns remain among some families.

Conclusion

In evaluating the D15 Diversity Plan, many D15 community members marked its development as a moment of opportunity, with focused support from the DOE, years of prior school community advocacy, and funding from New York State. In conversation with DOE staff, many shared that the D15 Plan set a precedent for DOE engagement processes and opened possibilities for exploring this work in other districts. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the same year that the first cohort of 6th grade students under the D15 Plan began middle school is critical context to consider in this evaluation, as school communities shifted to focus on emergency response to support families. Many school communities also marked the movement for Black Lives Matter later that summer as another critical reckoning for many school communities' around anti-racism and inclusion within schools.

Overall, the D15 Plan shifted a community school district's middle schools from the second most socio-economically segregated to 19th out of 32 school districts in NYC. The D15 Plan integrated middle schools, while maintaining school choice, over a short period of time in a district that is residentially segregated. The D15 Plan made considerable shifts in schools' proportion of PIA students with all but two schools falling within the target range. At the same time, District leadership has demonstrated a commitment to understanding families' range of educational priorities, especially families with marginalized identities, such as through the two PAR processes in the years following the D15 Plan.

This evaluation also highlighted ways that the experience of the D15 Plan's implementation varied across middle schools in the district. All middle school principals celebrated its work, though many also highlighted specific school-by-school needs that often cannot be addressed within districtwide recommendations. This reflection elevates the importance of continuing to engage school communities to understand how needs change over time as the implementation of the D15 Plan continues. Students engaged in this process also emphasized the need for continued and deeper engagement of students in the leadership of this work; students highlighted additional nuances of their schools context that they are best positioned

to address with support from trusted adults.

This evaluation brought to light several priorities and challenges that existed even before the D15 Plan's implementation: challenges around transportation coordination and safety; concerns around the loss of Title I funding in a district that has seen gentrification impact some schools; the importance of restorative justice and racial/ethnic representation among staff; and ongoing training for teachers on how to best support and steward integrated classrooms, both across academic levels and identities.

As the next five years bring new strides and challenges for D15, this first comprehensive evaluation of the D15 Plan prepared for District 15 aims to be a starting point. Findings presented here can be used as the basis for: accountability and monitoring support for relevant DOE offices and District staff; research or advocacy projects among students; discussion and ideation among PTAs; and further documentation of collective lessons learned by the D15 community and all those committed to advancing the values of the D15 Plan.

Consideration for future evaluations

Future evaluations can take several different forms to allow for more frequent or focused monitoring. Some potential iterations of this work are listed here:

- *Incorporate into student learning:* Utilize this evaluation as a learning opportunity for D15 students to further explore and build on the findings of this evaluation.
- *Convene a working group:* Gather a group of representative stakeholders to provide guidance and monitoring around D15 Plan and PAR work.
- *Identify findings for further exploration:* Based on community reflections on this evaluation, identify areas for further exploration that can be lead by future iterations of student- or parent-led participatory action research.
- *Monitor programs:* Replicate the programs evaluations process started through this work to track changes in programs offered across schools over time.

Introduction

The following section introduces the D15 Diversity Plan Evaluation and Reflection through an overview of District 15, the D15 Diversity Plan, key historical context, and critical current context.

Introduction

On the first day of school in September 2019, 11 middle schools in Brooklyn opened their doors to students, much as they had in previous years; the difference that year was that students' middle school offers in Community School District 15 (D15) were made under a new middle school admissions policy developed through the D15 Diversity Plan (D15 Plan). Following years of activism and discussion around concerns of increasing segregation between schools, the DOE approved the facilitation of a community-based process to create a districtwide integration plan in D15 during school year (SY) 2017-18.

For many years the D15 middle school admissions policy allowed choice across the district rather than sending students to zoned schools based on home address. In the early 2000s, NYC DOE changed the policy to allow middle schools to apply "screens" such as test scores, grades, absentee records and tour attendance to determine which students were accepted to certain schools. Rather than students and families choosing their schools, "school choice" meant that the schools were choosing the students.

This new policy resulted in a significant change in District 15. More high-income students began to attend some of the district's middle schools. Of particular note, three schools underwent rapid change, raising concerns that screens were contributing to increasing segregation.

In response to changing school demographics and parental concerns, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) approved a community-based engagement process aimed at developing recommendations on how to meaningfully integrate D15 middle schools. The development of the D15 Plan aimed to set a precedent for DOE engagement. The process included extensive community participation through a series of large-scale community workshops and several smaller-scale focus groups. A Working Group composed of members from local organizations, D15 schools, and the D15 Community Education Council was convened to guide the process and ultimately develop the final recommendations. When the D15 Plan was issued to the DOE in the summer of 2018, the DOE accepted all but a few of the report's 64 recommendations.

Evaluation

Among the D15 Plan's recommendations was a call for periodic evaluations to study the implementation and impacts of the recommendations. While there have been reports made by the District to the D15 Community Education Council, this is the first comprehensive evaluation of the D15 Plan. This report, which marks five years since the D15 Plan's implementation, was funded as part of the New York State Integration Project grant awarded to D15. This evaluation is based on a combination of quantitative analysis, with data provided by the DOE, and qualitative analysis synthesized from a series of listening sessions, interviews, and a community survey.

The D15 Diversity Plan Evaluation and Reflection process is an effort to understand the direct and indirect impacts of the D15 Plan on school communities and which of the D15 Plan's recommendations have been implemented. This evaluation was guided by a set of objectives, which also guide the organization of this report. Both the Executive Summary and Findings sections are organized by the first five of these objectives:

- *School Integration*: Analyze the impact of the D15 Diversity Plan on school integration.
- *Additional Impact*: Highlight additional impacts related to the D15 Plan, such as transportation, overall enrollment, choice acceptance rates, and school utilization.
- *Academic Outcomes*: Analyze D15 academic outcomes for D15 students overall and D15 PIA students since the D15 Plan implementation.
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4. **Appendix**, which includes a tracker providing high-level status updates on the D15 Plan recommendations from 2018.

DOE socioeconomic measure

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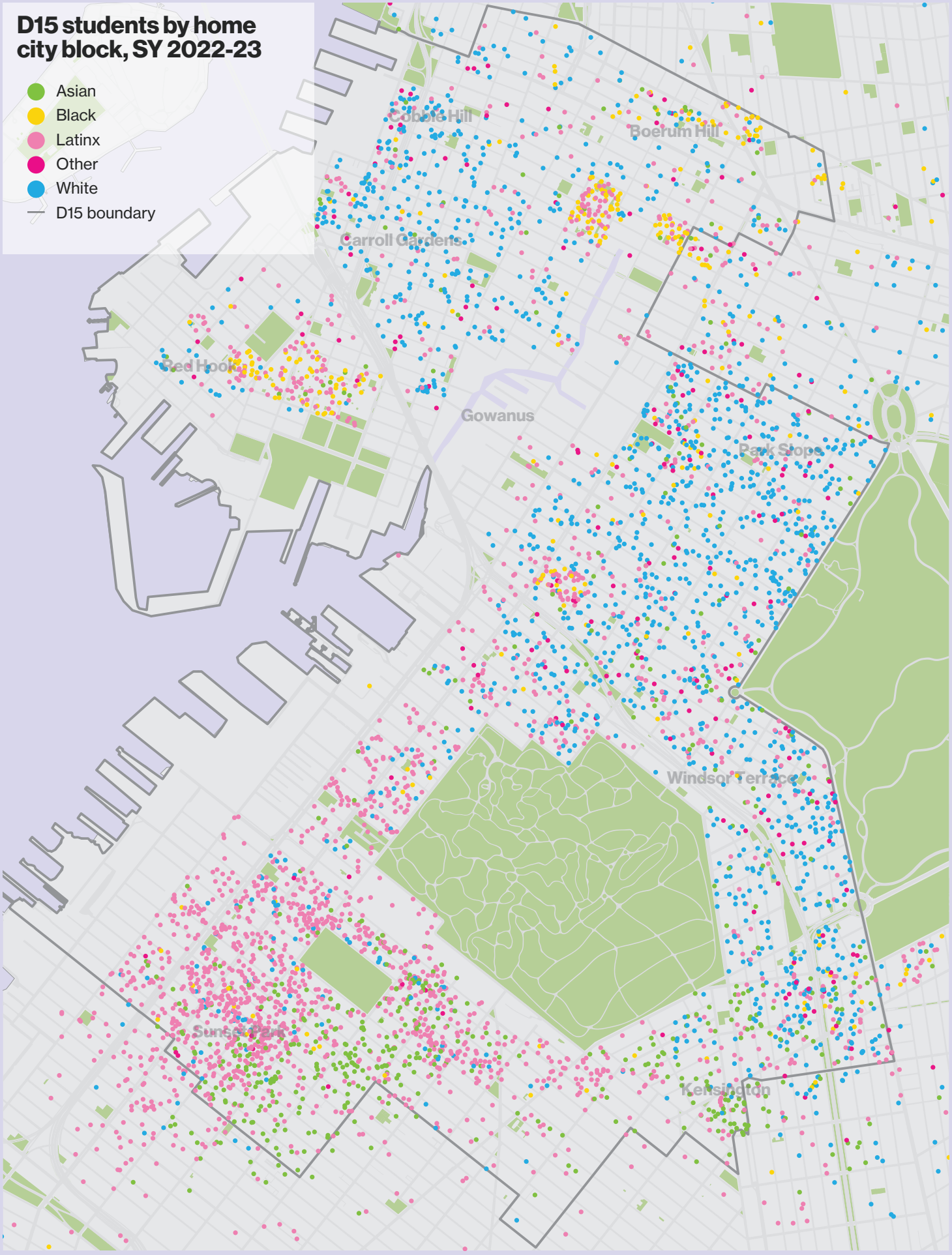

D15 students by home city block, SY 2022-23
Asian
Black
Latinx
Other
White
D15 boundary
Cobble Hill
Boerum Hill
Carroll Gardens
Red Hook
Gowanus
Park Slope
Windsor Terrace
Sunset Park
Kensington

Historical context

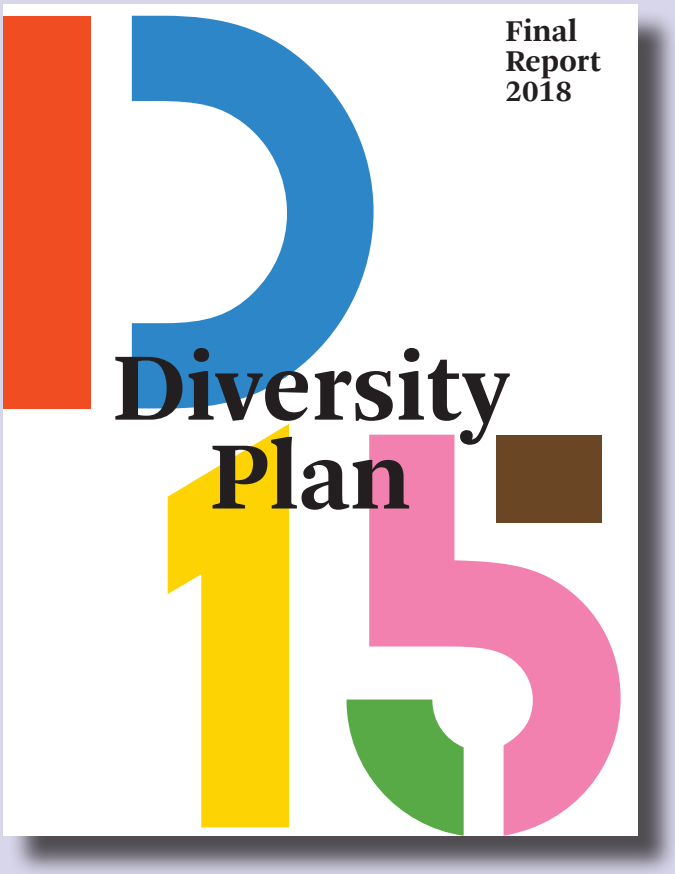
We are approaching the landmark 200th anniversary of the Public School Society (PSS). Approved by the New York State legislature in 1826, the PSS required schools to accept all students regardless of religion or ability to pay. Six years later, they expanded the policy to include schools serving Black students, although schools for Black students remained separate until 1873 (Ravitch 1974, 22-23). There were many schools already operating when the PSS began; a significant challenge came from church schools, in particular the Catholic Church which was growing enormously with Irish immigration. They viewed the PSS as "Protestant Public Schools," and only a small percentage of Irish immigrant children attended them (Ravitch 1974, 41). A compromise was reached in which local wards would control the schools and receive funds from a newly elected Board of Education that would ensure nonsectarian instruction (Ravitch 1974, 72-73).

The ward schools often took on the ethnic character of the local politicians who controlled their funding. While school governance became more centrally controlled in the early 20th century, the notion of neighborhood schools remained. With the influx of Black families from the South, a number of government actions including redlining and restrictive covenants resulted in a deepening of racially segregated schools.

Ten years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, New York City schools saw little impact as segregation continued to worsen. Protests over segregated schools exploded in NYC in 1964, with nearly half a million students participating in the school boycott of 1964. The policy debate often focused on integrating schools through redrawing school zones and busing students. Ultimately, there was little actual change: the Allen Report (1964) reaffirmed the notion of neighborhood schools, rejecting busing and any significant redrawing of boundaries (Ravitch 1974, 282). With the lack of movement toward integration, there was a shift later in the 1960s among some communities of color toward community control with a focus on self-empowerment. This was illustrated, for example, by struggles for local self-determination in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, where Black and Puerto Rican parents organized to gain power over school policies and the selection of school administrators.

The 1970s and 1980s saw a significant decline in public school enrollment. In particular, many students left the city's schools at the middle and high school levels. Enrollment numbers were beginning to rebound in the 1990s with the increase of immigration from Latin America and Asia. While migrant children often attended public schools, higher-income students did not, particularly at the middle and high school levels. In an attempt to expand the pool of public school students, some districts started to move away from zoned schools and allowed students to select schools. This selection worked both ways; in the early 2000s, many middle schools began applying "screens" such as test scores, grades, absentee records, and tour attendance to make acceptance more competitive.

In District 15 this process resulted in changes in the demographic makeup of a number of middle schools; between 2007 and 2017, M.S. 447 The Math & Science Exploratory School dropped from 63% to 44% students of color, M.S. 51 William Alexander shifted from 64% to 44% students of color, and M.S. 443 New Voices School of Academic & Creative Arts went from 79% to 51% students of color.



D15 Diversity Plan

Stretching from Park Slope, Cobble Hill, and Carroll Gardens to Red Hook and Sunset Park, Brooklyn's Community School District 15 is heterogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity, and class. When the D15 Plan process began in 2017, the overall composition of the District 15 middle school students was split relatively evenly between lower-income (56%) and higher-income (44%) students. This is fairly unusual in New York City, where in 2017 and 2022, 76% of all DOE middle school students qualify as low-income, and roughly half of the 32 community school districts serve more than 80% students who qualify as low-income. In the year that the D15 Plan process began, the District 15 middle schools were ranked the second most segregated community school district in New York City, and the District 15 elementary schools were ranked the most segregated. It is not surprising that District 15 shows more segregation than other districts which are more homogeneous in terms of class and race. But, with a fairly even mix of low- and high-income students, District 15 also represented an opportunity to have students of different backgrounds attend middle school together.

The D15 Plan's admissions policy recommendations focused on preserving families' school choice while also establishing a "priority in admission" for students who qualify as being either from low-income families, Multilingual Learners (MLL), or Students in Temporary Housing (STH). The "priority in admission" policy in District 15 recommended 52% of available seats be prioritized for the qualifying students at every middle school. This reflected the proportion of middle school students who qualified for Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) in 2017. As part of these changes, the Plan also recommended the removal of "screens" in the middle school admissions process. Students entering middle school in SY 2019-20 were the first to attend D15 middle schools after the initial implementation of the D15 Plan.

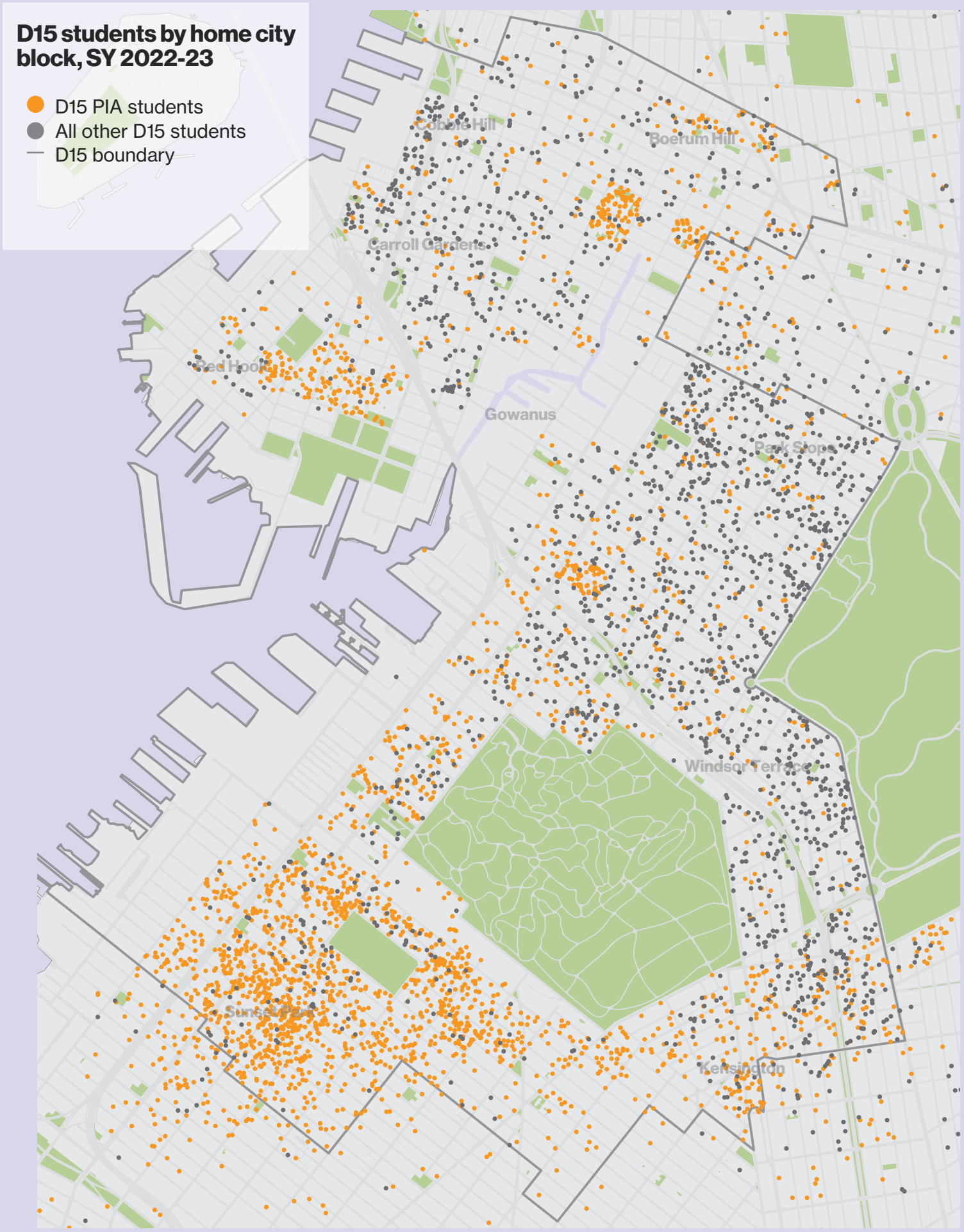
The development of the D15 Diversity Plan marked a departure from many attempts at integration in New York City and beyond. In D15 the Diversity Plan process and guidance were characterized by:

- Prior grassroots support from local parents and political leaders, including admissions changes that had already been implemented by two middle schools in the district.
- A breadth of community engagement supported by quantitative analysis during the plan's development.
- A continued commitment to school choice which allowed parents to continue applying to any of the district's middle schools.
- An emphasis on socioeconomic equity through a priority for lower-income students, removal of screens, and a focus on inclusion practices within the school.

The D15 Plan outlined guidance on policies and practices needed to support middle school integration and inclusion practices through a comprehensive list of recommendations including the following topics: admissions policies, monitoring and coordination, transportation, access to information, distribution of resources, restorative justice, accessibility, collaboration and family engagement, inclusive classrooms, training, and representation among staff.

D15 at a glance

In SY 2022-23, there were 30,500 students in grades Pre-K through 12 in District 15 schools – including 5,800 middle school students – and 2,600 teachers at D15 schools – including 450 at the middle school level. At the time of this evaluation, the D15 community had 12 middle school options, including the Harbor Middle School in Red Hook that opened in SY 2022-23. As of SY 2024-25, one additional middle school in Sunset Park will be available.


D15 students by home city block, SY 2022-23
D15 PIA students
All other D15 students
D15 boundary
Cobble Hill
Boerum Hill
Carroll Gardens
Red Hook
Gowanus
Park Slope
Windsor Terrace
Sunset Park
Kensington

Critical context since the D15 Plan

COVID-19

March 16, 2020, marked the start of school closures in New York State in an attempt to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19. This public health crisis was felt acutely in major cities, especially New York City, which has seen more than 46,000 pandemic-related deaths in NYC to date (NYC DOHMH 2024). The pandemic also posed unprecedented challenges for public schools and their families across NYC. Public school staff and families rushed to organize remote learning, school meals, and other support families relied on from schools. More than 8,600 youth lost a parent to COVID-19 in NYC (Bellafonte 2023), and depression among teens rose starkly during these years (Richtel 2023). After the return to in-person instruction during SY 2021-22, teachers across NYC also observed marked learning loss. Studies elsewhere have shown evidence that education disruptions and changes due to COVID-19 were particularly challenging for low-income students and have contributed to widened achievement gaps (Fahle et al 2024).

This crisis overlapping with the first year of implementation of the D15 Plan is an important consideration for this evaluation. The first cohort of 6th grade students under the D15 Plan experienced school closures during the Fall of their first year in middle school. Many stakeholders engaged in this evaluation noted that this crisis at the onset of a districtwide integration policy impacted the momentum of implementing some recommendations in the D15 Plan. The findings on the impacts of the D15 Plan outlined in this report aim to also take the impacts of COVID-19 into account especially around academic outcomes. The full description of this approach is outlined in the Process section.

Black Lives Matter

Additionally important to recall in reviewing the findings of this evaluation, the summer of 2020 saw a burgeoning of the Black Lives Matter movement after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota in May 2020. Polls from June 2020 suggest between 15 million and 26 million people participated in demonstrations against police brutality across the U.S., which would make this the largest movement in U.S. history (Buchanan, 2020). During engagement in this evaluation, many families and school staff noted the Black Lives Matter movement and the summer of 2020 as a catalyst for many conversations around racial equity and inclusion in their schools during remote learning in 2020 and beyond.

Migrant crisis in NYC

The recent heightening of the migrant crisis in New York City is also important context in the ongoing implementation of the D15 Plan. Between spring 2022 and fall 2023, NYC saw around 120,000 asylum seekers arriving in the city, of which around 30,000 were children (Jones, 2023). Almost all are enrolled in New York City public schools. This influx is important to note since understanding students' specific learning and social-emotional needs is core to the values of the D15 Plan and impacts how schools organize their resources to address those needs.

2

Process

The following section outlines the process for evaluating the D15 Diversity Plan using quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Process

This evaluation uses both quantitative and qualitative data to provide insight into the impacts of the D15 Diversity Plan. Quantitative data provides a first layer of insight on D15 middle schools before and after the D15 Plan using information that is updated annually by the DOE. Qualitative data, collected through engagement with school communities during this evaluation, provides important detail to deepen this evaluation's understanding of quantitative data. The analyses considered the impacts on all District 15 students, with a particular focus on the students with priority in admissions (PIA). Details of this evaluation's approach, qualitative process, and quantitative methodology are listed below.

Quantitative analysis

Quantitative analysis (indicated by a "●" in the Findings section) for this report aims to provide an understanding of D15 middle schools before and after the D15 Plan, and to contextualize insights gathered through qualitative interviews and small-group listening sessions. Topics of focus include: socioeconomic integration, changes to middle school admissions choices, distance traveled to school, discipline and restorative justice, and student academic outcomes.

Data collection timeline

This evaluation's qualitative data was collected during the first year of Superintendent Alvarez's leadership in school year 2021-22, and thus may not reflect new initiatives started in SY 2022-23. This evaluation was released in 2024 in order to incorporate the latest year of quantitative data, SY 2022-23, which the DOE shared with evaluators in early 2024. This was decided in order to provide more context on current conditions, after pauses in New York State testing data during the height of the pandemic.

Data for the quantitative analysis in this report was provided by the Research and Policy Support Group (RPSG) at DOE. This information included anonymized data on NYC public school students, student state test scores, incidents and suspensions, and middle school admissions choices. The School Construction Authority provided additional data on school capacities and utilizations. At the time of report writing, the most recent student enrollment, admissions, and testing data available from DOE was SY 2022-23. The most recent available data on the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) was from SY 2021-22.

Generally, all analysis was conducted for the year prior to the implementation of the D15 Plan (2018-19) and the most recent school year with available data (2022-23 or 2021-22); or to show change over time from SY 2015-16 through SY 2022-23. In some cases, to control for year over year variability, a multi-year average was used to compare the four years following the D15 Plan (SY 2019-20 through SY 2022-23) with the four years preceding it (SY 2015-16 through SY 2018-19).

The following subsections outline specific additional notes on methods used for topics analyzed in the Findings section.

Priority in admissions (PIA)

In D15 students receive priority in middle school admissions if they qualify as low-income, are Multilingual Learners (MLL), or live in temporary housing (STH). Students are identified as low-income by DOE if they are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or have been identified by the Human Resources Administration as receiving certain types of public assistance. All statistics on PIA students were computed on an annual basis, and do not necessarily indicate that the student received priority in admissions when they applied to middle school.

Enrollment and socioeconomic composition, D15 schools

Analysis of enrollment and socioeconomic or racial composition of D15 schools is based on counts and demographic information for students provided by DOE. This data (the "June Biographic Dataset") reflects the most recent school that a DOE public school student attended between October 31st and June 30th of the school year analyzed. Districtwide statistics for D15 middle schoolers include all students in grades 6, 7, and 8 who attend a school in D15 (including students who are homeschooled).

Charter school enrollment

Information on charter school enrollment is available by grade by school through the publicly available Demographic Snapshot provided by NYC DOE. Comparisons between charter school enrollment in D15 and citywide are conducted using these data.

Distance traveled

To understand the distance traveled to school by D15 students, this analysis calculated the distance that each student would need to walk along NYC streets to reach the school that they attend. To protect student privacy, DOE only provides information about where students live at the census block level. In New York City, census blocks typically are the same as city blocks. Distances were calculated from the center of the block where each student lives to the school that they attend.

Academic outcomes

Quantitatively assessing academic outcomes for students in the years since the D15 Plan is particularly challenging because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to this public health emergency, state tests were not administered to students during the spring of 2020. In spring 2021, state tests were optional for all students, and approximately 21% of eligible students took the exams. In spring 2022 and 2023, there was an increase in the number of waivers granted for state tests compared with prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To evaluate academic outcomes while controlling for the impacts of COVID-19, this analysis used a process similar to analyses in DOE's School Quality Snapshots and compared

test scores among D15 students with a comparison group. The comparison group is made up of students of the same grade with similar school environments, similar academic profiles (MLL and IEP), and similar backgrounds (PIA status versus all other students). The comparison group tells us how D15 students might have performed academically had they attended middle school in another district in NYC. In other words, the comparison group allows us to estimate the impact that D15 middle schools have had on their students' academic outcomes.

To construct a comparison group we take all D15 middle school students and pair them with a similar student from a different district in NYC. Specifically, each D15 student is matched with a student from outside of D15 who is in their same grade, who has the same priority in admissions status as they do, and is similar in:

- Whether they have been in temporary housing at any point in the last four years.
- The proportion of students at their school who are Multilingual Learners (MLL).
- The proportion of students at their school who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Whether they took a State math or ELA exam.

The statistical method used to identify these pairs of students is called Propensity Score Matching. After matching D15 students with students from elsewhere in NYC we are able to analyze the differences between the test scores of D15 students and the comparison group. For example, we are able to see whether or not D15 students have higher mean scores on their State tests than students in the comparison group, or whether D15 students are accepted into specialized high schools at a higher rate than students in the comparison group.

This analysis was conducted for the year before the D15 Plan (SY2018-19) and for the most recent year of available data since the D15 Plan and COVID-19. For after the D15 Plan, all comparison analyses use the latest year of available data: for the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) that is SY 2021-22 and for State exams that is SY 2022-23.

Comparisons should be made between D15 students and the comparison group of the same year. In all cases the difference between the average State test scores for D15 students versus the comparison group is not due to random chance and was statistically significant at above a 99% confidence interval, meaning that there is a very high level of confidence that differences between the two groups are not due to random chance. The relative difference between D15 and the comparison group is a way to compare academic performance of D15 students relative to their peers citywide before and after the D15 Plan. Readers should note that differences in the absolute scores between SY 2018-19 and the post-D15 Plan year reflect impacts due to COVID-19, and are not a good indication of the impacts of the D15 Plan.

Proficiency ratings and double-testing waiver

All analyses of state tests use the Proficiency Rating assigned by DOE. The Proficiency Rating is a value between 1-4.5 based on the scale scores for State math and English Language Arts (ELA) exams that corresponds to Performance Levels used by DOE. For all of the years examined, 7th and 8th grade students in New York State who took a math Regents exam were not required to take a State math test for their grade level. To account for students who took Regents math exams and do not take State tests in math (often students in advanced coursework) this study converts math Regents scores for 7th and 8th graders into the DOE imputed proficiency ratings on the State math tests (as published annually by DOE in the School Quality Reports, Educator Guide). For students who took both a Regents math exam and the State test in math, only the imputed Regents score is used.

Qualitative analysis

A range of principles, outlined on the following page, helped to guide the development of this

evaluation's qualitative analysis (indicated by a "▲" in the Findings section) and the selection of participants in collaboration with the District, CEC representatives, and principals. Opportunities for feedback included an online survey open to all D15 community members, in-person and virtual small-group listening sessions, and interviews.

The engagement process for this evaluation took place over eight months, from October 2022 through June 2023. Throughout this process, there was an emphasis on seeking feedback from a wide range of community members to understand different experiences with the D15 Plan. Details on each engagement method utilized in this process are outlined in this section.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with relevant DOE and District 15 staff October-December in 2022. Interviews included: D15 Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent, previous and current D15 DEI Coordinator, previous D15 Diversity Plan Working Group members, previous D15 Superintendent, and representatives from the Office of Student Enrollment (OSE) and the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). These sessions were held virtually or in-person based on the availability of the stakeholder, and questions ranged from general reflections on the D15 Plan, its implementation, and areas for improvement.

Community survey

A districtwide community survey was available between April and July 2023 and was open to all D15 community members. This survey solicited feedback on the middle school application process, awareness of the D15 Plan, and families' and school staff members' experiences with inclusion practices within D15 middle schools. There were 1,900 survey respondents:

- 50% of respondents were parents or caregivers of current or former D15 students, 29% were students, 9% were teachers, and the remainder were other community members, school, or district staff.

Engagement priorities

Priority in admissions

The D15 Plan aimed to support access to middle schools for PIA students, this evaluation put special focus on engagement with PIA students and families to understand the impact of the D15 Plan. This includes students who either qualify as low-income, are English Language Learners (ELL), or are Students in Temporary Housing (STH), measures outlined by the DOE. For privacy purposes, the specific identifiers for participants were not shared with evaluators.

School community roles

The planning of the engagement process sought to understand experience across various roles in school communities including students, parents/caregivers, teachers, guidance counselors and social workers, principals, related DOE staff, and District leadership.

District geography

D15 spans many distinct neighborhoods, from Gowanus to Sunset Park and Red Hook. Engagement aimed to understand experiences across various neighborhoods, especially those relatively more geographically isolated from the rest of the district, such as Sunset Park and Red Hook.

Diverse demographics

This process also prioritized obtaining feedback from a range of demographics present in D15, especially across race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic levels. Language-specific small-group listening sessions were hosted for parents in Mandarin, Spanish, and Bangla.

- 50% of respondents identified as White.

- The top four neighborhoods represented were Park Slope (26%), Sunset Park (16%), Windsor Terrace (11%), and Kensington (9%).

Through its design and the outreach methods used, the survey aimed to understand families' and student's experiences with the D15 Plan. The survey included both multiple choice questions and questions where participants share their opinion or feelings on a topic via a rating scale. Open-ended questions at the end of various sections of the survey allowed space for families to share further details. The District shared this survey during CEC meetings and during various meetings with principals, parents/caregivers, guidance counselors and social workers. Evaluators attended a number of meetings to discuss the survey, such as meetings with guidance counselors and with the President's Council. The District also worked with various teachers and student groups to increase participation among students.

Small group listening sessions

Knowing that some families may face barriers to providing feedback via survey format, most engagement was held in small groups, either virtually or in-person. Small-group listening sessions allow for in-depth discussions facilitated by a trained professional. Small group listening sessions were held with a range of stakeholders including School Leadership Teams at each middle school, groups of middle school teachers, middle school students, elementary and middle school parents, guidance counselors and social workers, and middle school principals. On an ongoing basis, the evaluation team solicited recommendations for additional school community members to engage from participants in small group listening sessions.

Generally, engagement sessions involved discussions of both the middle school application process and inclusion within middle schools. The engagement design of each session ranged depending on participants' roles in D15. For example, small group meetings with School Leadership Teams and guidance counselors sought to capture general reflections on the D15 Plan, progress on the recommendations, barriers to implementation, and how schools are or would like to track progress. For student listening sessions, engagement aimed to understand familiarity with the D15 Plan and their reflections on both the middle school admissions process and experiences in middle school on learning, inclusion, conflict resolution, access to special programs, transportation, and friendships across identities. Towards the end of all sessions, facilitators opened up the space to general discussion and questions to allow for additional priorities to be discussed and raised by participants.

The following outlines the number of engagement sessions held in this process:

- 16 sessions with School Leadership Teams, in-person and virtual

- 6 sessions with students, in-person and virtual

- 4 sessions with teachers, in-person and virtual

- 6 sessions with parents/caregivers, virtual and in-person, including 3 in-person held in the top additional languages spoken in D15: Mandarin, Spanish, and Bangla

- 2 sessions with the D15 President's Council, virtual

- 3 sessions with guidance counselors and social workers, virtual

- 4 sessions with middle school principals, virtual and in-person

Evaluators worked to ensure a wide range of representation in engagement from parents and students, especially students and families with priority in admissions. Informed by recommendations from the District team, CEC representatives, Principals, Parent Coordinators, and families, evaluators adjusted engagement design for each context. Out of all parents and students engaged in the evaluation, the majority of participants were students and families with

priority in admissions. Each small group listening session had approximately 10 attendees.

Recommendations tracker

The D15 Diversity Plan developed in 2017-2018 proposed 64 recommendations for how to support the meaningful integration of middle schools in D15. Since the D15 Plan's approval by the DOE in 2018, some reflection and monitoring has occurred, including a presentation by the previous Superintendent after the first year of the D15 Plan.

This evaluation aimed to build on the District's monitoring work and provide a high-level overview of the status of the recommendations. Several engagement meetings were designed, in part, to collect this feedback including meetings with District leadership, middle school principals, School Leadership Teams, and students. For example, during meetings with School Leadership Teams, part of the session included breakout groups to review various sections within the Inclusion recommendations of the D15 Plan. All of this feedback has been synthesized into high-level updates in the Tracker section of this report.

Programs

One component of the D15 Diversity Plan's recommendations included giving the district an improved understanding of programs across schools. In service of this recommendation, this process aimed to set up a baseline of qualitative data on special programs offered at D15 middle schools by engaging both the D15 Academic, Policy, and Performance Lead and school principals to collaborate on a review of special programs.

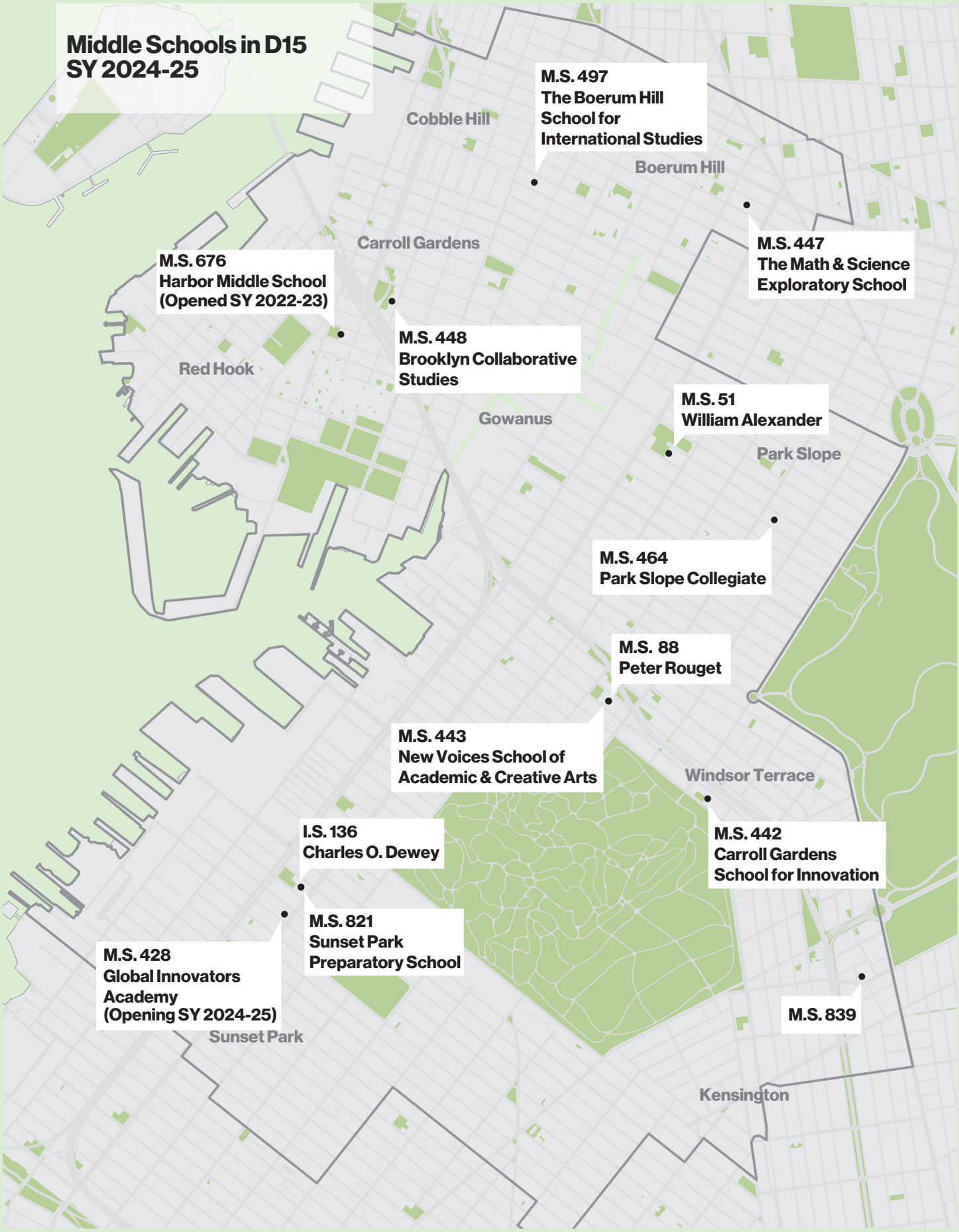
Using information available through the DOE on electives, activities, language courses offered, accelerated courses, dual language or ELL offerings, sports, and special education programs by schools, evaluators developed a list of special programs for each principal's review. Principals were asked to confirm the list of programs, remove or add any as needed, and provide information about the frequency of each. This information was provided to the district and can serve as the basis for future evaluations of program offerings across schools.

Synthesis

To develop this report, qualitative data was captured via notes during each meeting. To synthesizing findings from engagement, notes from these meetings were reviewed and themed by two different evaluators. The two reviews were then compared and synthesized into one list of findings organized by evaluation objective. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were then reviewed and synthesized further to bring them into conversation with one another in the Findings section of this report.

Middle schools in District 15	*Shorthand used in report text*
M.S. 51 William Alexander	M.S. 51 (Alexander)
M.S. 88 Peter Rouget	M.S. 88 (Rouget)
I.S. 136 Charles O. Dewey	I.S. 136 (Dewey)
M.S.428 Global Innovators Academy (Opens SY 2024-25)	M.S.428 (Global Innovators)
M.S. 442 Carroll Gardens School for Innovation	M.S. 442 (Carroll Gardens)
M.S. 443 New Voices School of Academic & Creative Arts	M.S. 443 (New Voices)
M.S. 447 The Math & Science Exploratory School (New name SY 2024-25: The Exploratory School)	M.S. 447 (Exploratory School)
M.S./H.S. 448 Brooklyn Collaborative Studies (BCS)*	M.S. 448 (Collaborative Studies)
M.S./H.S. 464 Park Slope Collegiate (PSC)*	M.S. 464 (Park Slope)
M.S./H.S. 497 The Boerum Hill School for International Studies (BHS)	M.S. 497 (Boerum Hill)
P.S./M.S. 676 Harbor Middle School	M.S. 676 (Harbor)
M.S. 821 Sunset Park Preparatory School	M.S. 821 (Sunset Park Prep)
M.S. 839	M.S. 839

*BCS and PSC are within District 15's boundaries but not under the Community School District 15 superintendency.


Middle Schools in D15
SY 2024-25
M.S. 497
The Boerum Hill
School for
International Studies
Cobble Hill
Boerum Hill
M.S. 447
The Math & Science
Exploratory School
Carroll Gardens
M.S. 676
Harbor Middle School
(Opened SY 2022-23)
M.S. 448
Brooklyn Collaborative
Studies
Red Hook
Gowanus
M.S. 51
William Alexander
Park Slope
M.S. 464
Park Slope Collegiate
M.S. 88
Peter Rouget
M.S. 443
New Voices School of
Academic & Creative Arts
Windsor Terrace
M.S. 442
Carroll Gardens
School for Innovation
I.S. 136
Charles O. Dewey
M.S. 821
Sunset Park
Preparatory School
M.S. 428
Global Innovators
Academy
(Opening SY 2024-25)
Sunset Park
M.S. 839
Kensington

3

Findings

The following section presents findings from qualitative and quantitative data gathered and analyzed during the District 15 Diversity Plan Evaluation and Reflection process. Qualitative data includes feedback from engagement sessions and survey data to provide insight into the experiences of D15 students, parents/caregivers, teachers, and staff in the years following the implementation of the D15 Diversity Plan. Quantitative analyses use data provided by New York City DOE Research and Policy Support Group to assess the composition of schools, application process, student academic outcomes, and more. On the following pages, the findings are organized into the five objectives of this report to understand the D15 Plan's impact on:

- School Integration
- Additional Impacts
- Academic Outcomes
- Inclusive Practices
- Implementation

Further information on methods and processes for the quantitative and qualitative analyses is addressed in the preceding Process chapter. Together, the findings provide a status update of the D15 Plan to support the D15 community in identifying potential areas for improvement and to highlight where strides have been made.

How to read this section:
The method of analysis is indicated by an icon next to each finding. A "▲" indicates findings synthesized from qualitative data sources, and a "●" indicates findings from quantitative sources.

School Integration

Impact of the D15 Diversity Plan on school integration

This evaluation focuses on impacts of the D15 Plan on the 12 middle school options that were available to the D15 community during this evaluation, including the Harbor Middle School in Red Hook that opened in SY 2022-23. One new D15 middle school in Sunset Park, set to open in SY 2024-25, will need to be included in future evaluations.

The following section describes findings related to school integration before and after the implementation of the D15 Plan. The proportion of students with priority in admissions (PIA) has remained relatively steady in the district. D15 middle schools became significantly more socioeconomically integrated in the first year of implementation of the D15 Plan in SY 2019-20 and have continued to become more integrated through the latest year of available data (SY 2022-23). Currently, the District aims for all schools to serve between 40-70% students with priority in admissions. As of SY 2022-23, 10 out of 12 middle schools fall within this range.

● In SY 2022-23, 59% of students in D15 met PIA criteria

As of SY 2022-23, 59% of D15 middle school students are eligible for priority in admissions (PIA) in D15. Students qualify as PIA if they qualify as low-income (eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or has been identified by the Human Resources Administration as receiving certain types of public assistance), are Multilingual Learners (MLL), or live in Temporary Housing (STH).

The proportion of PIA students has increased slightly to 59% in SY 2022-23 since SY 2018-19 when it was 56% (see figure 3A.1)

● Socioeconomic segregation between D15 middle schools is lower now than it was before the D15 Plan

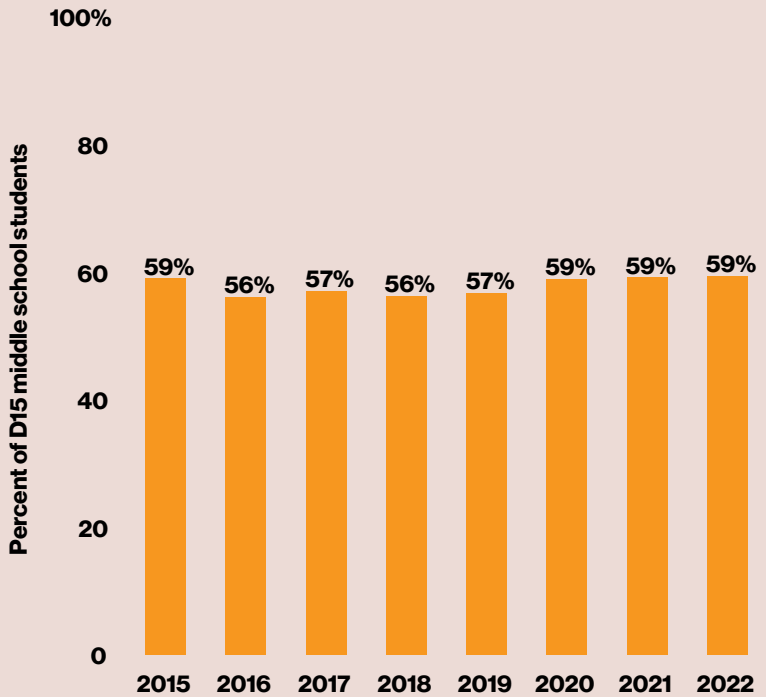
In the year before the D15 Plan was implemented, D15 middle schools ranked the second most segregated out of all school districts in NYC according to a dissimilarity index based on concentrations of PIA students. By SY 2022-23 D15 ranked 19th out of 32 districts (see 3A.2). This change reflects how students with priority in admissions are more evenly distributed across D15 middle schools than before the D15 Plan.

In contrast D15 elementary schools remain the most socioeconomically segregated in New York City (see 3A.3). This reflects the housing segregation in the district and speaks to the effectivness of integration work in D15 at the middle school level.

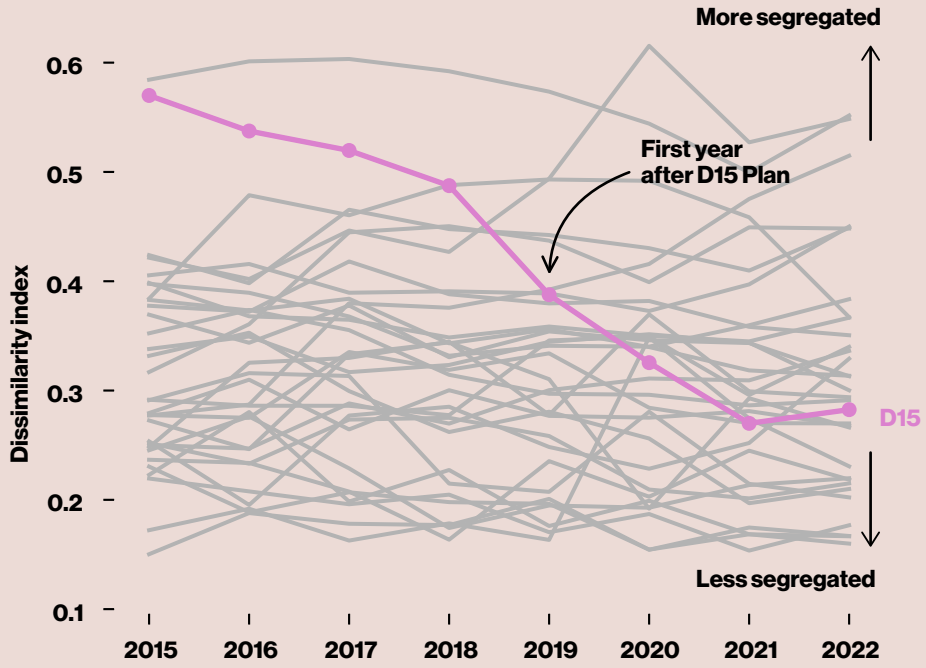
The dissimilarity index measures how different each school's proportion of PIA students is from the proportion of PIA students within the district overall. Higher dissimilarity index indicate a higher degree of segregation.

A recommendation in the D15 Plan was to assess whether all schools fell within the target range of PIA students by the end of year four: in SY 2022-23, 10 out of 12 schools (including the new Harbor Middle School in Red Hook) had between 40% and 70% PIA students. The year before the

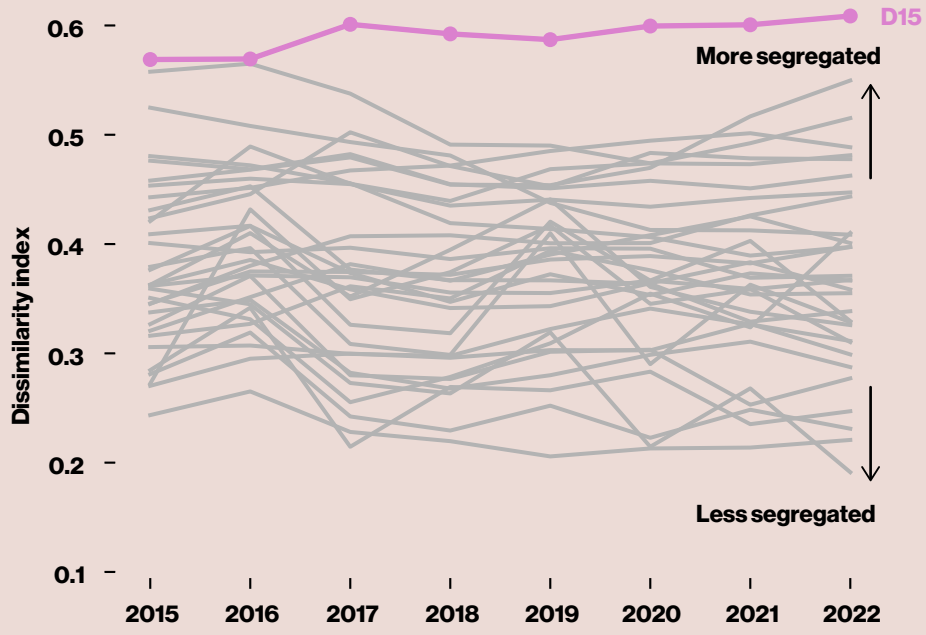
3A.1 **Proportion of D15 middle school students who are PIA**



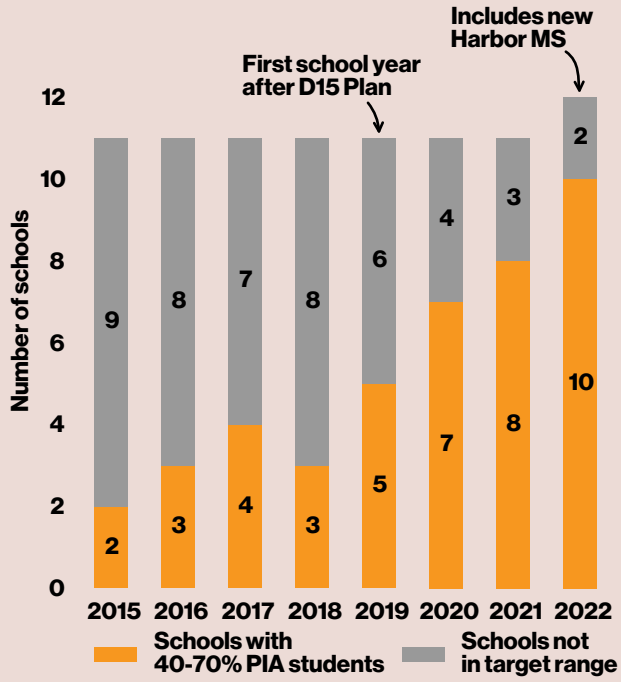
3A.2 **Grades 6-8, dissimilarity index for the proportion of PIA students by school for all NYC school districts**



3A.3 **Grades PreK-5, dissimilarity index for the proportion of PIA students by school for all NYC school districts**



3A.4 **D15 middle schools with 40–70% PIA students**



D15 Plan went into effect, three out of 11 schools fell within this range (see 3A.4). The District set a target range for each middle school of 40-70% PIA students based on the district average as a guidepost to measure progress under the D15 Plan.

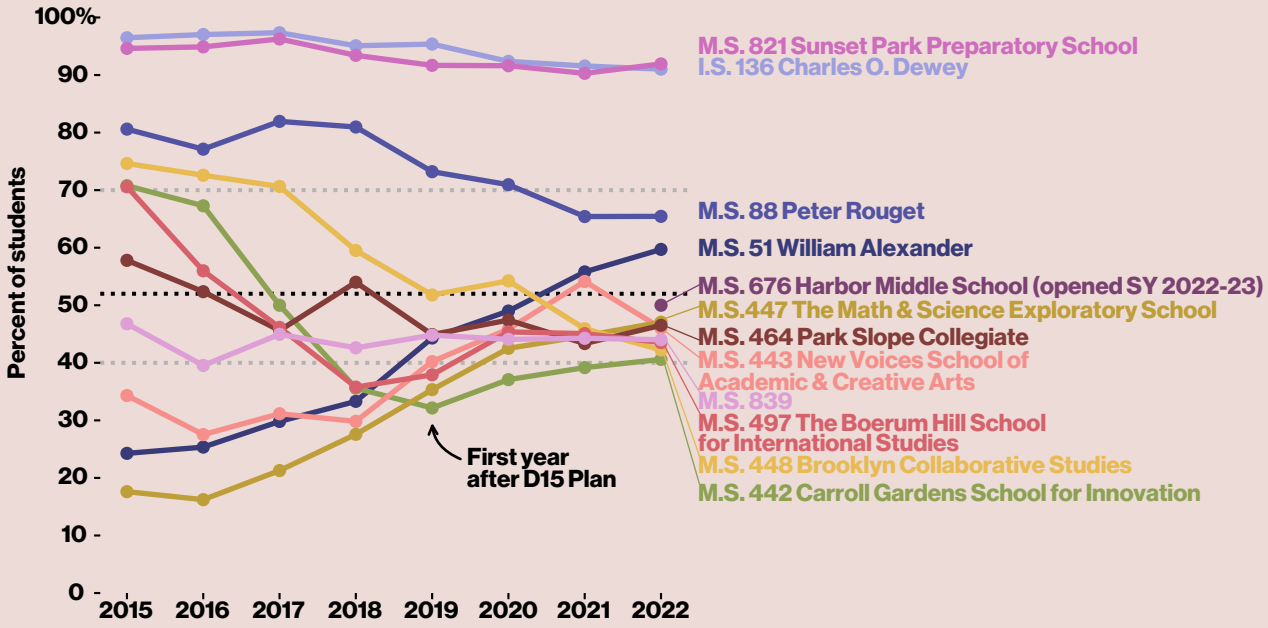
For some schools where the proportion of priority students was already trending towards the district average, those trends continued, such as M.S. 447 (Exploratory School) and M.S. 51 (Alexander) (see 3A.5). Prior to 2019 the proportions of students with priority in admissions in M.S. 88 (Rouget), M.S. 442 (Carroll Gardens), and M.S. 497 (Boerum Hill) were trending away from the District's target composition range for schools. After the implementation of the D15 Plan, the proportion of PIA students began to shift towards the target range at these three schools. M.S. 821 (Sunset Park Prep) and I.S. 136 (Dewey), where most students are eligible for priority in admissions, remain schools with a low proportion of non-PIA students.

▲● Many students and families reported that their middle school is more diverse than their elementary school

A range of stakeholders, including guidance counselors, social workers, and teachers who previously worked in D15 elementary schools, middle school parents/caregivers, and almost all middle school students engaged in this evaluation, noted that their middle school experience was more diverse than their elementary school experience. Students engaged in this evaluation pointed to a range of diversity in their middle school, especially race, ethnicity, culture, and language.

These observations echo the quantitative findings that D15 elementary schools still have the highest levels of socioeconomic segregation among all NYC school districts for elementary schools based on a dissimilarity index. District 15 continues to have a high degree of residential segregation and

3A.5 **Proportion of PIA students by school for D15 middle schools**



the zoned elementary schools reflect this.

Parent/caregiver perception of elementary school socio-economic composition ranged. Some noted a lack of socioeconomic diversity at elementary schools and saw this as a critical issue, while some parents reported highly valuing an elementary school close to home and worried about traveling long distances or their child missing the opportunity to live close to their peers.

● Not all schools have experienced the same amount of change

Some D15 middle schools have experienced more change in socioeconomic composition before and after the D15 Plan than others (see 3A.6). Between SY 2018-19 and 2022-23, M.S. 51 (Alexander), the M.S. 447 (Exploratory School), and M.S. 443 (New Voices) had the largest increase in the proportion of students with priority in admissions. M.S. 448 (Collaborative Studies) and M.S. 88 (Rouget) had the largest decrease in the proportion of students with priority in admissions. I.S. 136 (Dewey) and M.S. 821 (Sunset Park Prep) have seen the least amount of change and remain outside the District's target range with 91% and 92% PIA students respectively in SY 2022-23.

One teacher engaged in the process from I.S. 136 (Dewey) shared, "I was part of the [original D15 Diversity Plan workshop] group that met at Sunset Park High School [in 2018] and saw data that compared diversity. I didn't know how different it was at Dewey. Having half the population learning English, having 97% students on FRL, it was stunning for me to see the data. As far as changes I've seen [in demographics], they're not startling, they're minimal. I had the first [student] that is White in my career last year, [but there are] definitely more students with middle class backgrounds."

● Several schools saw the proportions of students of different race/ethnicities approach districtwide averages

Between SY 2018-19 and SY 2022-23 the demographic composition of students in D15 has remained relatively stable, with at most 2% change between groups (see 3A.7).

While the changes to admissions processes in the D15 Plan did not factor in student race or ethnicity, between SY 2018-19 and SY 2022-23 a number of schools saw changes in the proportion of students of different races and ethnicities, with some schools moving closer to the districtwide average for specific groups.

For example, in SY 2018-19 the proportion of Latinx students at M.S. 51 (Alexander) was 20% lower than the districtwide proportion of Latinx students for that year. In SY 2022-23, M.S. 51 (Alexander) was closer to the districtwide proportion of Latinx students, at 9% below the districtwide level (see 3A.7).

M.S. 88 (Rouget) saw the proportion of White students attending approach the districtwide level for this group: in SY 2018-19 the proportion of White students was 21% below the districtwide level, whereas in SY 2022-23 it was 10% below the districtwide level.

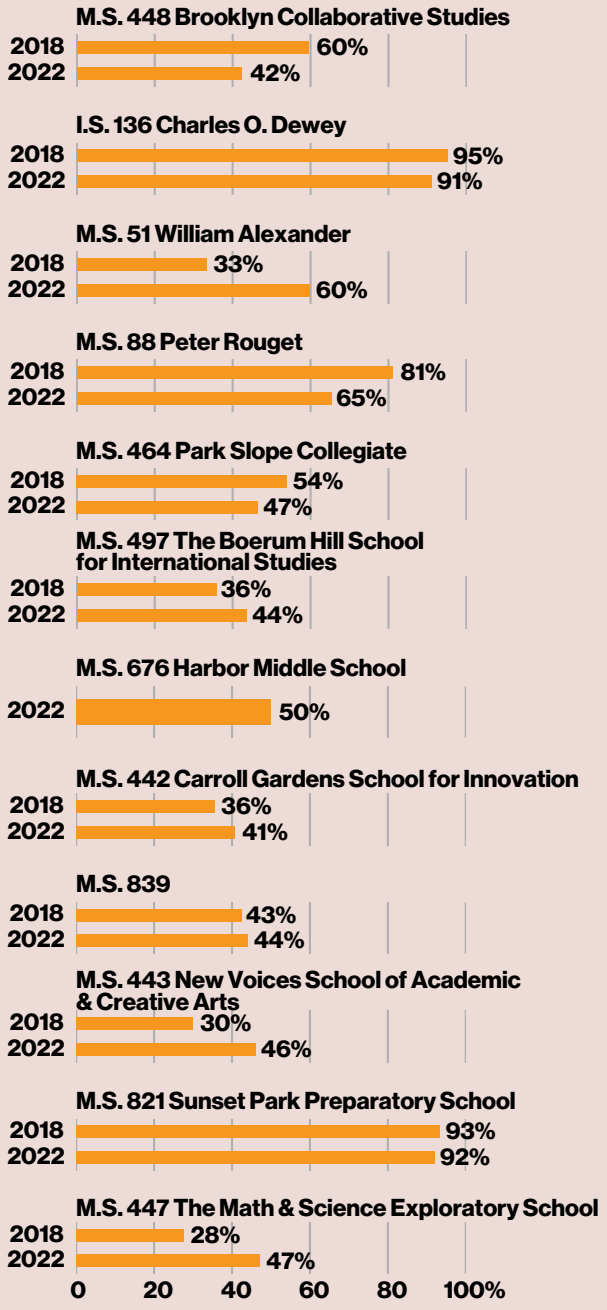
M.S. 448 (Collaborative Studies) saw a 20% increase in the proportion of White students, such that this group is now overrepresented compared with the proportion of White students in the district.

Notably, in its first school year the demographic makeup of sixth grade at the new middle school in Red Hook –M.S. 676 (Harbor)– closely matched that of the district as a whole. There was at most a 6% difference between the proportion of students of different racial/ethnic groups in M.S. 676 (Harbor) and the proportion districtwide.

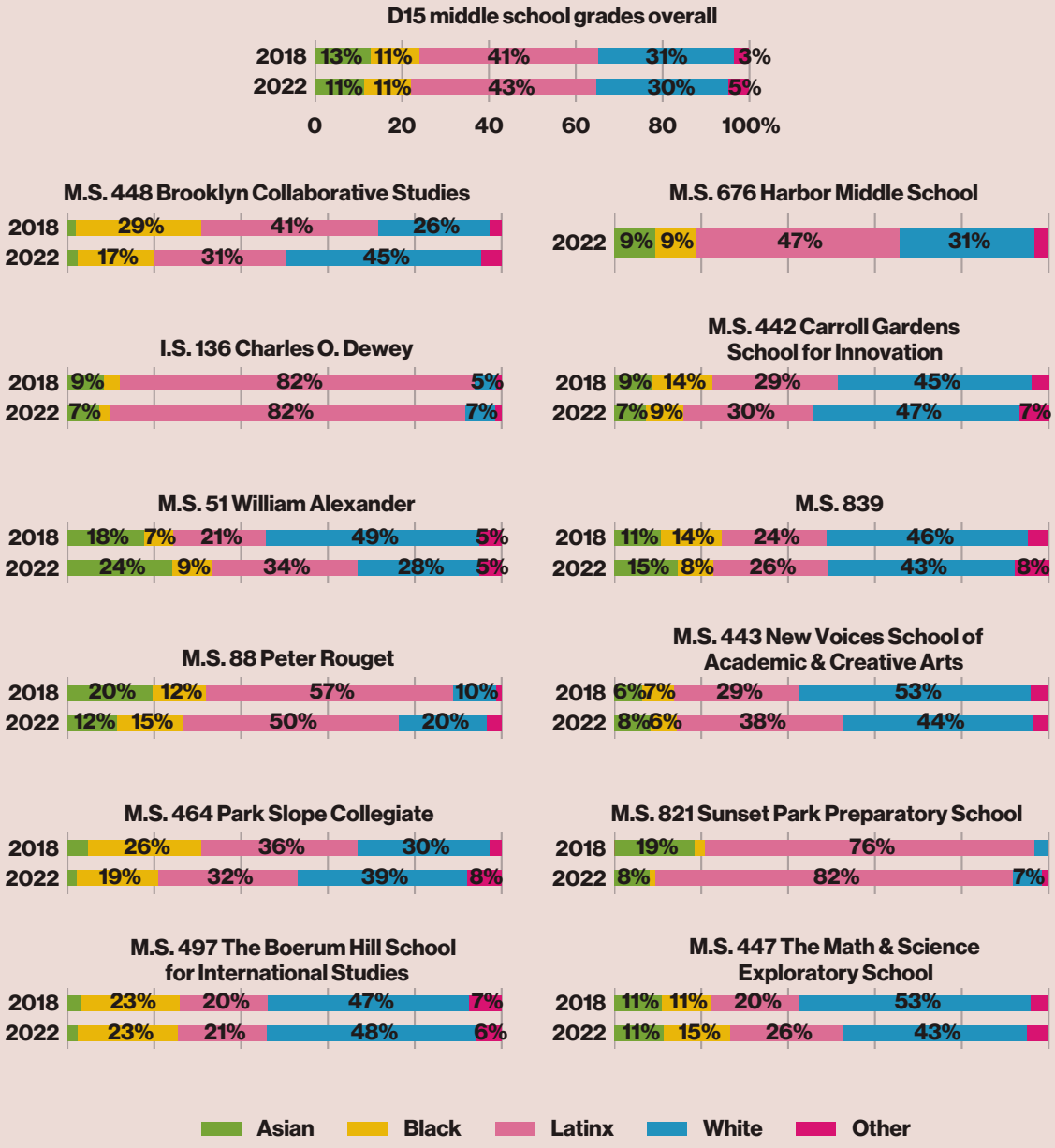
▲ Some urge continued engagement with the Red Hook community to advance both the D15 Plan and related work

Starting in 2022, P.S. 676 has been transitioning into a middle school, each year phasing out an incoming class at the elementary school and

3A.6 **Students with priority in admissions by school for D15 middle schools**



3A.7 Student race and ethnicity by school for D15 middle schools



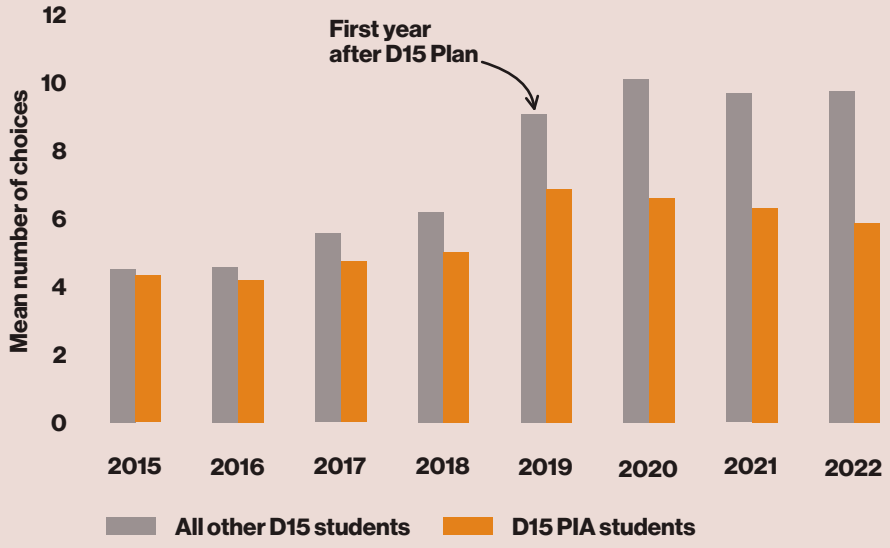
phasing in middle school grades. As of SY 2023-24, M.S. 676 (Harbor) has a 6th and 7th grade. The middle school's current composition includes 50% PIA students, close to the district proportion of 59%. In contrast, the elementary school serves majority students who meet the PIA criteria.

Parents/caregivers, teachers, and students at P.S./M.S. 676 (Harbor) engaged in this evaluation shared that further supports for Red Hook families are needed to encourage families to consider all available middle schools, to build stronger connections between the new middle school and Red Hook families, and to showcase ongoing commitment to Red Hook families. Some parents/caregivers suggested showing commitment through providing progress updates to Red Hook families on both the D15 Plan and related initiatives, such as the 2020 D15 Participatory Action Research project (D15 Sub3 n.d.), and creating processes for ongoing feedback to inform the work. What follows are some examples of key points raised by the Red Hook community.

During discussions with families and school staff in Red Hook, several Black parents/caregivers with students attending P.S. 676 raised frustrations around the lack of special programming at the elementary school, while seeing a range of programming and field trips available at the new middle school. One parent noted this felt like a continuation of disinvestment in families of color by the NYC DOE and shared she is considering sending her child to the charter school in the same building.

During a listening session with 5th graders at P.S. 676, almost all students shared they had ranked either M.S. 676 (Harbor) or Summit Academy, the charter school in the same building, as their top choices. A teacher chimed in after the session to encourage students to consider schools outside of the neighborhood. The teacher highlighted the importance of finding the right fit school, "Red Hook will always be here. You can always come back to give back to your community." One parent

3A.8 **Average number of middle school choices selected by D15 students**



shared, "I think some families don't want to go out of their comfort zone."

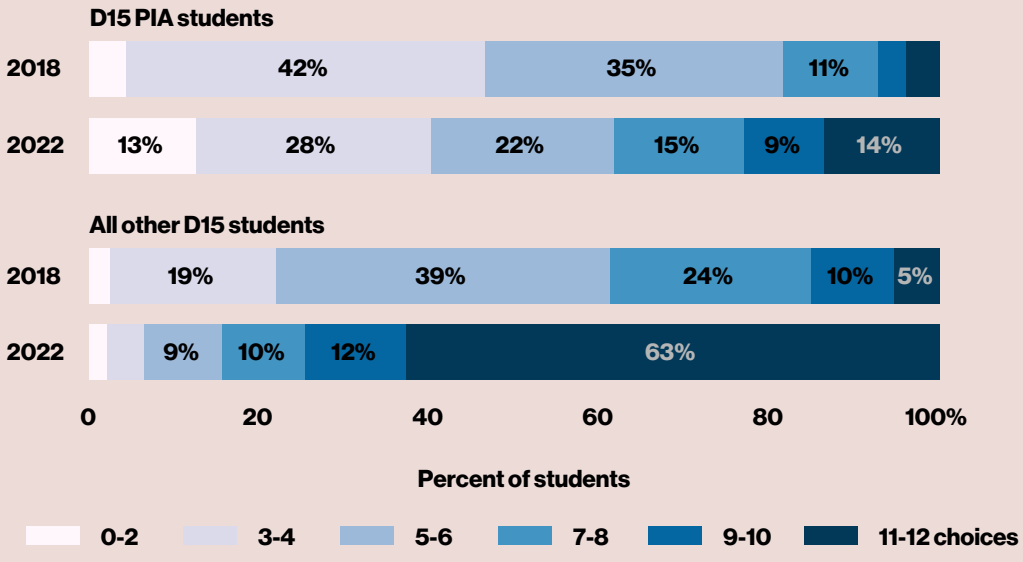
While this elementary school teacher highlighted more support is needed for families to consider all middle schools available to them, some teachers at the middle school hoped Red Hook families would continue to apply to M.S. 676 (Harbor). One teacher reflected, "We need support with families in NYCHA housing. We were known as a bad school and that history lingers…But now families outside the neighborhood are seeking this middle school before people in the neighborhood do. It's concerning to me. This school was built for the neighborhood especially, but I'm seeing lots of families moving out of the neighborhood or going to charter schools." P.S. 676's transition to a maritime-themed middle school came after years of advocacy from the school community and recommendations through the parent-led Participatory Action Research process in Red Hook in 2020-2021 (Veiga 2021).

● Students list more schools when applying to middle school, especially students without priority in admissions

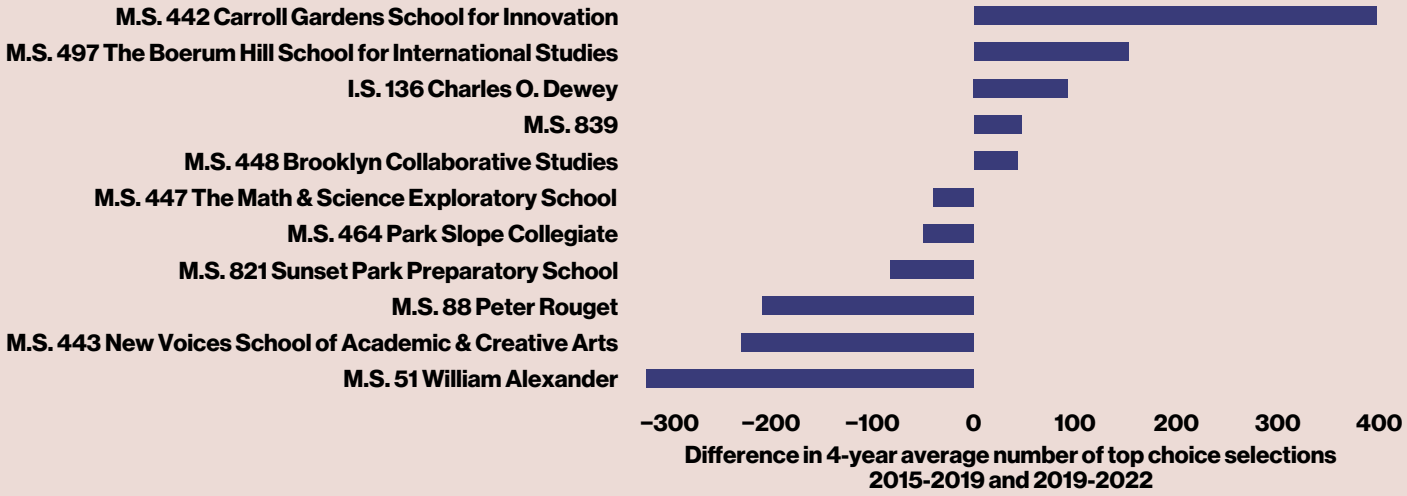
Since the D15 Plan, students who do not have priority in admissions have begun to specify a greater number of choices of schools when applying to middle school. The average number of schools selected by students who do not have priority in admissions was 6 in the year before the plan and 9 in the first year after the D15 Plan (see 3A.8). Among students applying for middle school for SY 2022-23, 61% of students who do not have priority in admissions selected 11 or 12 schools on the applications, compared to 5% among students who applied for SY 2018-19 (see 3A.9).

During engagement, many parents/caregivers reported they considered more schools after the implementation of a lottery system. One parent reflected that it made her family think more about "what is the best fit for my child, and not my

3A.9 **Number of middle school choices selected by D15 students**



3A.10 **Change in number of top 3 choice selections among D15 middle school applicants**



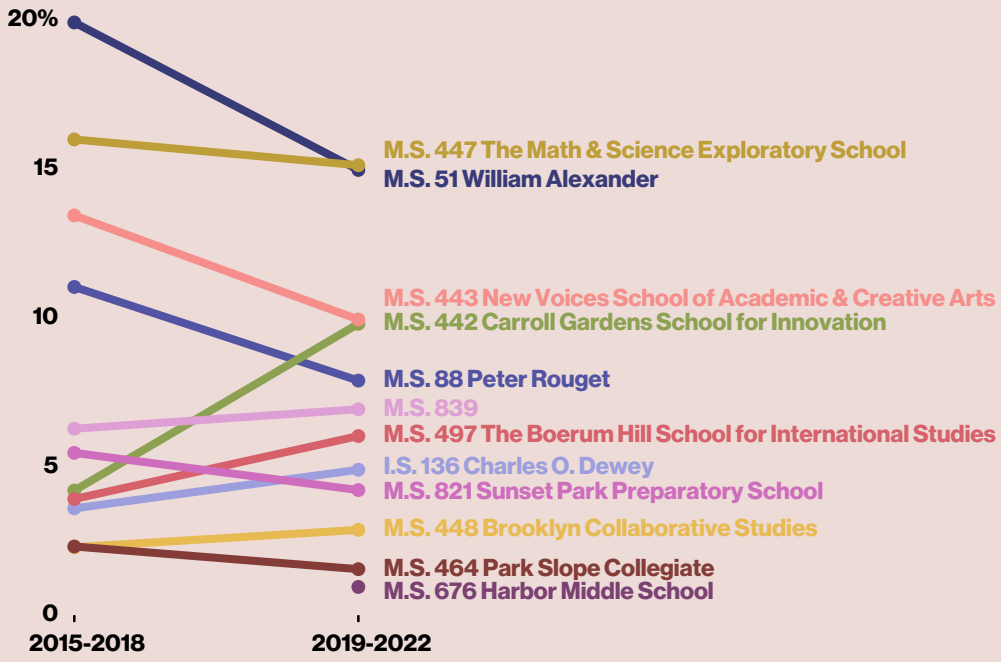
social circle; what type of learner is my child?" Many counselors observed this shift as well. One counselor noted that touring more schools allowed schools that a family may not have considered to showcase their strengths: "[when] parents started touring all the schools, they realized all the schools were great schools."

● Several schools have seen an increase in the number of students selecting them as a top choice in the lottery

Data on middle school admissions choices echoes these observations from guidance counselors about the change in which schools families consider when applying to middle school. The number of students selecting a school as one of their top three choices (weighted by the proportion of students who selected at least three schools on their application) provides a gauge of families' interest in different schools in the district. Some schools have seen large shifts in the number of students selecting them as one of their top choices in the past four years compared with the four years before the D15 Diversity Plan. For example, M.S. 442 (Carroll Gardens), M.S. 497 (Boerum Hill), I.S. 136 (Dewey), M.S. 839, and M.S. 448 (Collaborative Studies) all saw increases in the number of students selecting them as their first, second, or third choices for middle school admissions (see 3A.10).

Across engagement sessions with elementary and middle school communities, many caregivers, teachers, and guidance counselors also observed this shift in the popularity of D15 middle schools. Guidance counselors shared that before the D15 Plan they often heard two or three specific schools that were considered most desirable among families. One guidance counselor shared that at their elementary school it was as if "there were only two schools. It was either M.S. 51 or M.S. 447. Parents felt like it was the end of the world" and now "families are exploring schools that they would never before." Figure 3A.11 shows changes in the proportion of top 3 choices received by each school before and after the D15 Plan.

3A.11 **Proportion of top 3 choice selections by school**



▲ Sense of agency varied among students in the middle school admissions process

Most students engaged during this evaluation shared that they personally select schools to rank on their middle school application. When asked what is most important to them when selecting schools, students listed a range of factors; most often noted were specific sports or arts programs, respectful or calm teachers, a broad range of academic options, location, improved school options, and more flexibility to select courses.

Students whose parents/caregivers filled out the application for them noted a variety of reasons for this, including parents wanting their child to attend a specific school due to siblings or family attending that school, schools' academic performance, or location.

▲ Specialized arts school widening its focus to engage students with a range of interests

Several parents/caregivers and some staff engaged in the evaluation from M.S. 443 (New Voices), the specialized arts middle school, reported a sense of relief at the removal of screens and auditioning and observed a decrease in pressure on students. Some families noted that since the D15 Plan their student has observed some classmates are less interested in an arts focused school. One teacher noted that, since the implementation of a lottery system for enrollment, they are working on better engaging students in their school that may not be as interested or motivated by a primarily arts focus. One parent/caregiver noted during a meeting that "the school needs to switch their functioning as a 'choice school' to rethink how to engage with a community that got into the school based on lottery, not choice."

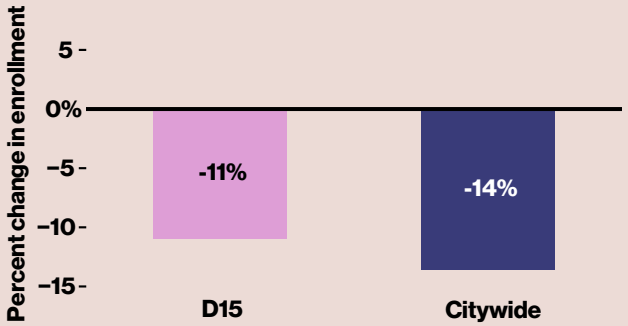
Additional Impacts

B

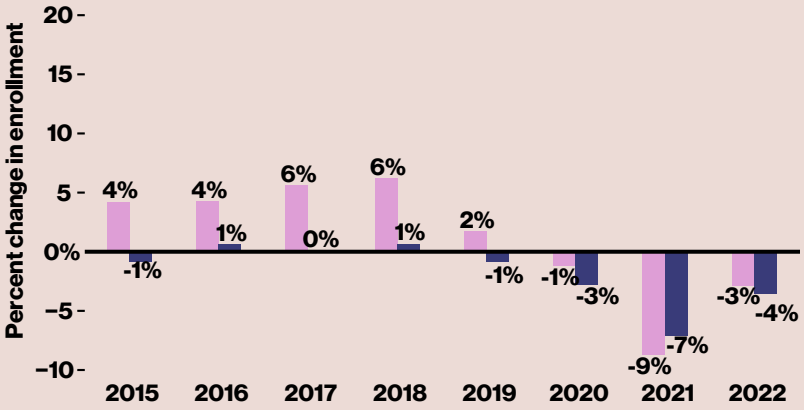
Additional impacts related to the D15 Plan, such as transportation, overall enrollment, choice acceptance rates, and school utilization

To examine additional impacts from the D15 Plan the Evaluation analyzed a number of factors including: districtwide average travel distances to school, middle school enrollment changes including among charter schools, proportion of students receiving their top choice schools in the middle school admissions lottery, experiences with the middle school admissions process, and changes in school utilization. These analyses and more are outlined on the following pages.

3B.1 **Enrollment change pre-D15 Plan (2018–19) vs 2022–23 for grades 6–8 in D15 and NYC DOE public schools**



3B.2 **Annual enrollment change for grades 6–8 in D15 and NYC DOE public schools**



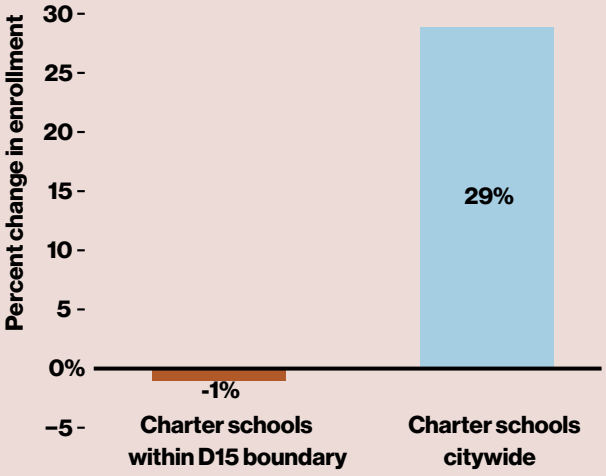
● **Since the D15 Plan, middle school enrollment in D15 has declined by 11%, compared with a 14% decline for middle school grades citywide**

During the development of the D15 Plan in 2017-18, some families expressed concern that many students would opt not to enroll in D15 public middle schools as a result of the D15 Plan. In reviewing the years since the implementation of the D15 Plan, this analysis indicates that overall middle school enrollment has declined less within D15 than it has citywide.

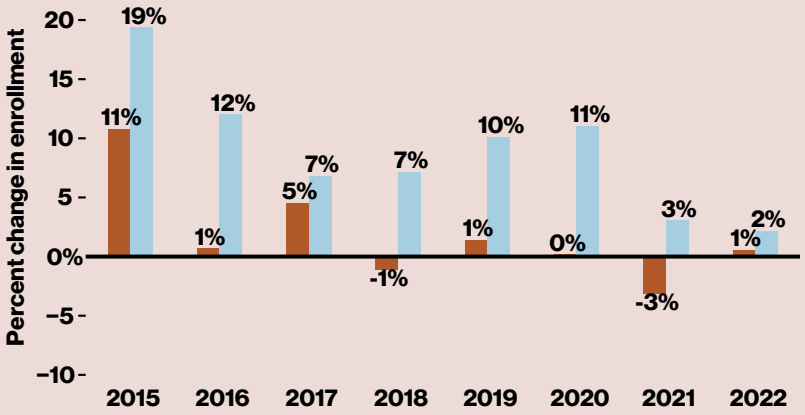
Between SY 2018-19 and 2022-23, enrollment in D15 middle schools declined by 11% compared to a 14% decline citywide (see figure 3B.1).

Looking at year by year trends, in the first year after implementation (SY 2019-20), D15 saw an enrollment increase of 2%. This was lower than enrollment increases in D15 in recent prior years, which had been between 4% and 6%, but higher than the 1% decline in enrollment citywide for middle school grades that year. In the following two years (SY 2020-21 and 2021-22), public schools in NYC saw enrollment declines amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recent data (SY 2022-23) shows D15 middle school enrollment decreased 3%, compared to a 4% decrease citywide (see 3B.2).

3B.3 **Enrollment change pre-D15 Plan (2018–19) vs 2022–23 for grades 6–8 in charter schools**



3B.4 **Annual enrollment change for grades 6–8 in charter schools**



● **Charter school enrollment in D15 slightly declined, compared with 29% increase in charter middle schools citywide**

Between SY 2018-19 and 2022-23, middle school enrollment in charter schools within D15 declined by 1%. This is much lower than the enrollment growth of 29% seen for middle school grades at charter schools throughout NYC (see 3B.3 & 3B.4).

Because the decline in enrollment in middle school grades in D15 public schools was greater than the decline in charter school enrollment, the share of enrollment in charter schools slightly increased. In SY 2018-19 charter school enrollment represented 14% of total enrollment in middle schools within D15 in SY 2018-19, in SY 2022-23 this had increased to 15%.

During the D15 Plan process, families expressed concern that a possible impact of the D15 Plan could be a large increase in the number of students enrolling in charter middle schools within the district. These findings indicate that enrollment in D15 charter middle schools has declined since the D15 Plan, even while enrollment in charter schools for middle school grades in NYC overall has increased significantly each year during this same time period.

● **After an initial decline, the proportion of students receiving one of their top three choices is slightly higher than it was before the D15 Plan**

After an initial decline in the proportion of students receiving one of their top three choices in the first year after the D15 Plan (SY 2019-20), the proportion of students receiving one of their top three choices has increased each year, and has now returned to pre-D15 Plan levels (see 3B.5). In SY 2022-23, 85% of D15 middle school students received one of the top three choices compared with 84% in SY 2018-19 (the year before the D15 Plan was implemented).

Similarly the proportion of students receiving one of their top five choices initially declined but has since returned to pre-D15 Plan levels: in SY 2022-23 93% students received one of their top 5 choice schools, compared with 94% in SY 2018-19.

● **Among students with priority in admissions, 83% receive their top choice compared with 46% for all other D15 students**

PIA students now are more likely to receive an offer from their top choice middle school than before the D15 Plan. This is consistent with the admissions policies put in place for middle school admissions for SY 2019-20 through the D15 Plan. In SY 2022-23, 83% of students with priority in admissions received their top choice school, while 46% of all other students were assigned to their top choice middle school (see 3B.6).

Feedback during a virtual engagement session with guidance counselors and social workers in the district echoed this finding from analysis of middle school admissions data. In this session, a few guidance counselors and social workers from different elementary schools observed that, in their schools, more students with priority in admissions were receiving offers to their top choice school than before the D15 Plan but noted that many families did not know they had priority in admissions.

▲ **Many in the D15 community observed a significant decrease in student stress and anxiety in admissions process**

After three rounds of engagement with guidance counselors and social workers in District 15, the most common takeaway from the D15 Plan was the decrease in stress and anxiety observed among students after the removal of screens and the implementation of the lottery system. One counselor who has worked in a D15 elementary school before and after the D15 Plan remarked that "how students feel about the process has changed drastically" and said, "the stress of the kids themselves—I used to hear them talk about it a lot. Kids would be in tears. They perceived the decision as if they were doing bad. Now, kids are silent up until they get their results, and then they're very happy."

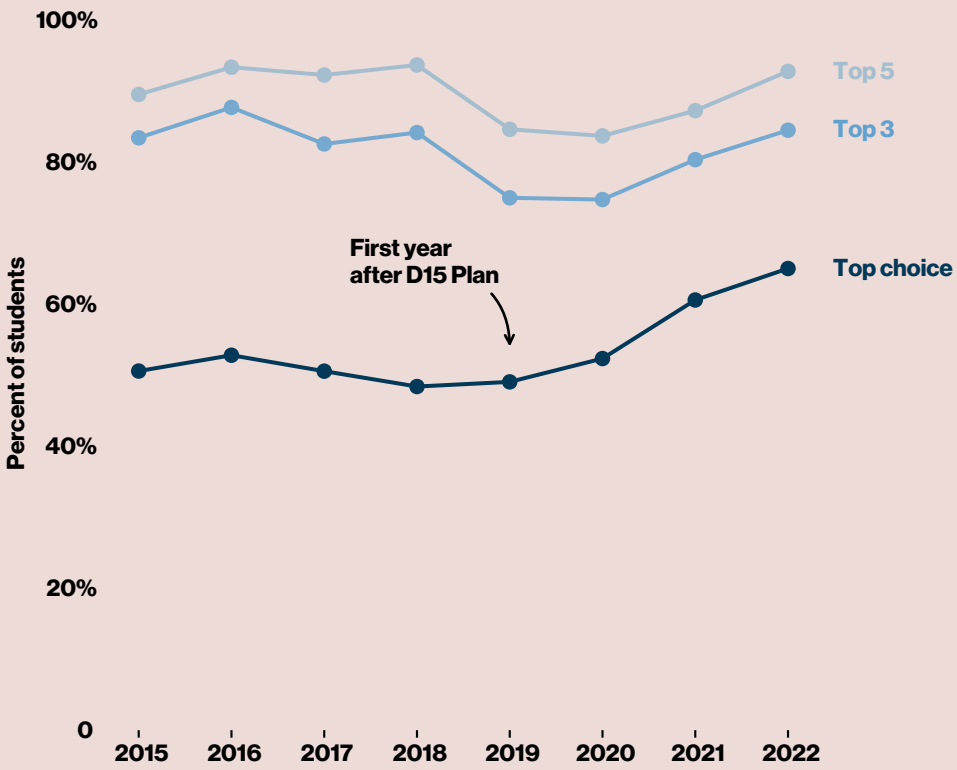
▲ **Some reflect that the lottery has lessened the burden on schools to manage families' expectations**

Several staff noted that the D15 Plan has cut down on parent meetings with schools after middle school admissions decisions are released. These meetings often included managing families' reactions to admissions decisions and providing reassurance and support. One guidance counselor engaged in this evaluation who has been in District 15 since 2004, noted that before the D15 Plan, there "really was a situation room when decisions came out. Now they just send me the list of where the kids are going." A few counselors noted that while the transition to the new admissions policies with the D15 Plan was initially challenging and involved difficult conversations with families, they ultimately saw the number of post-decision meetings with families decline after the D15 Plan.

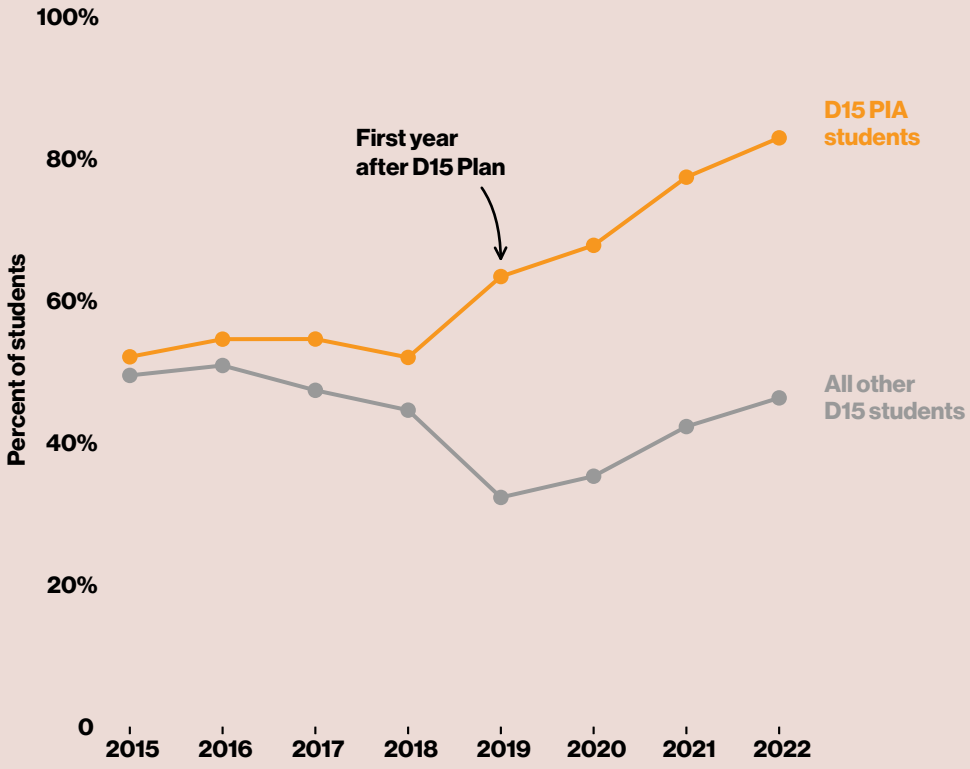
▲ **Among survey respondents, 74% reported being satisfied with their initial middle school admissions offer**

Survey respondents were asked to respond with their level of agreement to the statement "When I received my middle school offer I was satisfied

3B.5 **Percent of all D15 students who received one of their top choice middle schools**



3B.6 **Percent of students who received their top choice middle school by PIA status**



with the middle school that I/my child was offered." Among survey takers who responded to this question, including both students and caregivers, 74% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their initial middle school offer, compared with only 11% who disagreed with this statement.

● In SY 2022-23, school utilizations for D15 schools serving middle school grades are closer to the district average than they were in SY 2018-19

School utilization is defined as the total number of seats available at that school (its capacity) divided by the school's total enrollment, and is expressed as a percentage. School capacities are calculated by the School Construction Authority annually in their Enrollment, Capacity, and Utilization report (also known as the Blue Book).

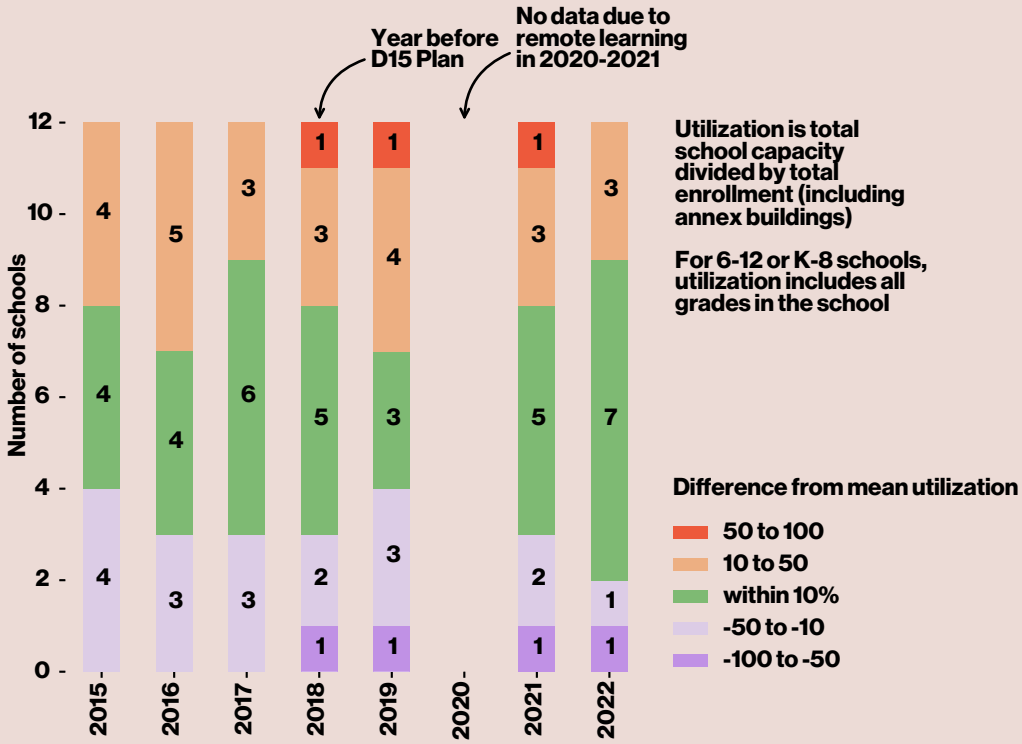
In SY 2022-23, the average difference between each school's utilization and the districtwide average was 18%, compared with 21% in 2018-19. In SY 2022-23 there were 7 schools within 10% of the districtwide average for school utilization compared with 5 in SY 2018-19 (see 3B.7). This indicates there was greater balance among school utilizations within D15 in SY 2022-23 than during the year before the D15 Plan.

Balancing school utilizations is important for a number of reasons, including reducing overcrowding in schools, as well as balancing school funding. The number of students that a school serves determines a large portion of their available annual funding, thus allowing some schools to become overutilized can result in resource imbalances between schools in the same district.

▲ Many urge target class size and previous year socio-economic composition are critical to consider

Several teachers across schools and some principals and parents/caregivers questioned the responsibility of the Office of Student Enrollment to consider a school's capacity, class sizes, and previous year socio-economic composition in enrollment offers. According to several teachers across schools and

3B.7 **School utilization distribution among D15 middle schools**



some principals engaged in this evaluation, large changes in class size or a decrease in socio-economic diversity from year-to-year often disrupts continuity of inclusion practices, co-teaching, and teachers' capacities more generally.

For example, when an incoming class becomes less integrated, some teachers and principals observed it can be challenging to maintain staff, student, and family involvement around integration and inclusion practices. Additionally, when the size of an incoming 6th grade cohort increases substantially, teachers reported facing burnout or observing more teachers leaving or considering leaving the career.

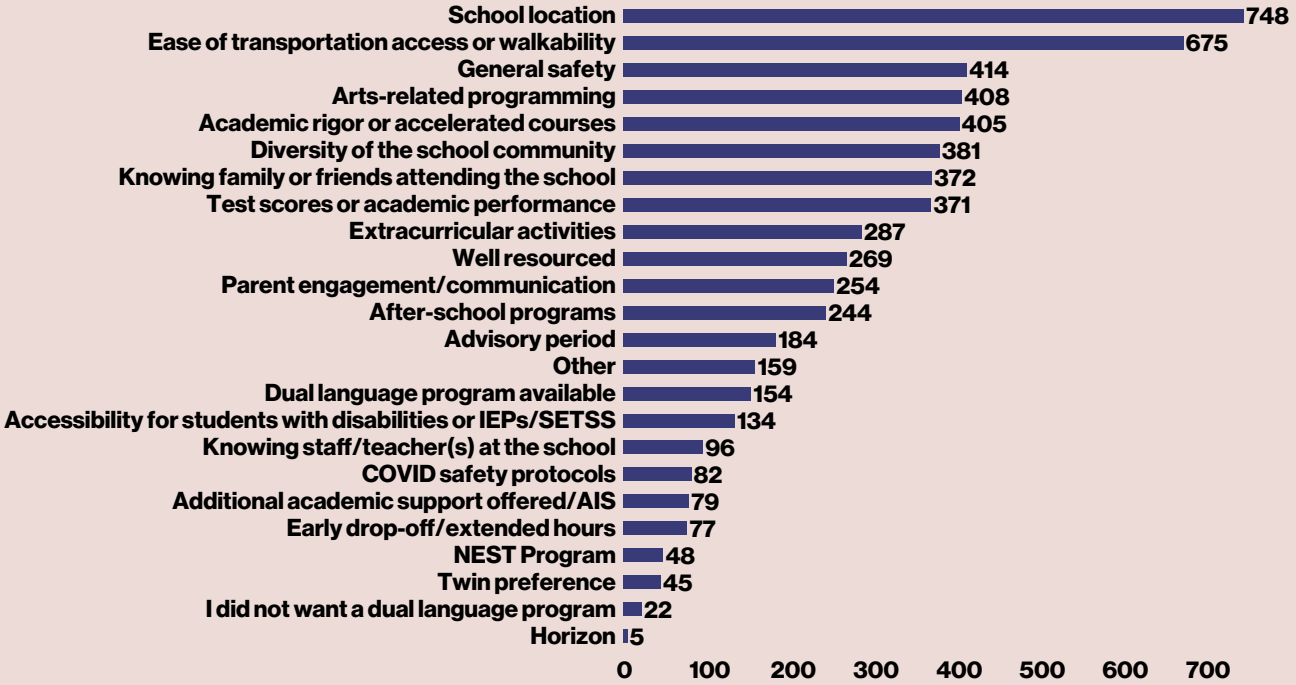
Conversely, when class sizes decrease substantially, school staff communicated that reorganization of teachers has often been needed, such as separating co-teachers. One principal shared, "Co-teaching takes time. Having people move around year-to-year impacts inclusion and ICT models for integrated classrooms. We need consistency in class size. We need to be able to plug into conversations about enrollment. These are non-negotiables we need to secure."

One of the four recommendations from the D15 Plan the DOE did not subscribe to included a recommendation to "work to decrease class sizes across all D15 middle schools." Since the implementation of the D15 Plan, the DOE has organized a Class Size Working Group to work towards compliance with a statewide class size legislation outlined in 2022.

▲ Among survey respondents, school location was the most common factor influencing ranking of schools

Among survey respondents, when asked "What were the primary factors that influenced your decision about how to rank middle schools on your application?", location and ease of transportation were the most common choices selected. Survey respondents were allowed to select all factors that applied to them. Out of 1500 survey responses, 748 respondents selected 'school location' and 675 selected 'ease of transportation access or walkability.' The next most common factors were 'general safety,' 'arts-related

3B.8 **"What were the primary factors that influenced your decision about how to rank middle schools on your application?"**



programming,' and 'academic rigor,' which were selected by approximately 400 respondents (see 3B.8).

▲ **Guidance counselors observe a more standardized application process, though some access challenges remain**

The first cohort of students applying to middle school under the D15 Plan were also the first cohort to transition to the online application portal MySchools. Several articles tell the story of a challenging implementation of this system (Amin 2018). Reflecting on how this challenge coincided with the first year the diversity plan took effect, one school counselor engaged in this evaluation observed that this overlap created a heightened focus on the application process through a new tool with centralized information.

Many elementary school guidance counselors and social workers engaged in listening sessions for this evaluation communicated that COVID-19's push towards digital learning and the new DOE online application process has helped to streamline the middle school application process. Several participants noted that District 15's slide presentation on middle school options has been a helpful tool in standardizing information that is shared with families about each school. Tools to connect, like the open forums online chat for staff, have also been noted as helpful.

However, many guidance counselors and social workers also noted that the process has become more challenging for families who face high barriers to accessing or navigating technology. Many recommended District 15 develop a request form for middle school admissions-related print materials, so guidance counselors can receive specific material quantities based on their school's needs.

● **Districtwide the average distance to school stayed constant**

The average distance to school stayed essentially constant before and after the D15 Plan. After the plan, the average student with priority in admissions travels up to 1 short block (0.04 miles/211 feet) farther to school than the average student without priority in admissions (see 3B.9).

● **Before and after the D15 Plan, Asian students travel further to school**

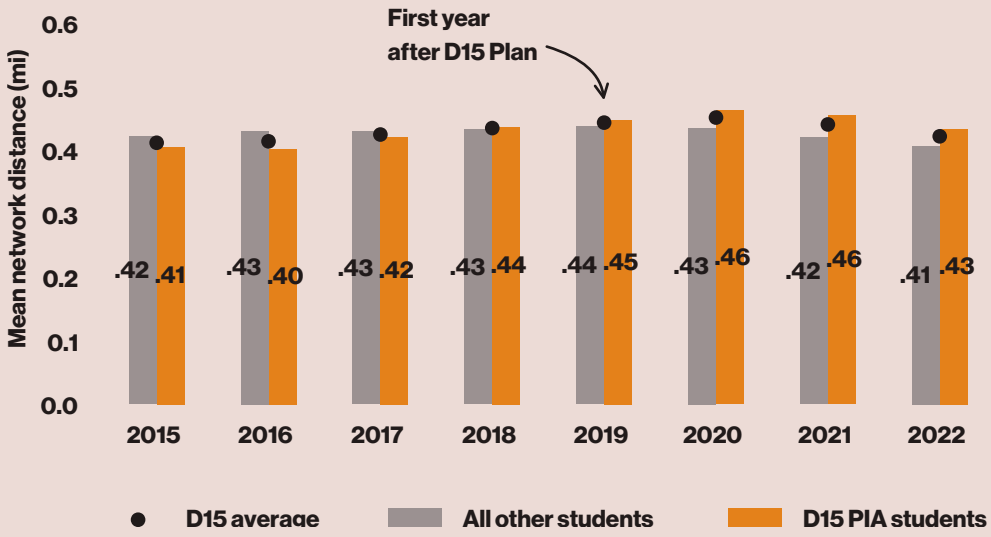
Among students in D15, Asian students travel farther to attend middle school both before and after the D15 Plan. On average they travel 0.1 miles/530 feet farther than students of other groups.

In the four years since the D15 Plan (2019-2022), Asian students on average travel slightly more than 1 short block (300 feet) farther to school than they did in the four years before the D15 Plan (2015-2018).

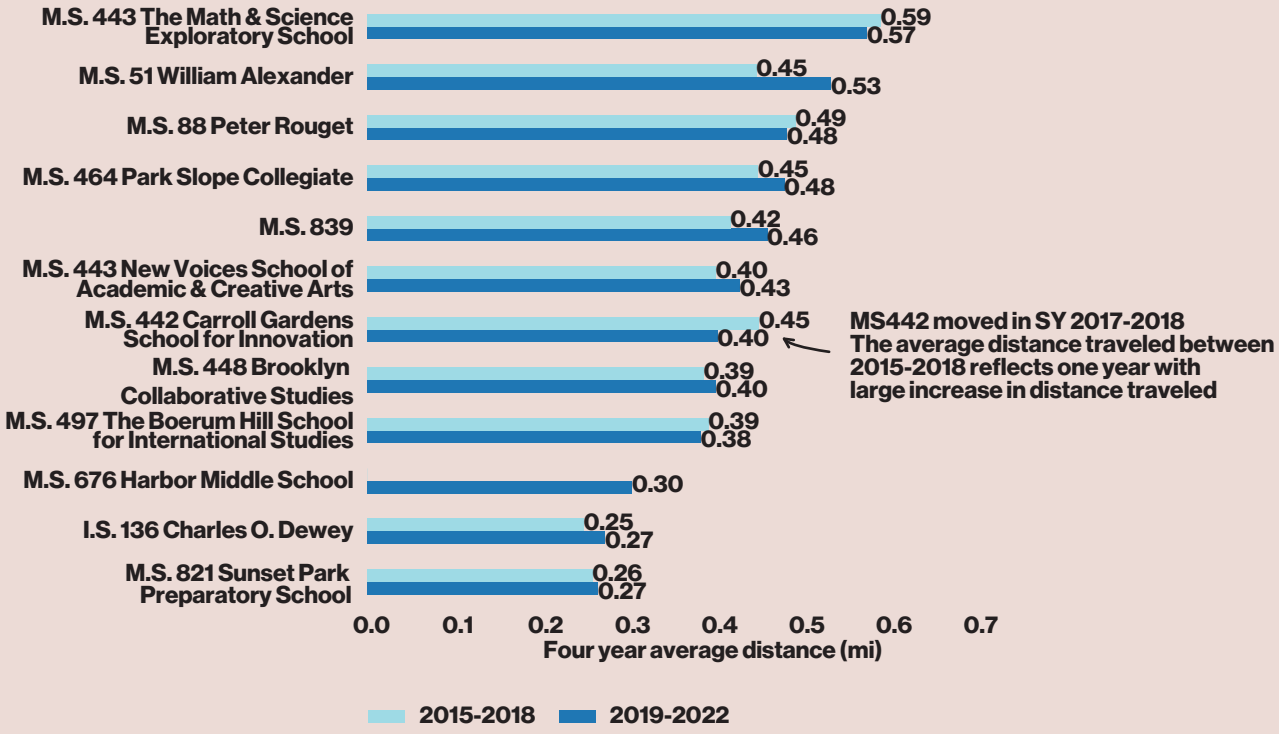
● **Distances students travel to attend some schools changed**

While the average distance to school districtwide remained steady, the distances that students travel to attend some schools changed. The average student at M.S. 51 (Alexander) lived farther away from the school than they did before the D15 Plan: between 2019-2022 the average distance to school was 0.53 miles compared with 0.45 miles in the 4 years before the D15 Plan (SY 2015-2018) (see 3B.10).

3B.9 **Average distance to school by PIA status for D15 middle school students**



3B.10 **Average distance to school for D15 middle school students by school**



Academic Outcomes

D15 academic outcomes for D15 students overall and D15 PIA students since the D15 Plan implementation

How do academic outcomes on standardized tests for D15 middle schoolers compare with their peers citywide? Quantitatively assessing academic outcomes for students in the years since the D15 Plan is particularly challenging because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to this public health emergency, State tests were not administered to students during the spring of 2020. In spring 2021, state tests were optional for all students, and approximately 21% of eligible students took the exams. In spring 2022 and 2023, there was an increase in the number of waivers granted for State tests compared with prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first two analyses in this section sought to understand how the proportion of students taking Regents exams or Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) exams has changed

from before and after the D15 Plan by priority in admissions status. All of the following analyses aim to understand D15 students' academic outcomes on Math and English Language Arts (ELA) State tests in relation to a statistically representative comparison group of their peers from other districts in NYC. Math and ELA State test exams are used in this analysis because it is a standardized measurement across schools. It is important to acknowledge that standardized testing is one method of quantitatively measuring student achievement. Understanding the full picture of student learning requires considering many sources and kinds of information, including approaches like the qualitative analyses presented in other sections of this report.

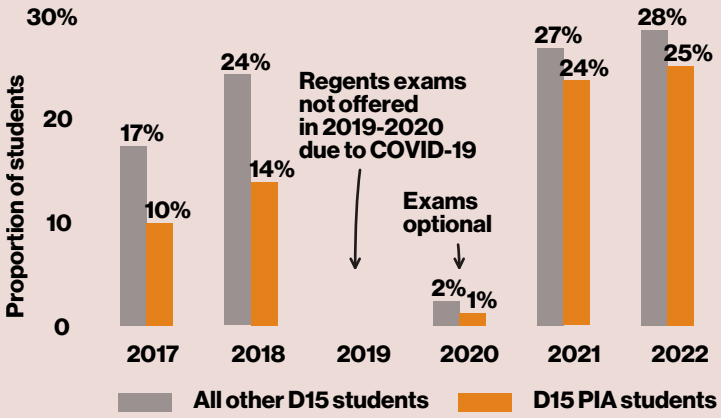
To evaluate academic outcomes while controlling for the impacts of COVID-19, this analysis used a process similar to analyses used in NYC DOE's School Quality Snapshots through SY 2018-19 and compared test scores among D15 students with a comparison group. The comparison group is made up of students of the same grade with similar school environments, similar academic profiles (MLL and IEP), and similar backgrounds (priority status versus all other students). This comparison provides an estimate on how D15 students perform academically through middle school in comparison to their peers across the city.

This analysis was conducted for tests taken in SY 2018-19, and 2021-22 or 2022-23: the year before the D15 Plan was implemented and the two most recent years of available data since the D15 Plan and COVID-19. For after the D15 Plan, all comparison analyses use the latest year of available data: 2021-22 for SHSAT and 2022-23 for state exams.

When reading this section, comparisons should be made between each cohort of D15 students and the comparison group of the same year. Readers should note that differences in the absolute scores between the 2018-19 and the post-D15 Plan year cohorts reflect impacts due to COVID-19, and are not a way of assessing the impacts of attending middle school in D15 after the D15 Plan.

Further detail on the methodology used is outlined in the Process section of this report.

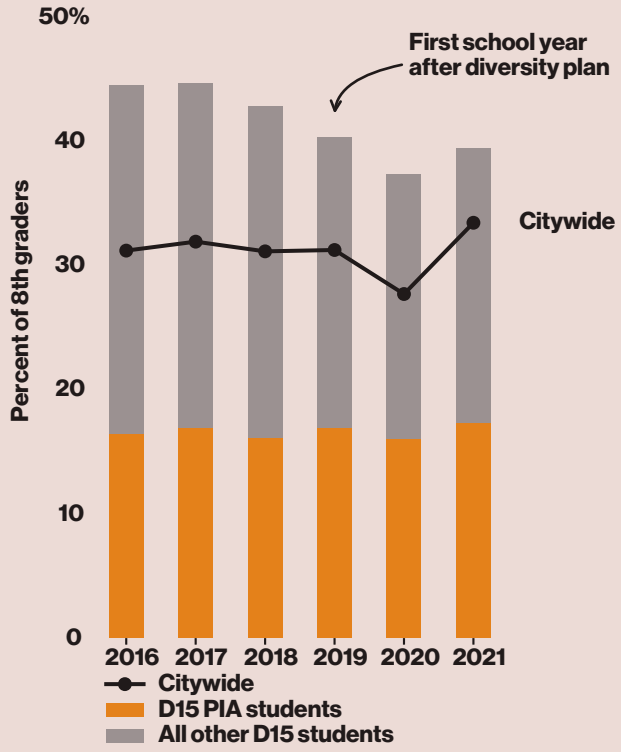
3C.1 **Students taking Regents math exams**



● **In SY 2022-23, 25% of PIA students took Regents math exams, compared with only 14% in SY 2018-19**

During SY 2022-23, 25% of students with priority in admissions in D15 took a Regents math exam, compared with just 14% in 2018-19 and 10% in 2017-2018 (see figure 3C.1). These exams for advanced work in mathematics are optional for middle school students and this trend indicates that D15 priority in admissions students have greater opportunities to take advanced math curriculum than they had before the D15 Plan.

3C.2 **Percent of 8th graders taking the SHSAT exam**



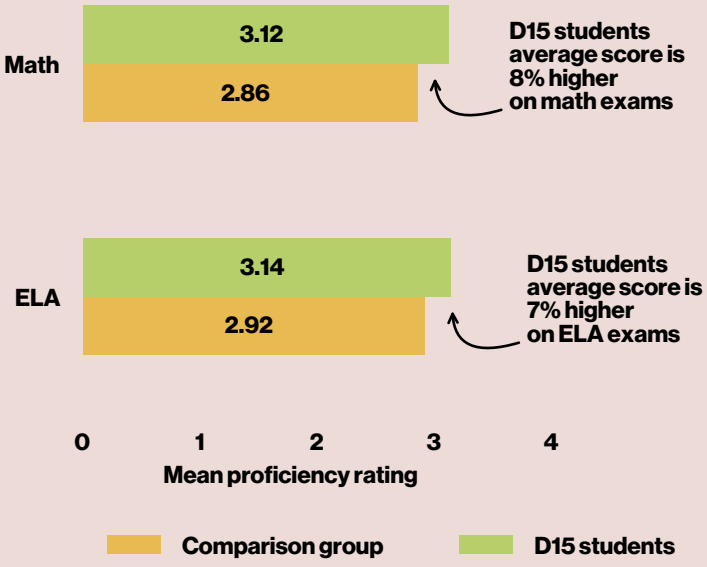
● **Fewer D15 8th graders choose to take the SHSAT exam in 2021-22 than before the D15 Plan**

Beginning in 2017, the proportion of 8th graders in D15 who chose to take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) for admission to New York City's eight Specialized High Schools has declined. In SY 2021-22, 39% of 8th graders in D15 took the SHSAT, compared with 43% in SY 2018-19 (see 3C.2).

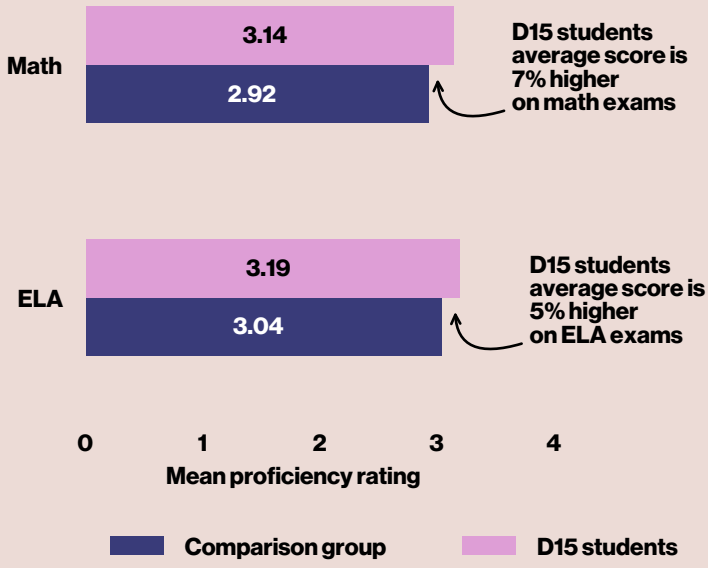
Among students who do not have priority in admissions, more students are choosing not to take the SHSAT, while the proportion of SHSAT takers who are PIA has remained constant. In SY 2018-19, 26% of SHSAT takers in D15 were non-PIA students, compared with 22% in SY 2021-22. In contrast, the proportion of SHSAT takers who are PIA has remained constant and slightly increased: in SY 2018-19, 16% of SHSAT takers in D15 were PIA students, compared with 17% in SY 2021-22 (see 3C.2).

D15 is one of just seven districts (out of 32 citywide) where the proportion of 8th graders who chose to take the SHSAT decreased between 2018 and 2021. Overall, students in D15 still choose to take the exam at a higher rate in comparison to 8th graders citywide where only 33% of students choose to take the SHSAT in 2021-22.

3C.3 **SY 2018–19**
Average scores on State tests



3C.4 **SY 2022–23**
Average scores on State tests

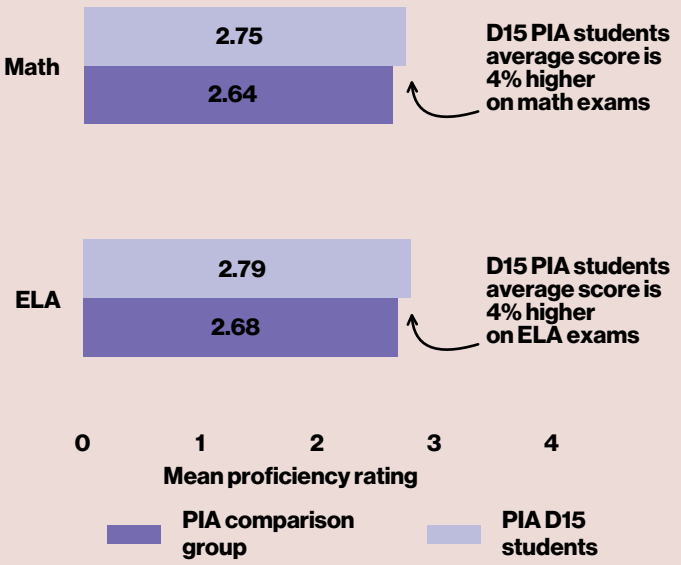


● **D15 students in both SY 2022-23 and SY 2018-19 cohorts had higher scores on their math and ELA State tests compared with peers citywide**

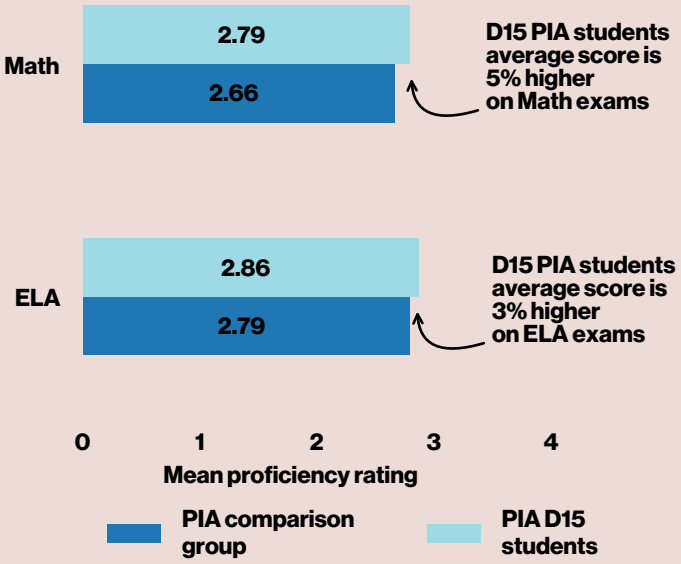
In both SY 2018-19 and 2022-23, D15 students overall had higher average scores on math and ELA State tests than their respective comparison groups. This difference was measured with greater than a 99% confidence interval, meaning that there is 99% confidence that the differences between these mean scores are statistically significant and not due to chance. This indicates that students who have attended D15 schools both before and after the D15 Plan have, on average, better academic outcomes on State tests than they would have had if they attended middle school in a different district in NYC.

In 2022-23, D15 students' average scores were 7% higher than the comparison group in math, and 5% higher in ELA (see 3C.4). In 2018-19 the relative advantage of D15 students was 8% in math and 7% in ELA (see 3C.3).

3C.5 **SY 2018–19**
Average scores on State tests for PIA students



3C.6 **SY 2022–23**
Average scores on State tests for PIA students

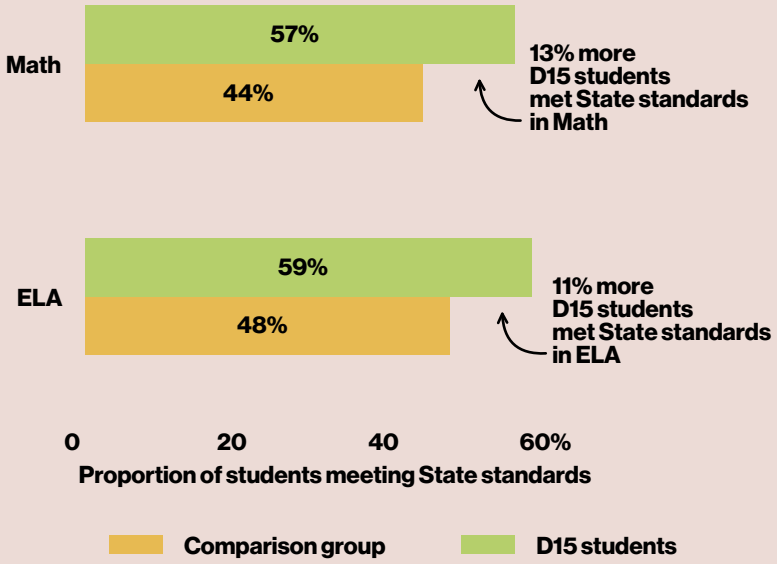


● **Students with priority in admissions in D15 in both SY 2022-23 and SY 2018-19 cohorts had higher scores on their State tests compared with peers citywide**

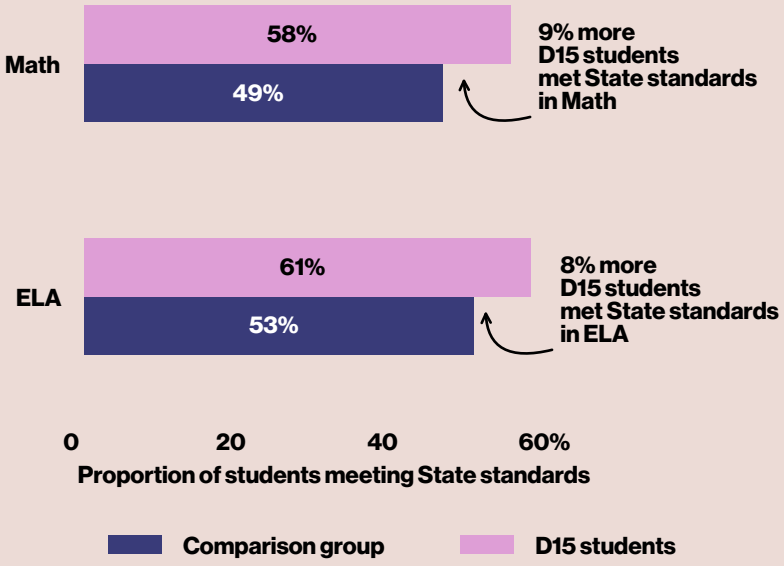
In both SY 2018-19 and 2022-23 students with priority in admissions in D15 achieve higher mean State test scores relative to a comparison group of PIA students citywide (with greater than a 99% confidence interval) (see 3C.5 and 3C.6). This indicates that both before and after the D15 Plan, students with priority in admissions had slightly more favorable academic outcomes on State tests than if they had attended middle school in another district in NYC.

However, PIA students in D15 continue to have lower average State test scores compared with D15 students overall.

3C.7 **SY 2018–19**
Proportion of students scoring 3 or 4 on State tests



3C.8 **SY 2022–23**
Proportion of students scoring 3 or 4 on State tests

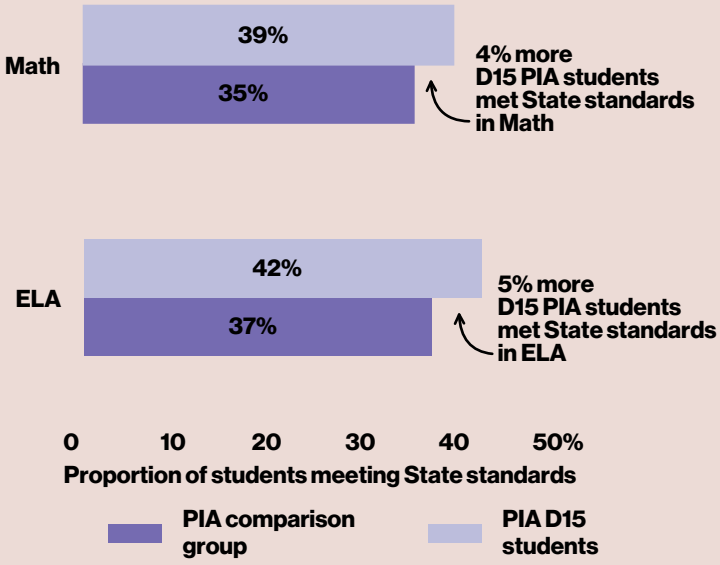


● D15 students in both SY 2022-23 and SY 2018-19 cohorts meet State standards on their State math and ELA exams at a higher rate compared with peers

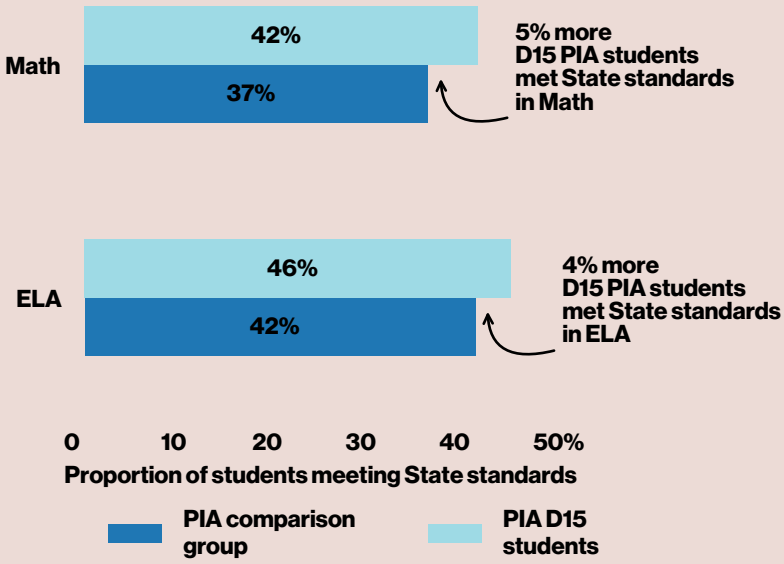
Students are considered to have met State standards if they have a proficiency score of 3 or above on a State math or ELA exam.

In both SY 2018-19 and SY 2022-23 D15 students met State standards at a higher rate than did students in the comparison group (see 3C.7 & 3C.8). In 2022-23, 61% of D15 students met State standards on their ELA exams and 58% met State standards on their math exams. Among students in the comparison group 53% of students met standards for ELA and 49% of students met standards math in 2022-23 (see 3C.8). This indicates that D15 students had better academic outcomes than if they had attended middle school in a different district in NYC.

3C.9 **SY 2018–19**
Proportion of PIA students scoring 3 or 4 on State tests



3C.10 **SY 2022–23**
Proportion of PIA students scoring 3 or 4 on State tests



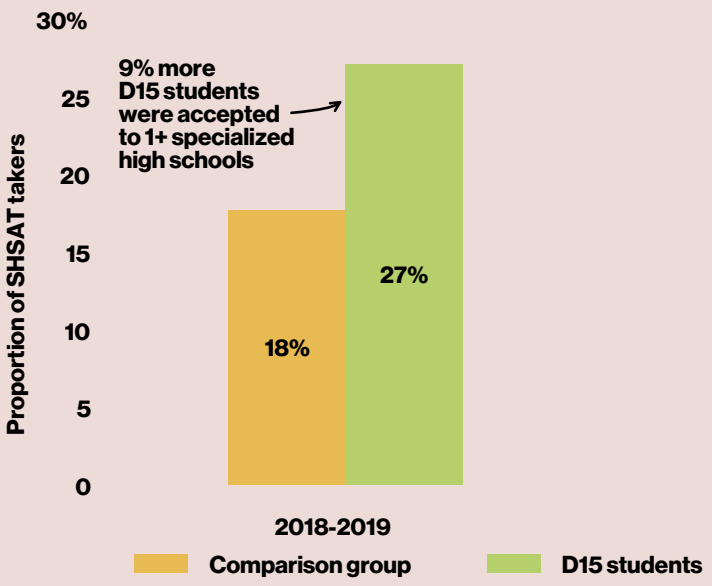
● **Students with priority in admissions in D15 in both SY 2022-23, and SY 2018-19 cohorts met State standards at a higher rate than their peers**

In both SY 2018-19 and 2022-23, D15 students who qualify for priority in admissions met State standards at a higher rate than students with priority in admissions in the comparison group.

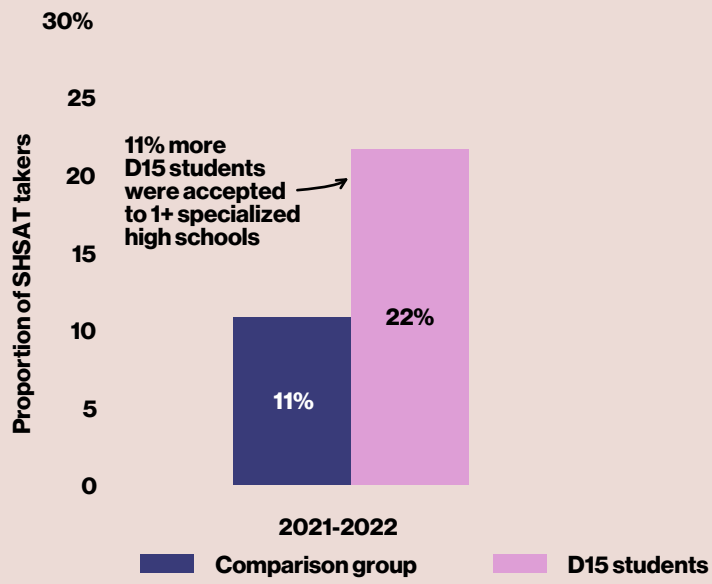
In 2022-23, 42% of D15 students who qualify for priority in admissions met State standards in math and 46% in English. In the comparison group: 37% of PIA students met standards in math, and 42% in English (see 3C.10). This indicates that D15 PIA students had better academic outcomes than if they had attended middle school in a different district in NYC.

In 2022-23, the proportion of D15 PIA students who scored 3 or 4 on State tests was 5% higher than the comparison group for math and 4% for ELA – this can be understood as the relative advantage of attending middle school in D15. In 2018-19, the relative advantage of D15 PIA students was 4% for math and 5% for ELA (see 3C.9).

3C.11 **2018–2019 SHSAT acceptance rate**



3C.12 **2022–2023 SHSAT acceptance rate**



● **D15 SHSAT takers in both SY 2022-23 and SY 2018-19 cohorts were accepted to specialized high schools at a higher rate than the comparison group**

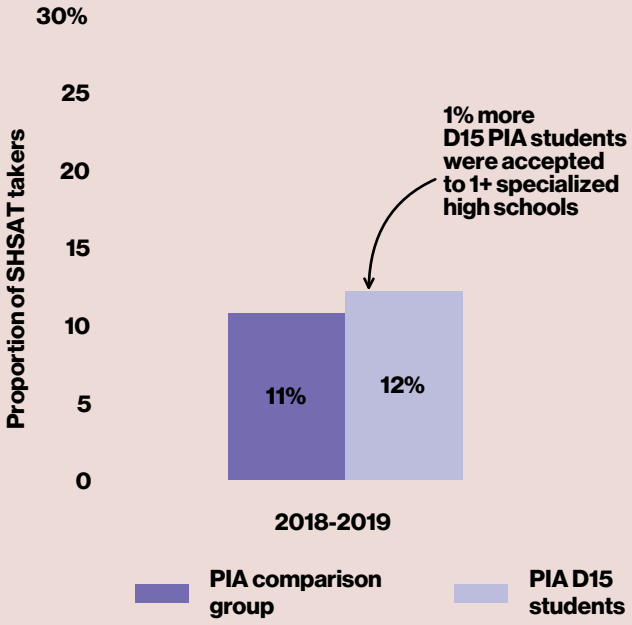
In 2018-19 as well as 2021-22 (the latest year for which SHSAT data was available at the time of report writing), D15 students who took the SHSAT were accepted to one or more schools at a higher rate than students in the comparison group.

In 2022-23, 22% of D15 students who took the SHSAT were accepted to one or more schools (see 3C.12).

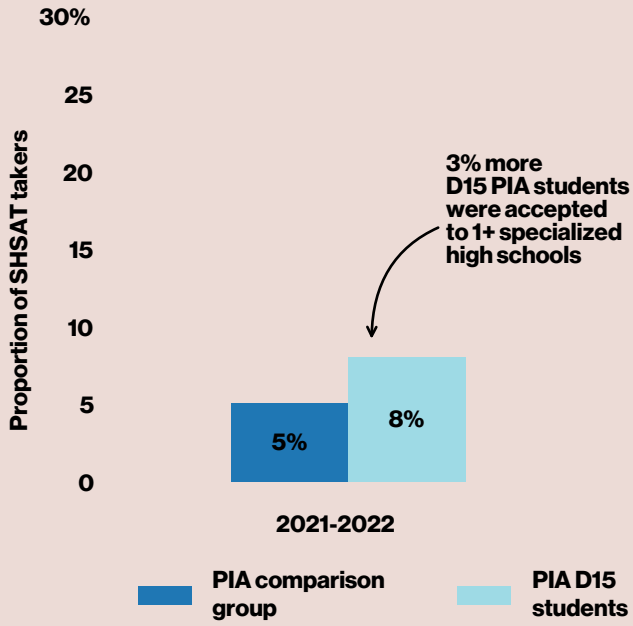
This is 11% greater than the acceptance rate for the comparison group. In 2018-19 D15 SHSAT takers were accepted to one or more schools only 9% more than students from the comparison group (see 3C.11).

The change in the acceptance rates between SY 2018-19 and SY 2022-23 reflects many different dynamics, including an increase in the total number of students citywide taking the SHSAT.

3C.13 **2018–2019 SHSAT acceptance rate among PIA students**



3C.14 **2022–2023 SHSAT acceptance rate among PIA students**



● **D15 PIA students with who take the SHSAT continue to be accepted to specialized high schools at a higher rate than the PIA comparison group**

In 2018-19 as well as 2021-22, D15 SHSAT takers who meet PIA criteria were accepted into one or more schools at a higher rate than the comparison group.

In 2021-22, 8% of D15 SHSAT takers who meet PIA criteria were accepted into one or more specialized high schools (see 3C.14). This indicates that PIA students in D15 are more likely to be accepted into specialized high schools than if they had attended middle school in another district.

The relative likelihood of being accepted into a specialized high school for D15 students versus the comparison group is slightly greater in 2021-22 than it was in 2018-19: in 2021-22, D15 PIA students were 3% more likely to be accepted into an SHSAT school relative to the comparison group. Whereas in 2019-2019, D15 PIA students were only 1% more likely to be accepted into a specialized high school than their peers in the comparison group (see 3C.13). This indicates that PIA 8th graders who attended D15 schools after the D15 Plan have a greater chance of being accepted to a specialized high school relative to their peers citywide than PIA students prior to the D15 Plan.

Inclusive Practices

Reflections on the impact of the D15 plan on inclusive practices within D15 middle schools

In addition to the focus on middle school integration, the D15 Plan also proposed recommendations to support greater inclusion within D15 middle schools. Inclusive practices and outcomes include a range of initiatives such as curriculum that embraces broader cultural histories, restorative justice practices, and the fostering of more friendships across identities. Based on survey information and focus groups with students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and school administrators and data-gathering, several important findings emerged.

Restorative Justice

▲ **Many schools shared that building early awareness of restorative justice among families and students is critical**

Several School Leadership Teams noted that a frequent challenge in the implementation of restorative justice work is the varying perspectives among school community members on when it is best to use restorative justice practices versus traditional consequences. Many school administrators and teachers shared that to implement restorative justice practices successfully, more work is needed in supporting parents/caregivers and students in understanding the approach and its values. One principal observed that without schoolwide engagement on this topic, especially before conflicts arise, some families have perceived restorative justice as leniency. Through the survey, one parent/caregiver shared an experience where her child had experienced harm by another student: "The restorative justice and administration team handled it pretty well, though it was difficult to swallow their methods at first."

▲ **School administrators shared that restorative justice coordinators are needed, and all staff need to champion restorative justice**

The D15 Plan included a recommendation to create a full-time DOE restorative justice coordinator position tasked with implementing, supporting, and tracking a districtwide approach to restorative practices in middle schools. Several principals and school administrators remarked that centrally-funded restorative justice coordinators within schools are needed to ensure continuity of these practices and emphasized the importance of all staff being trained in restorative justice. Many of these school communities discussed a need for a restorative justice coordinator at the school level. Below is the list of reflections shared:

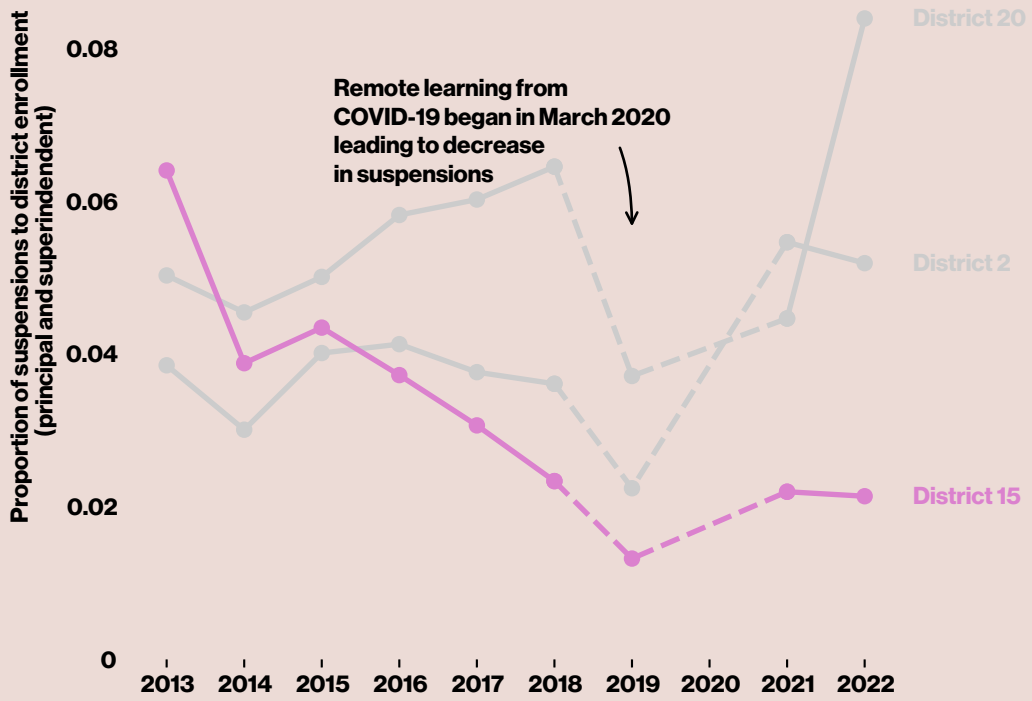
- Hiring challenges: One school that has worked to hire their own restorative justice coordinator has faced barriers in the process: "It took so much bureaucratic gymnastics to get him. Then we could only get him hired as a community coordinator role, which pays so much less…his work should be valued highly."
- Monitoring: One principal warns there should be some monitoring to ensure this role does not turn into a "glorified dean" or that this role absolves responsibility of all staff in practicing restorative justice.
- Centrally-funded position: One school administrator reflected that without centrally funding this position, as school budgets change, schools run the risk of this position existing "from one year to the next, making it difficult to build a restorative justice program."
- Communication: A few school administrators shared they would like to work on clarifying to students who is on the restorative justice team.

●▲ **Suspensions in D15 have continued to decrease since the D15 Plan, whereas in other districts suspensions have increased significantly**

The number of suspensions in D15 was lower in SY 2022-23 than it was in the years prior to the D15 Plan (see figure 3D.1). In 2022-23, there were 63 principal and 62 superintendent suspensions, compared with 77 principal and 74 superintendent suspensions in SY 2018-19. Principal suspensions can be imposed for one to five school days; superintendent suspensions are imposed for more serious behavior and can result in suspensions of more than five school days. D15 continues to have a lower total number of suspensions and lower rate of suspensions relative to its enrollment than similar districts. Comparison districts selected have slightly higher and slightly lower proportion of PIA students than does D15.

Note: During SY 2019-20 students transitioned to remote learning in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which contributes to a drop in the number of suspensions across the districts analyzed.

3D.1 **Total middle school suspensions relative to district middle school enrollment**



Conversations with D15 leadership provided context on collaborative efforts between schools and the District that have helped to mitigate school suspensions. This work has included:

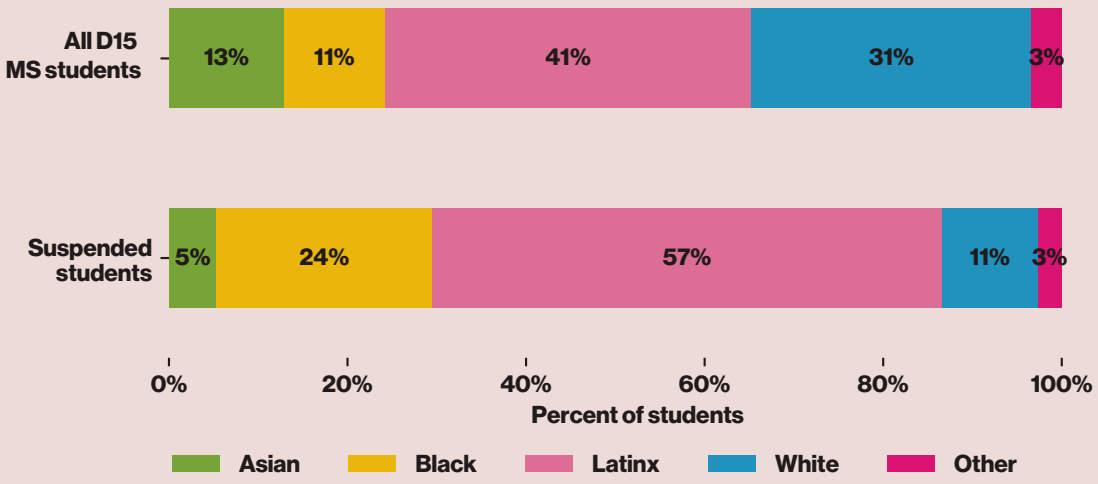
- Implementing collaborative problem solving in schools to support students and behavior.
- Increasing the number of school counselors and social workers.
- Providing additional professional development to new and existing mental health staff in schools to address the trauma and obstacles that students face.

Specific forms of professional development provided have included:

- Training in mitigating trauma (included grief and loss, trauma, chronic illness, suicide, and crisis response).
- Administering the Olweus Bullying Prevention program in 6 middle schools targeted for reducing bullying incidents in 6th grade.
- Training in play therapy and attachment theory.

At the same time, based on ongoing monitoring of data on suspensions and incidents, the District has worked closely with specific schools to provide additional support and resources to students who have experienced disciplinary actions.

3D.2 **2018-2019 Race and ethnicity of suspended students**



▲ Suspensions disproportionately impact Black students

Suspensions in D15 continue to be given to Black students at disproportionate rates. In SY 2022-23, 34% of suspended D15 middle schoolers were Black students, while Black students only make up 11% of D15 middle schoolers (see 3D.3).

In SY 2022-23, Latinx students were suspended at a slightly higher rate than the districtwide proportion of Latinx students: 47% of suspended students were Latinx, while Latinx students make up 43% of D15 middle schoolers.

In SY 2018-19 Black and Latinx students were also disproportionately impacted by suspensions (see 3D.2). In comparison to SY 2022-23 Latinx students were suspended at a more disproportionate rate in SY 2018-19, and Black students rate of suspensions was slightly less disproportionate in SY 2018-19.

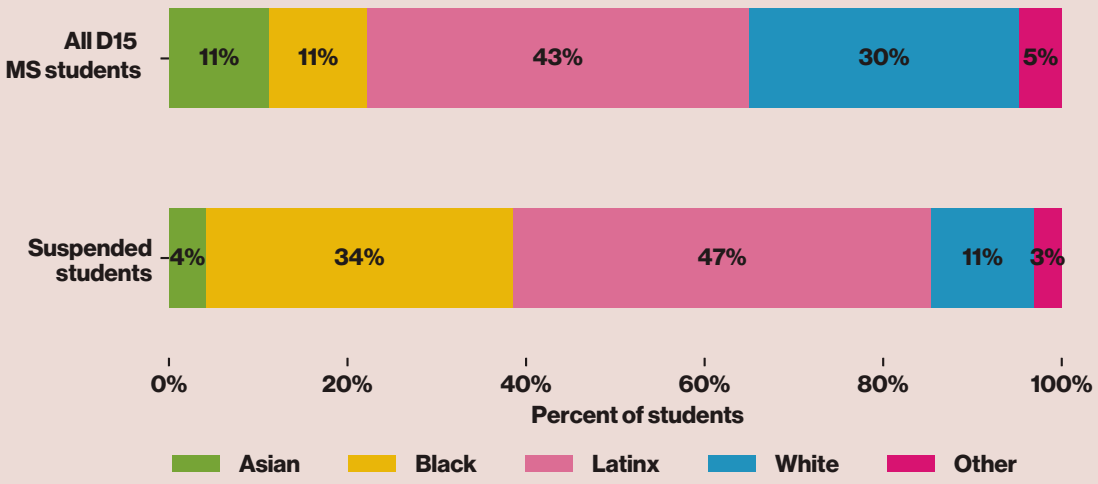
▲ Many students can identify strategies for navigating conflict with peers

Many students engaged in this evaluation shared that they feel comfortable and respected by most students. When asked about how students feel navigating conflicts among their peers, many students pointed to guidance counselors or other trusted teachers or staff who would support in helping "us make up if we have a rough start." When discussing incidents of racism or prejudice, students referred to experiences both among their peers and from teachers. A few students noted that some students "need more support in learning about respecting other races, cultures, and identities beyond advisory." More reflections on this are outlined in the subsequent findings.

▲ Some students who have experienced disrespect or microaggressions from teachers urged that a clearer process on how to elevate this to school leadership is needed

As noted above, many students engaged in this evaluation were able to identify trusted teachers and staff who they feel comfortable seeking support from to resolve conflict. However, several students shared that they felt a clearer process for resolving conflict with teachers is needed. A

3D.3 **2022-2023 Race and ethnicity of suspended students**



few students shared this is especially true when experiencing microaggressions, prejudice, or disrespect from a teacher. One student shared, "Watch the teachers and who the school hires. Some teachers are rude and disrespectful!" Students desired clarity on how and to whom to elevate these experiences for serious consideration and without repercussions.

▲ Students and school administrators at a few schools emphasized more ongoing student engagement and conflict resolution training is needed

Across all middle schools, school administrators, teachers, and students engaged in this evaluation shared the importance of ongoing student engagement in building an inclusive school environment. Students' reflections on this topic ranged across schools.

Students at a few schools emphasized that greater respect among students with different identities is needed and often suggested providing more opportunities for discussions on inclusion topics and training on conflict resolution and communication skills. When discussing respect across identities, students often referenced race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality as identities where they have observed or experienced disrespect or prejudice. A few school administrators across schools noted an interest in identifying and investing in further training for student peer mediation.

"We're still piecing together these practices. Figuring out how to implement a true restorative system and learn about the backgrounds of students…We are making short term headway, but the long-term goal of a true integrated and restorative school will take more time and resources."

– School Leadership Team member at a school where the proportion of PIA students is near the district average

Students & Families

▲ Some students highlighted the need for more meaningful action around inclusion values

Students in a listening session with peers from various D15 middle schools discussed a range of topics where more action is needed, including respect across identities, student safety, and substance use. One student shared, "We talk about campaigns and fixing the problem, but we haven't really applied any actions or precautions to solve the problem." In this discussion, many students celebrated the range of topics that their schools celebrate throughout the year (i.e., Black History Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Month, Pride Week) while urging meaningful ongoing action to address school-specific inclusion challenges. One student elaborated, "Posters are made, but they're taken as a joke." In discussions with educators around inclusion efforts, responses ranged from reporting on cultural history months celebrated at their school to specific classroom and restorative justice practices.

▲ Many students desire more student involvement in district and schoolwide policy decisions, especially around inclusion

In listening sessions with middle school students in District 15, many students urged greater student involvement in decisions around school policies and practices, especially around inclusion.

When asked about student-led spaces that discuss social-emotional learning and explore race, culture, identity, and ability, some students pointed to schools' equity teams or specific teachers who champion these efforts, while a number of other students mentioned they had not heard of groups like this. One student noted, "It might be there, but I don't see it." A few students emphasized that access and awareness of spaces like this would help to improve inclusion in their school.

During one engagement session, several students agreed when one student shared, "Discussions like these are good with a small group, but we should extend them to more people with more information about what the District is trying to do. It should be brought up more." One student followed up, "The District and school should also communicate with students, not just parents. We are interested in what is going on at our school." Some students suggested more skills training around conflict resolution be easily available, since at some schools "you have to put yourself out there to find those opportunities like through debate or special classes."

A few students at one campus that also includes a high school brought up the use of metal detectors in schools during listening sessions for this evaluation. A few students observed it made them feel safer, while some students felt there needed to be different ways to address violence. One student shared, "If you have a piercing, for example, you'll get searched. It makes you feel like a criminal. We want to feel understood in the situation." One student shared that, at her previous school outside D15, there were discussions on the topic of metal detectors, followed by a school vote on whether they would be used. Many students desired more meaningful involvement in decisions, such as in the use of metal detectors.

▲ Many students see the benefit of learning with peers who are different from themselves

Almost all students engaged in this evaluation process noted that their middle school is more diverse than their elementary school was and

> **"I see a lot of people of the same race grouping up with each other, though there's some people that go out of their way to be in a diverse group."**
>
> *– D15 student at a school that has seen an increase in PIA students since the D15 Plan*

that a more diverse middle school has allowed them to learn more about other cultures and languages. When discussing benefits and challenges of learning with students with different backgrounds, many students noted they see the value of learning in classrooms that are diverse. Students often identified diversity as it relates to race, ethnicity, culture, language, sexuality, and gender.

▲ Some students note varying degrees of friendships across identities, with some barriers

In a listening session with students across various middle schools, students noted different degrees of friendships across identities within their schools and often pointed to language learning, discomfort, or disrespect as barriers. One student also reflected that when there is a smaller number of students with a shared identity, he often sees those students forming a group.

Among students who responded to the survey, 66% reported agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement "within my school, there are many friends or friend groups that are made up of students of different races, genders, sexualities, and other identities"; 10% disagreed with this statement.

Some students, from schools with a high proportion of PIA students as well as those with proportions similar to the district average, observed that some friend groups form based on race, ethnicity, or language in their school.

Some observed this in the cafeteria. When asked why they thought this was the case, students most often pointed to language barriers and degree of comfort or respect among peers. One student reported being nervous about being made fun of for his accent and feeling more comfortable with students with similar identities or students who have been kind to him. One school shared they have assigned additional teachers to bolster restorative justice practices during lunch and provided more classroom lunch clubs to increase opportunities for student connection.

▲ Some observe strides in friendship across socioeconomic levels and neighborhoods

A range of D15 community members engaged in this evaluation observed developments in friendship across socioeconomic levels and neighborhoods. A teacher at a school with a socioeconomic composition close to the district average observed, "Small interactions matter…I see kids interacting and those friendships bonding and forming." Several teachers also expressed interest in learning more about how to better support students in making friends across socioeconomic levels.

Among students engaged in this evaluation who shared examples of friends whose identities are different from their own, many shared that the friendships develop either within their classrooms, especially when seated next to someone, through friends of friends, sports teams, or parents/caregivers becoming friends.

At listening sessions with 6th graders in Sunset Park and in Red Hook, some students noted that spending time with friends from different neighborhoods outside of school was a challenge, often due to distance, family rules around traveling far from home, or hesitation around not knowing the new friend's family. One middle school teacher in Red Hook engaged in this evaluation has observed a slow increase in invitations for cross-neighborhood hang outs.

A parent in Red Hook observed that there have also been shifts in self-awareness as socioeconomic differences manifest. For example, this parent shared that shortly after returning from a school break, she observed one student telling their peers about spending the break in their family's home in Upstate New York. She observed that students in lower-income families have become more comfortable

"My school is very diverse, but there's always a couple of friend groups that are the same race." -

– D15 student at a school within the target range of PIA students

telling students in higher-income families how lucky they are, and in response, she's seen students in higher-income families become more aware of what they have access to and considering other student's experiences.

▲ Some observe families across socioeconomic difference learning from one another

During engagement with parents/caregivers and school administrators, several participants highlighted areas of learning they observed from becoming a more socioeconomically integrated school. Many examples included learning about cultural identities different from your own, while others involved education related policies, such as testing policies.

One example shared at P.S./M.S. 676 (Harbor) came during standardized testing at the school. The parent coordinator shared that during one Parent Equity Team meeting, higher-income families brought up and preferred to opt out of State testing, while many lower-income families did not know this was an option. One school coordinator shared, "With diversity comes these unique realities of people's context and where they're coming from, [even] in something as simple as testing. For families of color, they never knew the option of opting out, not because it was withheld from them, [but because there] was usually an encouragement of 'let's take the test, let's prove our kids know what they're doing' because we want to get off state review or we need funding."

Some school administrators reflected on this moment with enthusiasm for the community-building that stems from learning across backgrounds and offered space to discuss testing options with families during subsequent meetings.

▲ Many PTAs are working to incorporate practices towards inclusion, and some request more support

Some parents/caregivers and school administrators engaged in this evaluation shared that shifting the PTA and its leadership to be more representative of the school community has been a priority, and has been challenging. Most parents/caregivers who mentioned this focus had a child attending a school where the socio-economic composition has shifted in the last 5 years. One principal mentioned that they have not observed all schools actively working towards building a representative PTA and that "principal leadership in this work matters and believing in the value of this."

Survey takers provided similar opinions. Among parents and caregivers who responded to the survey, only 35% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Our school's PTA is representative of our school community."

Parents/caregivers and teachers described some new measures to create meaningfully integrated spaces, such as shifting the focus from fundraising to community-building and inclusion, providing interpretation, and incorporating restorative practices. Some parents/caregivers at schools that have implemented these measures shared that a sense of "underlying discomfort" remains.

For example, some parents/caregivers and school staff have observed that asking for money from parents/caregivers divides the community. One staff member also remarked, "Cliques in PTAs make doing work in them really hard." Some schools also named that having a representative group of parents/caregivers involved on their Equity Team has been challenging. One school administrator noted that they have brought in an external partner to support parent/caregiver leadership development to build a more representative PTA.

▲ Interest in intradistrict collaborations with more support and elimination of barriers

Most School Leadership Team members engaged in this evaluation expressed interest in more intradistrict collaborations (collaboration across D15 schools). Many reported that some collaborations already exist but there is a need for coordination support and elimination of bureaucratic barriers. Some examples of intradistrict collaboration shared by the District leadership team included the D15 Project-Based Learning Share Fair and STEM Day.

Several school administrators across various schools observed that intradistrict collaborations are often organized at the school level and that some have run into bureaucratic hurdles. One

example shared during engagement in 2022 included an attempt to start a D15 middle school cross country league. School administrators ran into a bureaucratic barrier: permitting is coordinated with NYC Parks through the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) which only works with high schools.

Some additional ideas shared from engagement in this process included:

- One school administrator suggested these collaborations be centrally organized and funded, "Schools are already stretched so thin with limited funding, it cannot rely solely on individual schools to have the time and initiative to make them happen."
- One teacher reflected that "having a meeting center at your neighborhood school, even if it's not your school, would be really interesting."
- One principal urged restorative justice and inclusion practices be at the center of intradistrict collaborations, "Communities coming together that don't have relationships might cause you to enter into spaces where you don't feel welcome, undermining inclusion."

"Through my child's middle school, I had the opportunity to participate in an anti-racist parent training series through NYU MetroTech; that was an extremely valuable experience."

– Parent at a school with a high proportion of PIA students

Teachers, Training, and Curriculum

▲● Many school administrators and teachers highlight more representative staff as a continued priority, with some schools making recent strides

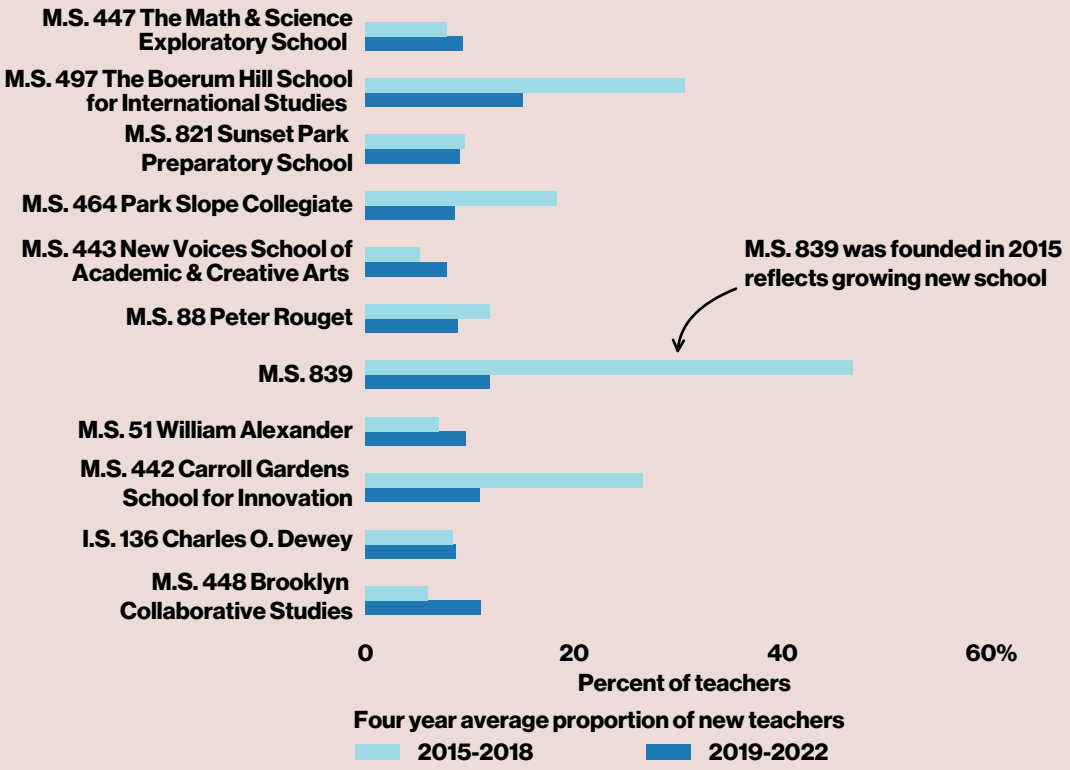
Almost all schools, especially those that saw an increase in the proportion of priority students at their schools, noted representative staff as a major consideration in their planning post-D15 Plan. During engagement in SY 2022-23, some schools noted that they need support in developing recruitment processes that attract and support candidates of color.

For SY 2022-23, the DOE's Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality (TRQ) launched the first annual Superintendent Diversity Report shared with NYC superintendents, alongside a range of additional resources and support. These district-specific reports aimed to provide access to current data about districts' student and teacher demographics to make informed decisions about inclusive recruitment hiring practice and provide resources that can assist schools with planning and hiring. D15 leadership shared that, in the second annual report, 58% of teachers newly hired in D15 were teachers of color in SY 2022-23.

The report also outlined progress by school. Some schools have seen a significant increase in teachers of color, while some schools still require a significant shift to be representative of their student population. Using the Superintendent Diversity Report, D15 asked principals review hiring data and present to fellow principals using the inclusive hiring tools to share best practices.

Some parents/caregivers of color and a few teachers engaged in this evaluation noted

3D.4 **Percent of new teachers by school**



representative teaching staff is especially important in maintaining and celebrating the identity of a school that historically served majority students of color. This is discussed in greater detail in a finding later in this section. A few new teachers of color at schools that had an increase in PIA students since the D15 Plan shared that they would not have considered working at their school if it was not racially or ethnically diverse.

A few parents/caregivers of color engaged in this evaluation in SY 2022-23 also mentioned that while applying to middle schools, they noticed many middle school principals in D15 are White. District leadership shared an awareness of this concern and noted that between 2022 and 2024, the three most recent principals hired have been people of color, shifting the overall total to four principals of color out of 11 principals under the D15 superintendency.

● **Since the D15 Plan, 10% of the teachers are new each year at the typical D15 middle school**

The median proportion of new teachers across D15 middle schools was 11% in the four years before the D15 Plan was implemented (SY 2015-2016 through 2018-19) and 10% in the four years afterwards (SY 2019-20 through 2022-23). Some schools had higher rates than the average; for example, M.S. 839 had a high proportion of new teachers between 2015-2019 because the school opened in 2015. With reduced hiring in 2020-2021, most schools had fewer new teachers during this year, contributing to overall lower proportions of new teachers since SY 2019-20.

At six out of the 11 schools, there was a change in principals between SY 2015-2016 and 2022-23. M.S. 51 (Alexander) stands out with two new principals between SY 2018-19 and 2022-23.

▲ Some observe more equity-focused work at their schools over the last five years

Several caregivers, principals, and teachers engaged in this evaluation observed that the D15 Plan, alongside the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 and the COVID-19 crisis, energized their school community to focus on inclusion and equity in their school. This was a common topic of conversation brought up in engagement especially with school communities where the proportion of PIA students has increased since the D15 Plan.

Some examples included lesson planning focused on inclusion and learning about a range of identities, weekly small group meetings to discuss equity, school-based organizing to support families through the pandemic, curriculum development to address social-emotional learning, and equity-focused training and book clubs. Some school communities noted that their school had engaged in equity initiatives long before the D15 Plan.

▲ Many school administrators reflected that school-specific plans for support and monitoring as part of districtwide integration planning would have been beneficial in the implementation of the D15 Plan

One of the most common points of feedback across engagement sessions with various school community members was that professional development needs for successful implementation of the D15 Plan vary from school to school. Some School Leadership Teams and parents/caregivers noted their school has been working on topics of integration, diversity, and racial equity for many years before the D15 Plan, while some schools reported more recently starting to analyze the impacts of their pedagogy and practices across different identities.

Many school leadership reported that school-specific plans for support and monitoring would have been helpful in the early stages of the D15 Plan's implementation. Some examples of specific contexts described included:

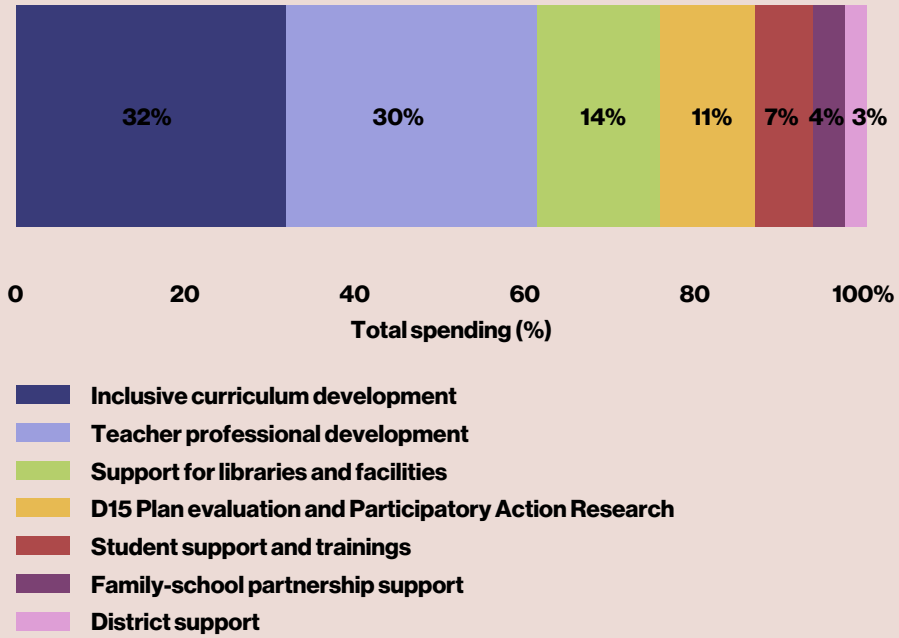
- Aligning teachers within schools on "what we mean by inclusion and restorative justice"; some teachers and principals engaged in this evaluation observed a divide between some teachers around inclusion practices.
- Identifying and implementing best practices for PTAs or Equity Teams to be more representative of the school community.
- Identifying partnerships for their specific professional development needs.
- Identifying and sharing best practices around facilitating student connections across socioeconomic status.
- At schools that have historically served majority students of color, how to maintain, honor, and celebrate that history as school compositions shift.

●▲ The NYSIP grant and schools directly funded some inclusion training after the D15 Plan, though many desire more ongoing training

New York State Integration Project grant funded a range of support and training after the D15 Plan (see 3D.5). D15 leadership noted that D15 middle schools benefited from this funding in various ways and to different degrees. Several administrators also shared that their school had self-organized and fundraised for their own implicit bias, racial equity, and other equity-focused training and said they saw no additional funding from NYC DOE to support the implementation of the D15 Plan. During engagement with teachers and parents/caregivers

> **"Getting full staff buy-in to the Diversity Plan is a barrier many schools are facing."**
>
> *– D15 middle school teacher*

3D.5 **NYSIP grant spending by category**



across various schools, several underlined a need for more ongoing, high-quality training for all school staff around inclusion and restorative justice efforts, along with including parents/caregivers and students more in these opportunities.

Responses from the approximately 60 middle school teachers who completed the survey echoed these comments from in-person engagement: 66% of teachers who responded to the survey indicated that they had opportunities to participate in ongoing training. However only 52% agreed that they have had the resources and support needed to support changing demographics at their school.

▲ Many work to maintain and celebrate the identity of school communities that previously served majority students of color

Through engagement at schools that have historically had majority students of color, many parents/caregivers and school staff celebrate the D15 Plan and want to maintain their practices of centering and celebrating students of color while welcoming students of all backgrounds.

A school staff member who works with parents at P.S./M.S. 676 (Harbor) shared that since the school is transitioning to a middle school one year at a time, this pace has allowed for deliberate discussions with the first cohort of middle school families around how to maintain and celebrate the identity of a school that has historically served families of color. One staff member observed about middle school parents, "I've seen White families in our school already thinking about next year, when any new White families join the context, discussing how they can make sure the next cohort are also allies to the school's equity vision."

A few teachers in the school wanted to learn more about best practices and examples specific

to integrating schools that historically have served students of color in a way that ensures the identity and culture of the school remains central.

When discussing this with a group of parents at P.S./M.S. 676 (Harbor), one Black parent noted that an important factor in maintaining the identity includes representative teaching staff, "The middle school is majority White teachers, and it feels like some are nervous to teach Black and Brown history to my child. I need to feel you are comfortable having these conversations for me to be comfortable with you teaching my child."

▲ Some expressed interest in sharing or learning from best practices across middle schools around implementation of the D15 Plan

A few principals and teachers engaged in this evaluation also suggested the District provide support through designating time and facilitation for paired learning among middle schools in the district focused on implementation of the D15 Plan. They described examples such as intervisitations, which involve collaborative learning through observations at different schools, and other paired learning opportunities among school administrators or educators.

D15 leadership shared that some opportunities for intervisitation currently exist, and that they are working to increase these opportunities, especially as new citywide curriculum mandates are implemented starting in SY 2024-25 in District 15.

"I'm curious about having contact with teachers within other schools [around the D15 Plan]. What is happening in other schools? What have the kinks been in the system and what is this like for them?"

– D15 middle school teacher

Implementation

Community feedback and reflections on the D15 Plan and its implementation

Based on engagement across school communities, there was a range of feedback on how the D15 Plan was implemented. The following summarizes key findings.

General Reflections

▲ Awareness of the D15 Plan varies among different communities in D15

Across various engagement sessions, most parents/caregivers and students, especially those with priority in admissions, and many staff had not heard of the D15 Plan nor the integration work it sought to accomplish. Almost all parents/caregivers engaged in the listening sessions in Spanish and Bangla had not heard of the D15 Plan.

Among community members who completed the survey, 36% of respondents were not at all familiar with the D15 Plan. Among survey takers who reported qualifying as PIA, 44% were not at all familiar with the D15 Plan. This finding indicates that districtwide some families are not aware of the D15 Plan, and that PIA families may have less familiarity with the D15 Plan. Similarly, one school administrator wondered if families with PIA status know they have priority in admissions when applying to middle school and what impact not knowing this information may or may not have.

▲ Many families and staff celebrate the values of the D15 Plan and the work to integrate schools

Across D15 middle schools, most members of School Leadership Teams that were engaged in this evaluation expressed support of the plan and of its values. At almost all listening sessions with parents/caregivers, teachers, and guidance counselors, the first reflections expressed support or celebrated the plan's values even among families and staff not previously aware of the D15 Plan. Of the families and staff who were aware of the D15 Plan, many also noted excitement at seeing the impact of the D15 Plan on students over a short period of time.

Families with students that went through the middle school admissions process before and after the D15 Plan often observed a notable decrease in stress and anxiety among their students who went through the process after the implementation of the plan. While most students engaged in this evaluation were often not aware of the D15 Plan, most reflected excitement towards the values of this work and/or curiosity on the progress and implementation of the plan.

"We still don't entirely understand what the diversity program is about. Where is it coming from, how does it really work, and what are the goals specifically? Who is in charge of all of this?"

– School Leadership Team member at a D15 middle school

▲ Some families expressed concern about the removal of screens and implementation of the lottery system

Some families engaged in this evaluation expressed concern and frustration that the removal of school screens and implementation of a lottery admissions process was a transition away from a merit-based process.

Frustrations were especially present during a listening session held in Mandarin in Sunset Park with elementary school parents/caregivers. Many families in this session recognized this plan as the implementation of the lottery system. Concerns focused on providing the best educational opportunity for their child and having an admissions system that rewards hard-working students. One parent remarked, "I do not support the lottery system because our kids work very hard and yet are left in the hands of the lottery, which affects our kids emotionally."

Some additional frustrations from other listening sessions involved parent/caregiver priorities and how their admissions offer had misaligned with those priorities. For example, one parent's priority was to send their child to a school close to home, and their child was offered a school far from home. A number of these parents empathized with the goals of the plan but desired more balance between family choice and diversity.

▲ **Some call for further consideration of students with disabilities and diversity in learning styles in D15 Plan**

During engagement with D15 middle school principals, some principals highlighted the need to expand the range of diversity addressed in the D15 Plan to consider students with disabilities and diversity of learning styles.

One principal, who celebrates the D15 Plan overall and has seen their school become more socio-economically representative of the district, emphasized that even within integrated spaces, there are systems-level barriers that prevent teachers and schools from fully supporting student learning, such as funding and standardized testing. The funding section of this report outlines further details on this barrier.

For standardized testing, several teachers and principals engaged in this evaluation expressed that diversity planning needs to address the impacts of standardized testing on students' diversity of learning styles. One principal commented, "How does the D15 Diversity Plan address the pressure of standardized testing? The CR-SE [culturally-responsive and sustaining education] academic piece of this is really important; some students have anxiety around the testing. How do we prepare our school community to prepare our instruction to meet their needs? Also, [we need to consider diversity] as in diversity of how different students learn. And how do we measure improvement outside of current testing structures?"

Another school principal emphasized the need to understand and measure the percentage of students with disabilities at each school over time. They suggested that the definition of diversity should include different learning styles and abilities and wondered why the priority in admissions categories did not include students with disabilities. Students engaged in this evaluation often observed varying degrees of interaction with students with disabilities. One student shared, "I feel like I see some students with ADHD and autism like me, but I don't see people with harder disorders in the classroom."

Among students and parents who completed the survey as part of this evaluation process 66% reported agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement "I have/my child has the opportunity to learn in classrooms where there are both students with disabilities and those without."

"The Diversity Plan in D15 was a time where we created a cultural moment, where we said this is important to us, this is who we are, and this is something we believe in."

– Former DOE Employee

Middle School Application Process

▲ **Some parents and teachers suggest more support for attending open houses/school tours**

Some parents/caregivers, students, and teachers, especially those engaged in Sunset Park and Red Hook, highlighted a need to further support students with priority in admissions (but also welcomed the support for all students) in learning about all middle school options available to them via tours before the application process.

During listening sessions hosted in Spanish and Mandarin in Sunset Park, some parents expressed difficulty in finding time to attend open houses or that they did not hear about them until after the dates. One parent shared that this is especially important for parents going through the middle school admissions process for the first time and that, currently, many parents "rely heavily on online ratings or getting recommendations from friends or parents who had gone through the process."

When engaging 5th grade students at P.S. 676, most students shared they had ranked either M.S. 676 (Harbor), M.S. 448 (Collaborative Studies), or Summit Charter school among

their top two choices. Many students in this session said that they did not spend a lot of time learning about available schools in D15. During a session with teachers at P.S./M.S. 676 (Harbor), one teacher observed many families are not comfortable considering schools far away or that are unfamiliar. He also encouraged the District to support students in learning about all middle school options available to them.

Among parents and caregivers who responded to the survey roughly a third reported having not attended any in person tours for middle schools.

District leadership shared that many elementary school guidance counselors organize school tours for some 4th and 5th grade students and noted the District Family Support Coordinator and DEI Coordinator can work to further support in a high-level coordination capacity, especially to elementary schools in Sunset Park and Red Hook. District leadership reflected this support could be more expansive with a D15 Admissions Coordinator, a role that was recommended under the D15 Plan but does not currently exist. The District and CEC have also recently been working to centralize information around open houses to publish all available dates and times on the CEC website in all major languages.

▲ Some observe that more alignment with Family Welcome Centers is needed

School staff at two schools expressed some concern around information shared by Family Welcome Centers (FWCs) after admissions offers have been made. Family Welcome Centers support families with enrollment and admissions decisions by appointment, including enrolling in NYC public schools, transferring to another NYC public school, and applying for 3-K, Pre-K, kindergarten, middle and high school (Family Welcome Centers, 2024). One school administrator expressed that the Center does not "convey clear information and is not onboard [with the D15 Diversity Plan]." The administrator shared that the school receives an influx of calls around August and September from parents/caregivers who are directed to contact them by the Welcome Center staff.

Transportation

▲ Some transportation recommendations from D15 Plan in 2018 have been partially implemented, though the DOE did not initially subscribe to them

The D15 Diversity Plan outlined four transportation recommendations, which the DOE did not initially subscribe to in 2018 when the D15 Plan was approved. The D15 Plan recommended free unlimited-use MetroCards to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders who qualify as low-income or travel beyond one mile to school; separately, the MTA approved a full-fare MetroCard for students in 2019. OPT's current policy (in 2024) is that only 6th grade students who live one mile or more away from the school are eligible for DOE school bus transportation. All other students receive full-fare student MetroCards, with up to three trips per day between 5:30am and 8:30pm. It is not currently unlimited. All four 2018 recommendations are outlined in the Tracker towards the end of this report.

Note

Eligibility for DOE provided transportation is based on grade level, distance between home and school, and existing accommodations. A middle school student is eligible for bus transportation through NYC Public Schools in sixth grade if they live one mile or more away from school. All other middle school students receive full-fare student MetroCards, with up to three trips per day between 5:30am and 8:30pm. Additional services are available to students who have transportation recommended on their Individualized Educations Programs or 504 Accommodation Plans or have approved medical exception from the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT).

▲ Many observe DOE bus coordination challenges persist

Many schools with 6th grade students electing to use the school bus shared some challenges with transportation coordination, such capacity and delays in setting up bus routes or in response time, especially at the start of the school year.

Almost all School Leadership Teams reported that the responsibility of coordinating school bus transportation is placed on school staff, often teachers, guidance counselors, or school administrators, without training or additional compensation. Several school staff engaged in this evaluation feel the process of setting up bus routes and finalizing transportation via the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) is inconsistent, unclear, and "not practical and disorganized." Many staff who lead on transportation coordination perceived that OPT is understaffed.

When complaints are filed, many school staff noted lags in response time that impact students' ability to travel to school. One school shared that they have filed numerous complaints and that OPT can take up a month to provide a bus service to a student. A few schools shared that at the beginning of the year lack of confirmation on bus services caused some students to be absent from school. One school noted that, in the past, parents/caregivers and schools called Uber for students to reach school. Another School Leadership Team member engaged in this evaluation shared, "Before COVID-19, about 180 kids in 6th grade rode it, and we had no problems with it." Now there are "just a handful of kids taking the bus." School staff have emphasized that providing multiple transportation options could be helpful: "Our bus from Sunset Park has six kids. Ridership grows and then shrinks. Some kids like them, and some don't. If we could promise families a bus for three years, that would be helpful. It's hard if families are forced to choose between a bus and MetroCard; if kids take a MetroCard, then at least they always have transportation. I say give the kids both!" A student shared via the survey that "The bus was constantly late, and traveled so slow that we were sometimes 20-30 minutes late. I wake up at 6:40AM every day, there are 2 hours between when I wake up and when school opens. My 6th grade attendance tanked."

"Kids of color have a different experience with NYPD [New York Police Department]. There needs to be supervision coming from people not in the carceral system especially during times when we know kids are traveling."

—Teacher at a D15 school

▲ Some student transportation safety concerns exist, especially among parents/caregivers in Sunset Park

Many elementary and middle school parents/caregivers engaged in this evaluation, especially during listening sessions in Spanish, Mandarin, and Bangla in Sunset Park, shared safety concerns in and around transportation to school. In the session in Spanish, several parents noted safety as a major concern and factor when deciding which schools to rank in their middle school application process. During the session held in Mandarin, all parents resonated when one parent raised safety concerns around students using public transit alone, specifically noting fear of racially-motivated violence. This concern is critical to address as part of the D15 Plan to both increase students' and families' sense of safety and support Sunset Park students in being able to consider all schools in D15.

Several staff members and some students also mentioned this concern during School Leadership Team listening sessions. One student shared that

"I took the B63, and it was really annoying at times, but did its job. It arrived in stages, so if I missed it, I'd have to wait a while for the next one. It was also very slow, which made me late to school occasionally. On the way home, there weren't enough buses to accommodate everyone, so the buses were always cramped, overcrowded, loud, and overall disorienting."

– Student feedback via survey

"public transit needs to be safer, and more policing is not safer." One teacher at another school shared that some of her students wait at their bus stop in the dark starting around 6:30 am. Another teacher observed that some students take 2 or 3 buses due to overcrowding. A few school staff at various schools observed that some students living further away from their school have family members travel with them. A student shared via the online survey that "I wanted to go on a DOE school bus, but they didn't come anywhere close to my house. So I took the B69/B67 which is fine, but I won't take the train because I'm too scared to go by myself since the shootings."

Programs

▲ Some students face barriers to accessing after-school programs like transportation availability and safety concerns

Across engagement with middle school students as part of this evaluation process, several students named they are not able to participate in after-school programs because they themselves or their families have safety concerns about staying at school late. As one student noted during a listening session, "some kids don't trust other kids after school, or we have to pick up other siblings." A few students named recent violent incidents on public transportation as a major factor in their families' safety concerns. One school administrator also stated that several sixth-grade students at their school who rely on the school bus service as their method of transportation face challenges in coordinating accommodations to participate in after-school programs.

▲ City and state defined eligibility requirements for some special programs are at odds with integration efforts

A few social workers and guidance counselors engaged in this evaluation encouraged a re-evaluation of admissions criteria for special programs that require students to attend a high-poverty public school within the context of districts with integration initiatives and to consider district-specific socio-economic compositions.

The specific program discussed was the NYC Department of Education Summer Discovery programs for eighth grade students, where public school students "must attend a school whose Economic Need Index (ENI) is 60% or higher" to qualify (Discovery, 2024). One D15 middle school social worker shared that using segregation as a metric for qualification punishes districts working to integrate schools. They shared, "it was heartbreaking this year and years in the past to counsel students who scored high and were aware of the Discovery Program that they were ineligible to be invited because our school as a whole did not meet the threshold—when in fact the student's family meets the federal poverty guidelines."

Alternative options suggested include student-specific eligibility requirements or considering each district's socio-economic composition in qualifications, in this case considering District 15's ENI when developing a cut-off requirement.

▲ Some point to physical space as a barrier to meaningfully implementing the D15 Plan

Several school staff engaged in this process named that space is a major barrier to meaningfully implementing aspects of the D15 Plan. Some examples of this include lack of library space, service providers needing to conduct their sessions in hallways, lack of elevator access, and more. One principal shared, "Space is currently our biggest issue. Service providers are often conducting sessions in the hallways. Space to conduct restorative circles would also be beneficial."

Funding

▲ Many emphasized concerns around Title I funding policy in the context of D15

Title I-A funding is a federal funding mechanism that provides financial assistance to school districts and schools serving areas with concentrations of low-income students. It is established in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This federal legislation specifies that school systems must set a cutoff below which schools become eligible for Title I-A funding. In New York City this is done at the county level, and in Kings County the cut-off for a school to obtain Title I funding is 60% or more low-income students.

Many school leaders raised concerns around the impact of integration work on Title I funding, since the districtwide average of low-income students is slightly below the 60% cutoff. Several principals, who either lost Title I funding shortly before the D15 Plan, shortly after the plan, or are close to losing this funding, shared the sentiment that losing Title I funding feels like "a punishment for diversifying." One principal shared that "limited funding for this work took momentum away from implementation."

These sentiments highlight the challenges inherent to cutoff-based funding policy. Many principals and teachers urged for revisions to Title I funding policies to consider the specific context of each school district, including whether a district is implementing a diversity plan and a district's proportion of low-income students. Some principals reported losing funding by a few percentage points and questioned a cut-off approach versus providing schools with different levels of funding based on their proportion of low-income students.

Concerns around the loss of Title I funding highlight the ways that district policies are intertwined with and impacted by policies set at the city, state, and federal levels.

● Two schools lost Title I funding shortly before the D15 Plan

M.S. 442 (Carroll Gardens) and M.S. 497 (Boerum Hill) lost Title I funding shortly before the implementation of the D15 Plan. Both school's proportions of students in low-income families had been decreasing in the 4 years prior to the D15 Plan (see figure 3E.1).

● One middle school lost Title I funding since the D15 Plan, and two are nearing the funding cut-off

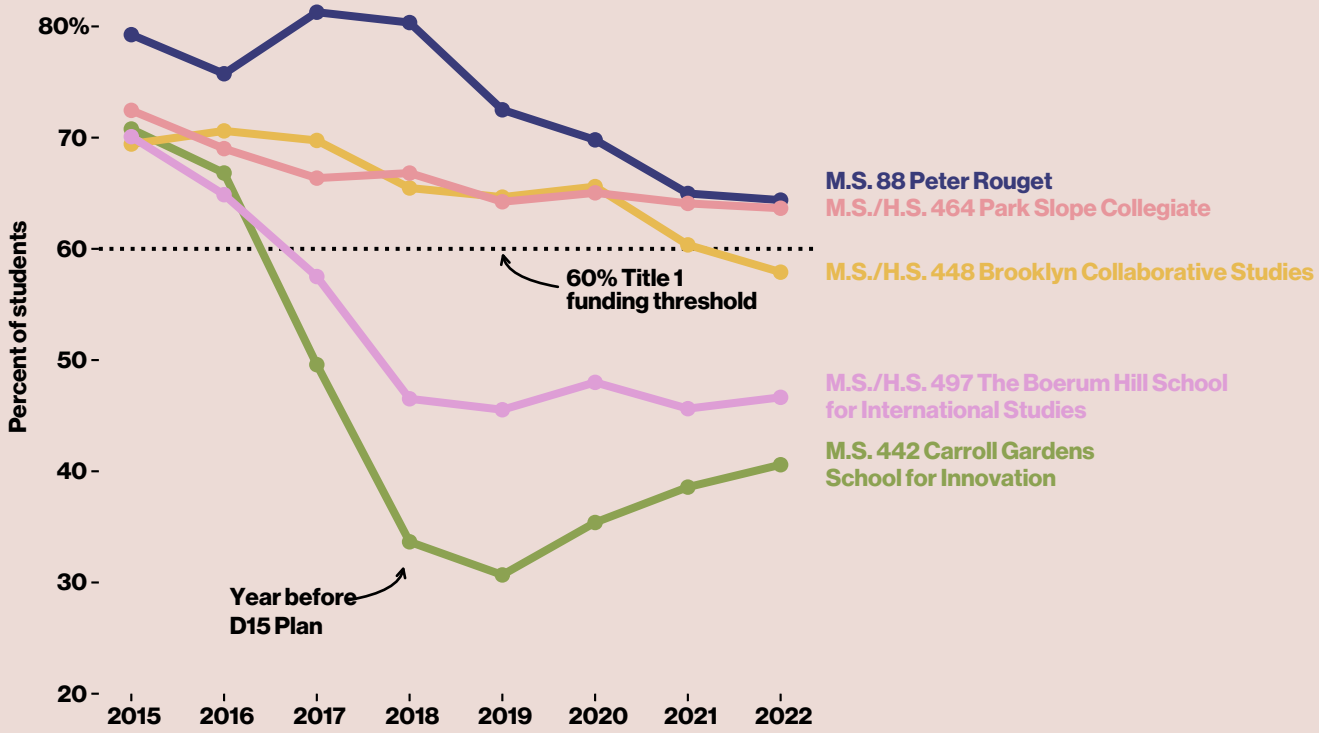
M.S./H.S. 448 (Collaborative Studies) lost its Title I status as of fiscal year 2022 (SY 2021-22), and lost funding as of fiscal year 2023. A school administrator at M.S./H.S. 448 (Collaborative Studies) shared that the middle school has seen a decrease in students in low-income families, but the high school continues to be majority low-income students. The administrator shared that this loss in Title I funding has negatively impacted the high school, "It cost us $400,000 in our budget and has taken funding from our high school students, most of whom qualify for Title I. They're being averaged out with a 'richer' middle school."

M.S./H.S. 464 (Park Slope), a 6-12 school, and M.S. 88, a 6-8 school, have both seen a decline in the proportion of low-income students in the years after the D15 Plan (see 3E.1). Both schools are nearing the 60% threshold that disqualifies a school from receiving Title I funding.

▲ Many parents/caregivers, principals, teachers, and some students stressed concern around funding for public education more generally and desired further clarity on school funding policy

Principals, teachers, parents/caregivers, and some students across schools reported significant concern and frustration around funding for public education and changing federal, state, and city administrations' impact on levels of funding. Many stakeholders engaged in this evaluation, across these various roles in D15, reported feeling "extra financial pressure on schools, especially in light of recent budget cuts."

3E.1 **Proportion of students in poverty by school for schools that have moved below or are approaching the 60% cutoff for Title 1 funding**



For example, many reported seeing impacts during changes in mayoral administrations on school funding, required curriculum, and degree of support offered for integration work. Several parents/caregivers noted a general interest in learning more about how schools are funded. One parent wondered, "It would be helpful to understand what issues are happening across schools, what is systemic, and where the issues are coming from the DOE or the district."

▲ Many parents/caregivers are curious about intra-district fundraising, requesting more information and support

Parents/caregivers engaged in this evaluation noted curiosity about reducing inequities in PTA fundraising in the district and wanted clarity around how funding is organized for schools and where inequity exists. One principal shared an existing example of intra-district fundraising, a collaboration on a multi-school Fun Run.

One parent/caregiver suggested, "A little more context would help to educate people on the problem." Some parents/caregivers had heard of discussions around intra-district fundraising but had not heard any follow-up from previous discussions; one parent said, "We heard loosely of partnership with another school's PTA, but we didn't hear anything else. We thought we would partner with our sister elementary school in the same building." One parent involved in the PTA President's Council remarked, "We are reviewing PTA by-laws but not necessarily with this intention. We were not told we were supposed to be doing these things." Some parents noted additional work is needed to clarify practices for reducing disparities in PTA funding.

These observations shared by parents stemmed from reviewing a recommendation from the D15 Plan that specified monitoring D15 middle school resources such as arts, music, technology, sports & PTA contributions across all D15 middle schools.


4

Appendix

The following pages include a summary of actions and ongoing work to address the recommendations that were outlined in the District 15 Diversity Plan, as well as a glossary of terms and works cited.

D15 Diversity Plan Recommendations Tracker—2018

Acronym Definitions

DOE	Department of Education
ENI	Economic Need Index
FRL	Free or Reduced Lunch
OPT	Office of Pupil Transportation
OSE	DOE Office of Student Enrollment

Status Definitions

Complete or Ongoing - For labels 'Complete,' the recommendation has been implemented; if labeled 'Ongoing,' the measure to address the recommendation requires ongoing work.

In Progress - Measures to address this recommendation are currently in progress.

Reconsidered - Based on updates to policy or practices since the D15 Plan, the need for this recommendation has shifted or is no longer needed.

Not Complete - Measures to address this recommendation have not been made.

Recommendations developed in 2018 as a part of the D15 Diversity Plan are listed on the following pages. This includes (1) Integration: Equitable Admissions, Access to Information, Transit, Monitoring, Transparency and Coordination; and (2) Inclusion: Integrated Schools, Inclusive Classrooms, Restorative Practices, Collaboration and Engagement, Resource Inequity, and Students with Special Needs & Physical Access. This tracker provides the general status, recommended owner, and an update on the recommendations. Recommendations were reviewed by D15 leadership to assess how this work has progressed and how it can continue to align with current work.

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Integration: Equitable Admissions			
Remove all screens. (These screens include: lateness, attendance, student behavior, admissions exams/tests, standardized test scores, report card grades, & auditions. Maintain the current system of school choice.)	Complete	Implemented starting in the Fall 2019 admissions cycle.	• OSE
Create an admissions priority for students who qualify as low-income, are English Language Learners (ELLs) and/or are Students in Temporary Housing for 52% of all seats at all D15 middle schools.	Complete	Implemented starting in the Fall 2019 admissions cycle.	• OSE

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
A more specific & accurate metric will be developed & used to identify low-income students status. For example, using the DOE's economic need index & median income data from the US Census.	Complete	Since SY 2017-18, DOE no longer uses Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) as their measure of poverty. Instead, the DOE uses Economic Need Index (ENI), which considers a wider range of factors in assessing socio-economic status.	• D15 • OSE
The admissions priority would be adjusted yearly to match the previous year's district average for low-income students.	In Progress	The 52% admissions priority was developed to reflect the proportion of D15 FRL students in 2017-2018. The proportion of students with priority in admissions was at 59% in SY 2022-23. Using analysis from this report, the District will work to determine when a change in admissions priority is appropriate as the proportion changes.	• OSE
Allow elementary students who have completed a dual language program to be automatically eligible for middle school dual language programs. Utilize a transparent & objective assessment to determine bi-literacy for new students entering a middle school dual language program.	Reconsidered	Following the District 15 Diversity Plan, all middle schools, including middle school dual language programs, use random selection to order applicants. This means that all elementary students who are eligible for District 15 middle schools are also eligible for middle school dual language programs, including those who have completed an elementary school dual language program.	• OSE • D15: Multi-Language Learners Service Coordinator • D15: Director of English Language Learners
Encourage the citywide School Diversity Advisory Group to research & explore the impacts of Dual Language programs as they relate to school diversity & integration.	Complete	All of the recommendations in the District 15 Diversity Plan Final Report were shared with the School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG).	• D15
Improve support & funding for existing programs in middle schools which have historically been ranked lower by applicants.	Complete & Ongoing	Funding from New York State Integration Project grant for the D15 Diversity Plan was used to support schools historically ranked lower by applicants.	• DOE • D15
Explore, implement & fund specialized programs in middle schools which have historically been ranked lower by applicants, such as Spanish and/or Chinese dual language programs & specialized STEM programs.	Complete	A new middle school MS 428 Global Innovators Academy in Sunset Park will open for SY 2024-25 after feedback from communities highlighted the desire for a Mandarin and Spanish dual language program in the neighborhood as well as additional Special Educaiton Programs. Similarly, after extensive community feedback from the PS 676 school community and wider Red Hook community expressing a desire for a middle school in Red Hook, PS 676 began its transition into the new maritime-themed Habor Middle School during SY 2022-23.	• DOE • D15

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Strengthen relationships between elementary schools & middle schools which have historically been ranked lower by applicants.	Ongoing	Since the Diversity Plan and COVID-19, there was a shift to more individualized middle and elementary school collaborations, coordinated by parent coordinators and guidance counselors, rather than district-wide events. The District has heard from principals that adding more recruitment events at a district level feels redundant, so the District office is shifting to support schools with logistics and coordination of these tours. This task is taken on by current District office roles, though would be better suited to a D15 Middle School Enrollment Coordinator, a role recommended in the D15 Plan that does not currently exist.	• D15
Ensure that any new specialized programs serve the entire school population (no tracking).	In Progress	The District is committed to eliminating tracking. Currently there is no active system to understanding how tracking changes over time. The District is tasking their Academic Policy, Performance and Assessment (APPA) Specialist to develop a system for this.	• D15: APPA Specialist
Ensure that any new dual language programs serve the immediate surrounding community of English language learners.	Ongoing	There are currently 28 bilingual education programs in District 15: 25 are dual language bilingual education programs that serve both ELLs and non-ELLs; 3 are transitional bilingual education programs that serve only ELLs or former ELLs. Programs are in three languages: Spanish (20 programs), Chinese (6 programs), French (2 programs). Since 2018, two new bilingual education programs have opened at one school in District 15: Sunset Park High School (H.S. 667) opened a Spanish Dual Language (DL) Bilingual Special Education (BSE) Integrated Co-Taught (ICT) in SY 2018-19. The next year (SY 2019-20), H.S. 667 opened an additional Spanish DL general education program. We anticipate two of the brand-new schools opening in fall 2024 (as part of the Office of New School Design cohort) in District 15 to also offer bilingual education programs: M.S. 428 — I.S. 428 is planning to offer both sixth grade Chinese and Spanish dual language bilingual education; 15K456 — P.S. 456 is planning to offer kindergarten Spanish dual language bilingual education.	• D15: Multi-Language Learners Service Coordinator
Conduct an assessment of all middle schools to identify inequities with respect to resources & program offerings. Use the results of the assessment to develop strategies to address inequities between schools, including the development of programs needed to support & challenge a range of learners at all middle schools in D15. Make the assessment & action plan publicly available.	In Progress	A programs baseline analysis set up through this evaluation will allow for comparisons over time. Action plans can then be developed based on these comparisons.	• D15: Diversity and Equity Coordinator
Allow students with physical disabilities the option to be prioritized for barrier free schools within their local school district.	Ongoing	Schools located in fully and partially accessible buildings prioritize applicants with accessibility needs. DOE encourages any family with accessibility needs to explore their child's program options in MySchools, and to list choices on their child's application that will meet their family's needs. For more specific information about a program's admissions priorities, please contact the program directly. For more information, please visit DOE's website at schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enrollment-help/meeting-student-needs/students-with-accessibility-needs.	• OSE • D15: Administrator for Special Education

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Once students are matched to a middle school, create an optional opportunity to identify & connect "cohorts" or clusters of students from the same elementary school to facilitate familiarity for incoming 6th graders	In Progress	Currently this often happens at the school-level, whether organized by the school or organically through families. The District is aiming to support in coordination where needed. More capacity to support this work would be best offered by an D15 Enrollment Coordinator, as recommended in the D15 Plan.	• Some schools organize this independently • Some families set this up organically • D15
Align mid-year enrollment policies & mechanisms with district wide admissions priority. Ensure that the middle school appeals process is clear & easy-to-navigate.	Complete	The DOE appeals process ended in 2019.	• OSE • D15
In years 2 & 3, assess whether all D15 middle schools have the required applicants to fill the 52% districtwide admission priority for FRL students based on district average by the end of Year 2. Conduct a district wide survey to better understand student & parent choices.	Complete	As of SY 2022-23, 10 out of the 12 middle schools have between 40-70% PIA students. This range was set as the target range for PIA students by the District. The two schools which fall outside of this target range have greater than 90% PIA students indicating that these schools do not currently have enough non-PIA students to reach the target range.	• DOE • D15
In years 2 & 3, provide funding & support to develop strategies with D15 middle schools who do not have the required applicant pool to fill the 52% district wide admission priority for low-income students in partnership with parents, students, & community partners.	Ongoing	As of SY 2022-23 10 out of the 12 middle schools have between 40-70% PIA students. This range was set as the target range for PIA students by the District. The two schools which fall outside of this target range have greater than 90% PIA students indicating that these schools do not currently have enough non-PIA students to reach the target range. Additional outreach or support may be needed to encourage non-PIA students to consider these schools.	• DOE • D15
In years 2 & 3, continue to support & fund existing & specialized programs, such as Spanish and/ or Chinese dual language programs & STEM programs. Strengthen relationships between elementary schools & middle schools which have historically been ranked lower by applicants. Ensure that any new specialized programs serve the entire school population (no tracking).	Complete	See page 99 and 100 for more details on support offered for funding of specialized programs.	• D15: Multi-Language Learners Service Coordinator • D15: Director of English Language Learners

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Assess whether all D15 middle schools fall within 40%–75% for low-income students by the end of Year 4. Current FRL averages for the two Sunset Park middle schools are 96% & 97%, & the higher range above the 52% district average has been set to ensure that the challenge of integration does not fall disproportionately on the students of Sunset Park. Conduct a district wide survey to better understand student & parent choices.	Complete	As outlined in this evaluation, in SY 2022-23, two middle schools fall outside the current target range of 40-70% priority students in each school: Sunset Park Prep and M.S. 136. Both schools are located in Sunset Park. Both this evaluation and the two Participatory Action Research projects in Sunset Park and in Red Hook elevated findings to better understand student and parent choices and found a desire for specific middle school options in their respective communities, which the District office has supported through the opening of M.S. 676 and M.S. 428.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Engage in a community planning process to explore & implement other approaches if all D15 schools have not met this target by the end of Year 4.	Ongoing	This evaluation will help to provide insights on next steps to support schools outside of the target range of 40-70% PIA students.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
In year 5, utilize the outcomes of the community planning process to implement new admissions approaches & to set appropriate goals & benchmarks.	Ongoing	This evaluation will help to provide insights on next steps to support schools outside of the target range of 40-70% PIA students.	• D15
Integration: Access to Information			
Create a centrally-funded full-time D15 Middle School Admissions Coordinator position to facilitate access to information on the middle schools admission process & middle school offerings. Their responsibilities would include overseeing the equitable & culturally responsive distribution of information, coordinating partnerships between elementary & middle schools & connecting D15 families to language services.	Not Complete	This position does not currently exist. D15 DEI Coordinator took on tasks of this role. This is still needed and high priority.	• DOE

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Develop a D15 Language Access Action Plan to address information access districtwide. Ensure middle school open houses and tours are offered in multiple languages, with funding provided for translation.	In Progress	The development of a Language Access Action Plan is listed in the new job description developed for the DEI Coordinator hired in 2023. This is a priority item for the district. The action plan should include a deep understanding of each school's context and availability of translation services, strategies to address any disparities, potential funding sources, and timelines.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Create targeted information sessions between middle schools & the elementary schools that currently don't have many students applying to them, based on analysis of the previous year's applications & with assurance that DOE provides funds & resources to support this process (e.g. through the D15 Middle School Admissions Coordinator).	Complete	The districtwide parent forum was paused during COVID-19. Parents/ caregivers shared that this forum was less helpful, and schools have been coordinating partnering with elementary schools themselves. The district is commited to developing clearer supports in this process, including support on scheduling, strategic school pairings, etc. Based on feedback from parents/ caregivers in a Superintendent's Townhall, the district and DOE developed a plan for aligning supports for elementary and middle schools in the admissions process, including providing the same materials for guidance counselors to reference in their support of families in navigating the D15 middle school admissions process.	• D15
Ensure that parents receive real-time, complete, & accurate information in the language of the family's home choice regarding their rights, their individual student's needs & abilities, & school choice.	Complete	The District provides training for guidance counselors and schools around engaging families in the middle school admissions process. To support this work, the District developed a presentation deck in September 2023 that includes complete and accurate information on D15 middle school options for students. The District is also currently updating their website to include information on D15 middle school options on their site. This deck and website is updated each year.	• D15: Family Leadership Coordinator
Embed a multi-lingual informational component into the online middle school application process highlighting the unique programmatic offerings of each middle school (not including standardized test scores).	Complete	The MySchools platform can be used in a range of languages.	• DOE
Standardize all the D15 middle schools distribution materials in terms of length & graphic formatting so that there is equity in school marketing materials & resources. Ensure that the distribution materials uses language accessible across educational backgrounds.	Complete	As noted above, the District provides an updated district-wide deck to guidance counselors and social workers to use in supporting families through the middle school admissions process each year. Each school still is able to use their own materials in addition to this deck. The District will review promotional material needs, especially with the two schools outside the target range.	• D15: Family Leadership Coordinator

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Provide training & support to Guidance Counselors & Parent Coordinators to ensure the non-biased distribution of information on all D15 middle schools to parents & students.	Ongoing	There continue to be ongoing trainings and presentation materials provided to guidance counselors and school staff who support the admissions process.	• D15: Parent Coordinator • D15: Supervisor of School Social Workers • D15: Family Leadership Coordinator
Execute targeted promotion of new admissions changes (& the larger D15 Diversity Plan) across D15. Ensure the D15 school community is informed about & understands admissions policies. Conduct personal, direct outreach to all parent coordinators in underserved communities.	Ongoing	As outlined above, this work has been underway. Additionally, based on this evaluation and ongoing feedback from families, the District will continue to assess potential strategies to address information gaps and access challenges.	• D15
Integration: Transportation			
Update the DOE's existing policy (with new & clearer publicity) to provide 6th, 7th & 8th graders who qualify as "low-income" or travel beyond 1 mile to their middle schools with free unlimited-use MetroCards.	Complete	All students in grades 6, 7, and 8 who travel more than a half mile to school can now receive Full-fare student MetroCards. These are provided at no cost to students. The cards are Student MetroCards, which are different from regular MetroCards. A student MetroCard has three trips and three transfers.	• OPT
Encourage the citywide School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG) to explore citywide transit solutions for middle school students.	Complete	All of the recommendations in the District 15 Diversity Plan Final Report were shared with the School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG).	• OPT •SDAG

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Pilot a busing program for 6th grade students traveling beyond 1 mile to their middle schools. Ensure bus routes provide access for students with limited subway & bus access.	Ongoing	As before the D15 Plan, students in grade 6 who travel beyond 1 mile to middle school may be eligible for bus transportation. Students are assigned a Yellow School Bus if: • The student lives in the same district as the school, • The student's school has yellow bus service available for eligible students, and • A bus stop within the student's grade/distance eligibility exists or can be added to accommodate the student. NYC Public Schools does also offer exceptions to bus eligibility requirements for certain students, including those that face some hazard in walking to school or public transportation. To see what type of circumstances qualify, visit schools.nyc.gov/school-life/transportation/bus-eligibility/exceptions-to-transportation-eligibility. Eligible students who do not meet these criteria will receive a MetroCard. For more information on yellow bus eligibility, please visit schools.nyc.gov/school-life/transportation/bus-eligibility	• OPT
Utilize the D15 Diversity, Equity & Integration Team to help establish travel groups & networks between middle school parents & guardians with children going to the same school. In collaboration with school leaders, teachers & parents, work with elementary schools to hold students with siblings 30-minutes longer to allow middle school siblings to pick them up.	In Progress	Based on this evaluation and school community feedback generally, the District will work to identify next steps to address transportation challenges generally. A D15 Enrollment Coordinator is needed to support in this work.	• OPT • D15: DEI Coordinator
Integration: Monitoring & Coordination			
Conduct an audit on enrollment results to ensure that equitable numbers of students from the admissions priority are chosen for each D15 middle school. Ensure that the results of the audit are made publicly accessible & are easily understood by all D15 school community members. Use modeling & data simulation to illustrate how other admissions models would impact integration	Complete	This evaluation provides this auditing. Other admissions models were not explored in this evaluation since 10 out of 12 middle schools fall within the target range. Beyond this report, the DEI Coordinator will work with the Office of Student Enrollment to obtain updates on basic enrollment results yearly that can be shared out. The DEI coordinator will also work with the Student Equity Congress and various parents and educator groups to develop ways to share access to this report and to incorporate this report into classroom learning.	• Evaluation Consultant • D15: DEI Coordinator

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Create an annual review of the D15 Diversity Plan that is publicized by the D15 Superintendent's Office & CEC15, including a checklist of what has been accomplished, an update on inclusion initiatives, what items are outstanding & a comparison of the year-by-year demographic information contained in the DOE Demographic Snapshot of the individual middle schools & overall district. This would also monitor the number of students attending the D15 middle schools relative to previous years & the latest census data. Host a district wide forum for stakeholders to review & discuss the results.	Complete	This report is the first district-wide evaluation of the D15 Diversity Plan, and it includes a review of the items listed here. Beyond this report, the DEI Coordinator will help to work with the Office of Student Enrollment to provide an update each year, building on this evaluation. This District will provide various avenues for discussion of this evaluation.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Create a centrally-funded full-time D15 Diversity, Equity & Integration Coordinator that partners with D15 administrators, educators, staff, parents & students on diversity & integration initiatives. The coordinator would track integration initiatives in D15 & solicit feedback to inform future plans & other NYC integration efforts. This coordinator would work in collaboration with the D15 Restorative Justice Coordinator & D15 Admissions Coordinator.	Complete	After the previous DEI Coordinator left the role late 2022, the District office drafted a job description to align with the recommendations of the D15 Diversity Plan.	• D15: DEI Coordinator • DOE

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Inclusion: Integrated Schools			
Expand & incentivize opportunities for anti-racist, anti-bias, cultural sensitivity & disability bias trainings for D15 administrators, teachers, parents & students	Ongoing	The New York State Integration Project grant is used to provide this support. The district has worked with The Minor Collective in all schools (2022-2023) to engage in teacher inquiry groups with a focus on creating a robust, culturally responsive curriculum and anti-racist, student centered teaching practices. They presented to all 36 schools, but focused on four schools in particular, impacting 130 staff and administrators throughout our district. In classroom coaching and demonstration practices were used to sharpen instructional practices in targeted areas, embedded one-on-one instructional leadership support for selected principals and assistant principals (APs), and district-wide reflection and strategy building for APs. The Minor Collective's measured impact has been classroom and grade-team scale systemic redesign. The overall impact has been measured in terms of student work, discussion, and engagement. Teachers were observed and have exhibited and manifested expectations around culturally responsive standards-based lessons. Furthermore, the Pacific Education Group has provided all APs with training in conversations around disrupting disproportionality and eliminating bias.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Provide support for D15 educators in adopting best practices for academically, racially & socioeconomically mixed classrooms	Ongoing	The New York State Integration Project grant is used to provide this support. The district has worked with Hill Pedagogies to facilitate workshops for 78 assistant principals and teachers who were tasked with crafting units and lessons of study that are equity-based, anti-racist, culturally relevant, and exhibit teaching practices across history classrooms. Students discuss differences and difficult histories, impacting conversations and curriculum that break down stereotypical biases. Hill Pedagogies covered five pursuits of culturally and historically responsive teaching: identity, skills, intellectualism, criticality, and joy. Her work focuses on how to build better relationships with students, understanding why cultivating literacy skills isn't enough, and how to break down the barriers to equity. Evidence of impact is that 95% of all teachers observed exhibited and manifested expectations around equity-based teaching practices for all students. Projects were observed at Project-Based Learning symposiums as well.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Support short-term & long-term hiring practices, funding & incentives to hire more teachers of color	Ongoing	Starting in 2022, the DOE Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality (TRQ) provided District leadership with a Superintendent Diversity Report with a number of resources and support focusing on building representative staff in schools. The District has and will continue to facilitate sessions with school leadership to investigate their own hiring practices, through one-on-one meetings and Principals' Conferences, reflecting both on data on hires over time and the hiring process.	• D15: DEI Coordinator • D15 Principals
Identify an "equity team", including the principal & a cohort of teachers & staff, who serve as in house support to coach teachers, develop curriculum, & guide Culturally Responsive practices at each middle school. Provide training opportunities on Culturally Responsive practices to "equity team." Ensure opportunity to join cohort is open to all teachers & staff.	Ongoing	With the hiring of a new DEI Coordinator in 2023, the District has taken community feedback to revamp the Equity Congress to focus on one problem of practice for extended periods of time, using both data and resources around best practices to guide the group's work.	• D15: DEI Coordinator

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Inclusion: Restorative Practices			
Address the racial disparities in student discipline by investing, supporting, & incentivizing restorative justice circles & best practices to support student-centered, healing & restorative approaches to discipline, conflict, & community-building.	Ongoing	In the 2022-2023 school year, The Center for Supportive Schools worked with 54 students and adults in the Youth Equity Congress to work on relationships, shared definitions and understandings, and understanding oneself as a change maker. They explored the importance of developing authentic relationships especially when striving to be Change-Makers. They explored shared definitions such as equity and applied these to their experience in schools. They focused on the importance of embracing who they are, affirming that everyone is unique in support of an equitable world. Students engaged in the Youth Equity Congress use strategies to facilitate conversations around race, gender, sexual orientation and class through observations of restorative circles and equity dialogues. Additionally, in the 2022-2023 school year, Ms. Sams provided comprehensive training on how to incorporate SEL competencies into all 36 D15 elementary and middle school advisory programs. A robust curriculum was provided along with vast opportunities for faculty to engage in observation and feedback sessions to increase the efficacy of implementation. All teachers and their students participated in inquiry groups and interviews. In particular, MS 447's student population demographics have changed as a result of the Middle School Diversity Initiative where more African American and Latinx students have joined their community. As a result of this work, the school educators incorporate the newly established school values into their instructional practices to create a more equitable, positive and productive school culture. Faculty design lessons and activities that explicitly promote and reinforce these values and impact daily SEL practices. Teachers infuse the identified values into SEL learning and strategies. As a result, students develop the social and emotional skills necessary to understand and embody those values in their interactions with peers and teachers. Furthermore, the Bank Street Center on Culture, Race and Equity supported equity team and youth equity group development at PS 295 through providing protocols on addressing conflict in the 21-22 school year. Also for the 2021-2022 school year, the NY Peace Institute provided coaching to the MS 443 community in conflict mediation to resolve community disputes, restore trust, repair harm, and reset relationships. During the 2022-2023 school year, The Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility provided sessions to the MS 51 faculty. The purpose of this work was to combine culturally-affirming Social and Emotional Learning with restorative practices and the development of racial critical consciousness. Teachers also received Morningside's middle school curriculum to use during advisory, which is a new structure at MS 51. Participants were immersed in topics including: skills for deep listening, key elements of circles and the role of the circle keeper, introduction to SEL, conflict resolution dialogue skills, tools for managing anger, and a framework for understanding oppression, power, privilege, and intersectionality.	• D15: DEI Coordinator

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Create a Restorative Justice Coordinator (full-time DOE) position tasked with implementing, supporting & tracking a districtwide approach to restorative practices at all D15 middle schools. Designate a Restorative Justice leader at every D15 middle school to lead restorative practices within each school. Track, monitor and report disciplinary data by race, gender and ethnicity.	Ongoing	In fall 2018, when the District 15 Diversity Plan recommendations were adopted, NYCPS did run a restorative justice program in some districts, headed by a restorative justice coordinator. At the time, NYCPS evaluated the needs of each district, looking at disciplinary data like suspension rates, and allocated resources to the areas with the greatest need. At the time these recommendations were adopted, the total cost to run this program in a district ran from $600,000 – $1,000,000, and NYCPS had committed to work with other districts before implementing a similar program in District 15. To support this work, our Restorative Justice team recommended that the District 15 superintendent work to get all of the principals and a team from each school trained in restorative justice. The central DOE offered these trainings and covered the cost.	• D15: Parent Coordinator
Increase investment for multilingual social-emotional & mental health supports in D15 middle schools; such as guidance counselors & social workers. Add investments in trainings for students in conflict & peer mediation. Ensure access to services for English Language Learners	Ongoing	The District office has worked with guidance counselors and social workers to provide monthly professional development focused on these values. Several partners were engaged in this work, funded through the New York State Integration Project grant. Many schools have also facilitated this work independently to bolster support for students.	• D15: Supervisor of School Social Workers
Encourage the citywide School Diversity Advisory Group to address the disparate impact & use of metal detectors on students of color.	Complete	All of the recommendations in the District 15 Diversity Plan Final Report were shared with the School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG).	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Inclusion: Collaboration & Engagement			
Create mechanisms & develop ongoing opportunities for intra-district family, parent, & student engagement & collaboration (i.e. Districtwide after school programming, including sports, language, technology, music & arts programs). Partner with local community-based organizations to build on existing community programs.	Ongoing	Since the D15 Plan, an intra-district theatre group, urban debate league, STEM fair, parent workshops and learning together event, and a sports league have provided opportunties for cross-district engagement. However, many continue to express a need for funding for a range of programs.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Bolster & strengthen community engagement & invest in parent networks in historically marginalized communities & communities of color in collaboration with local community-based organizations & partners	Ongoing	District 15 hosts an annual Parent Symposium in areas with more marginalized populations (Sunset Park and Gowanus) where workshops are offered to families around health, wellness, immigration, and curriculum. The impact of these initiatives is that students across the district learn about different cultures from their parents' involvement in school and district initiatives.	• D15: DEI Coordinator

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Pair intra-district PTAs to encourage collaboration & cross-cultural community building (this should be paired with support & trainings to ensure meaningful & productive engagement).	Ongoing	Through engagement in this evaluation, parents noted some collaborations across PTAs have happened around fundraising. Some individual schools have been able to implement community partnerships. At the district-level, the New York State Integration Project grant has provided for trainings and collaborations that address this need. 40 Parent Coordinators, Guidance Counselors, Social Workers, School Leaders and Parent Leaders from 10 schools in Sunset Park attended the Family Leadership Institute (FLI) facilitated by Ms. Consuelo Kickbush. Conversations were had around engaging newcomers to the country and about their sharing stories with their children as their first teacher before students come to school.	• D15: Family Leadership Coordinator
Conduct an internal review of PTA guidelines in order to better understand & encourage opportunities for intra-district fundraising.	Not complete	PTA funding policies are governed by Chancellor regulations and State law.	• DOE
Inclusion: Inclusive Classrooms			
Provide training & support for the implementation of anti-racist & Culturally Responsive Education across all D15 middle schools.	Ongoing	This work is ongoing. Training has occured as funded by the New York State Integration Project grant, as outlined in previous recommendations.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Require a plan on how to incorporate a cultural & ethnic studies curriculum through existing classes & advisory programs; providing opportunities for students to learn about different social & cultural topics relevant to NYC students for all D15 middle school students. The curriculum should focus on African, Latinx, Asian, Middle Eastern & Native heritage people in NYC schools as well as the intersections with gender, LGBTQ/ GNC, religious, disability diversity, while highlighting their contributions to society. Additionally, the curriculum will highlight the vast historical contributions of non-white groups & seek to dispel the many non-truths/ lies related to American & World History.	Ongoing	Many schools have and continue to develop their own curricula through their Equity Teams. The DOE released a new curriculum Hidden Voices that will provide additional resources for this. The District will support schools in implementing this curriculum.	• D15: ELA Instructional Specialist

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Expand academic & social emotional programs which create safer spaces & strengthen connectedness through student led conversations & exploration around race, culture, identity & ability such as middle school advisory programs.	Ongoing	Advisory classes, present in most middle schools district-wide (with the exception of a few schools), have been the center of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs at the middle school level. However, SEL curriculum has not been available to all students. The District wants to continue pursuing improvements in SEL curriculum. The supervisor for social workers implemented The Art Therapy Project for Social Workers and Guidance Counselors to learn positive strategies to support students in transition through use of theory, story-telling, and visual arts. 57 social workers and guidance counselors learned self-soothing techniques to support students through sensory output. The therapists led instruction on transition activities to support students with end of year closings. Counselors learned activities to help students communicate in non-verbal ways, express their feelings, and help them self-regulate. Six-week long Art Therapy sessions were implemented at 10 schools. We serviced student-facing groups at P.S. 124, P.S. 15, P.S. 676, M.S. 51, M.S. 136, and M.S. 821 during SY 2022-23.Art Therapy 6 week sessions were offered to caregivers at PS 516, PS 896, and PS 154 during SY 2022-23. Art Therapy sessions were also implemented for Staff at M.S. 447. Self-care workshops were offered for District 15 Parent Coordinators and District 15 Superintendent Staff. The District recieved positive feedback on students' desire to continue the art sessions after the therapist had completed the 6 weeks. Students expressed learning how to communicate their feelings through Art. During SY 2022-23, there were two sesssions for professional learning in building equity with immigrant populations and the LGBTQIA + community conducted by the Ackerman Institute to 50 guidance counselors and parent coordinators. All School Counselors and Parent Coordinators particpated in understanding the cultural barriers of Latinx families related to accessing and norms around mental health. Counselors discussed ways to support this population and impact equity in resources for those that may not know the language. The program was supportive in helping school counselors and social workers understand the needs of students, state laws, and addressing bias. Elementary schools have begun implementing Rainbow clubs, we held a District Town Hall addressing this topic, and school counselors were equipped with resources to support their students. We will continue to support this initiative in creating a network of resources within the district. Also during SY 2022-23, the D15 Supervisor of Social Workers implemented Understanding Autism and Neurodivergence, a two-part workshop that served 56 guidance counselors and social workers to develop practitioner understanding of neurodiversity and their capacity to support the autistic learners they serve. The training focused on proactive supports to implement in regards to environment and language, as well as practical and foundational therapeutic approaches for supporting autistic learners. Several schools requested this training turn-keyed to their staff to better support neuro-divergent students such as PS 107, MS 821, and PS 118. All social workers and school counselors learned de-escalation techniques from this training. Based on the counselors impact survey, they reported adding breaks, journaling, calm spaces, use of hands-on strategies for addressing melt downs, providing therapeutic environments for students, helping some teachers readjust their classrooms, and minimizing the amount of materials up on the walls. Additionally during SY 2022-2023, Understanding Autism and Neurodivergence was a two-part workshop from the NYU Nest Project serving 52 guidance counselors and social workers to develop practitioner understanding of neurodiversity and their capacity to support the autistic learners they serve. During the 2022-2023 School Year, all 36 schools (100% of the district) with teams of four (totaling 144 teachers) were trained in RULER to further support the SEL work within each school. RULER has been consistently used to elevate student voice using non-violent communication approaches which enable students and staff to identify the root of conflict, and address bias within each school community, with a focus on students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students in temporary housing.	• D15: Principals • D15: Teachers • D15: DEI Coordinator

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Expand healthy food access for middle school students throughout the day, while working collaboratively with school communities to create culturally responsive lunch menus which celebrate the cultures of students in schools.	Ongoing	The Mayor's initiatives have included providing healthy and nutritious food options for students across all schools. D15 has opened two Halal kitchens to honor the needs of our communities.	• DOE • D15
Provide support for English Language Learners in all D15 middle schools consistent with state & federal requirements & guidelines. Ensure that there is a point person who is multilingual & fluent in the predominant language of the school community at every D15 middle school.	Ongoing	As learned through engagement in this evaluation, many schools are working to provide these supports but generally need additional resources to meet this need.	• D15: Multi-Language Learners Service Coordinator • D15: Director of English Language Learners • D15: School leadership and staff
Engage with students & families to understand their language dialects to avoid penalizing alternate language interpretations for multilingual students. Create spaces & opportunities that allow multilingual students to express themselves in languages other than English outside of dual language programs	In Progress	Disrict leadership noted that some schools are working on language programs, but schools generally continue to need support on this recommendation.	• D15: Multi-Language Learners Service Coordinator • D15: Director of English Language Learners
Explore & create opportunities for school staff to build authentic relationships with surrounding neighborhoods & communities in partnership with local neighborhood partners & community-based organizations.	In Progress	Through engagement, many families and staff obseved that schools create these opportunties within their schools. Some schools noted that further support in identifying high-quality and aligned partners is needed.	• D15: Director of Student Services and Special Initiatives
Develop a set of district wide guidelines & resources to promote inclusivity, diversity & equity within Parent Teacher Associations. The district wide guidelines should seek to address the inclusion of all parents across diverse educational backgrounds, socio-economic status, English language proficiency, nationality & immigration status.	In Progress	District 15 will work with school and parent leaders to develop a strategic plan to provide resources, tools and training to school teams to ensure inclusive practices in PTAs. In addition, efforts are made to engage and empower all families, especially those who have been historically marginalized, to increase family participation and to create more access for families to take on leadership roles in PTAs and SLTs. These guidelines and tool kits will be developed in collaboration with parent coordinators, the PTA President's Council and a district family engagement committee.	• D15: Family Leadership Coordinator

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Partner with community based organizations & partners to implement middle school student success programs designed to support middle school participants in navigating the NYC high school admissions process & in making informed choices.	In Progress	High school admission work has mostly been conducted individually by schools.	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Inclusion: Resource Inequity			
Track & monitor D15 middle school resources such as arts, music, technology, sports & PTA contributions across all D15 middle schools; develop an action plan to reduce inequities between schools. Provide clear, accessible & transparent information on school funding.	In Progress	A programs baseline analysis set up through this evaluation will allow for comparisons over time. Action plans can then be developed based on these comparisons.	• D15: Family Leadership Coordinator • D15: Director of Student Services and Special Initiatives
Develop an equitable baseline of funding to support school supplies, arts, music, technology & sports at all D15 middle schools.	In Progress	Schools are funded by the DOE based on student enrollment.	• DOE
Work to decrease class sizes across all D15 middle schools. Create equity between middle schools for classroom student-teacher ratios & ensure class sizes of historically disadvantaged students do not increase. Support the resources required (physical space, teachers) to decrease class sizes.	Complete	State law passed in September 2022 requires class sizes to be no more than 23 students for grades 4-8.	• OSE
Ensure that individual schools do not lose out Title I funding if a school drops below the 60% free & reduced lunch threshold.	Not Complete	As of this evaluation, one school has lost Title I funding since the implementation of the D15 Plan. Two additional schools are close to the cut-off.	• D15: DEI Coordinator • DOE
Encourage the citywide School Diversity Advisory Group to research & explore new Title I funding models.	Complete	All of the recommendations in the District 15 Diversity Plan Final Report were shared with the School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG).	• D15: DEI Coordinator
Create middle schools seats (grades 6–8) in Red Hook.	Complete	PS 676 transitioned to a middle school starting in 2022-23.	• D15: DEI Coordinator

2018 Recommendation	Status	Progress Update	Rec Owner
Inclusion: Students with Special Needs & Physical Access			
Ensure that all D15 middle school students with disabilities have equitable access to all school programming while also receiving the additional support services. Measure & evaluate schools on their social & programmatic inclusion approaches.	Ongoing	In D15, 98% of middle school students with an IEP are fully programmed in STARS.	• D15: Administrator for Special Education
Ensure that all D15 middle school students with disabilities have equitable physical access to school sites & programming (including access to art classes, gymnasiums, lunch rooms, & recess areas). Measure & evaluate schools on their physical inclusion approaches.	Ongoing	By 2024, 40% of all DOE buildings will become Fully Accessible, 27% will offer a level of Partial Accessibility, and Non-Accessible percentage of buildings will shrink to 33%	• D15: Administrator for Special Education
Encourage principals, teachers & staff to work together to create opportunities for meaningful partnership & interaction among students with & without special needs (within schools & between co-located schools).	Ongoing	D15 schools foster inclusion by ensuring collaboration among all students, including those with and without IEPs, through initiatives like peer mentorship and inclusive classroom activities.	• D15: Administrator for Special Education
Create clear, easy-to navigate pathways within the DOE for families of students with disabilities seeking support to address unmet needs & to request physical access improvements.	Ongoing	The DOE's parent-facing website and NYCSAA allow families of students with disabilities to easily access support pathways and track IEP service mandates.	• D15: Administrator for Special Education • DOE
Develop Building Accessibility Profiles for all (D15 Middle) schools.	Complete	Information concerning accessible school buildings is contained in a department-wide Building Accessibility Profile (BAP) List, which is regularly updated and available to the public. These BAPs have been developed for all D15 middle schools. For more information on building accessibility and to download DOE's Building Accessibility Profiles (BAP), please visit our website at schools.nyc.gov/school-life/space-and-facilities/building-accessibility.	• DOE • School Facilities/ SCA
Appropriate funding for improvements to the physical accessibility of buildings.	Ongoing	NYC Public Schools and the School Construction Authority continuously assess the accessibility needs of communities across New York City and prioritize resources based on the greatest need. Recent Full Program Accessibility Projects in the district, have been conducted or are underway at the following buildings: • K001, Design Complete • K015, In Construction • K029, Design Complete • K169, In Design • K321, Completed	• DOE • School Facilities/ SCA

Glossary

Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL)
As of 2017-18 New York City Public Schools provides free breakfast, lunch, and afterschool meals to all students enrolled in NYC public schools throughout the academic year. FRL was previously used by NYC DOE as a way to indicate students in poverty, and has now been replaced by the definition for students that qualify as low-income outlined below.

Individualized Education Programs (IEP) or 504 Accommodation Plans
The Individualized Education Program (IEP) serves as a mechanism to guarantee that a student can engage with the general education curriculum effectively. It outlines the necessary learning opportunities, accommodations, specialized services, and support tailored to the student's disability, facilitating progress towards meeting academic standards and addressing their individual needs.

Multilingual Learner (MLL)
A Multilingual Learner refers to a student who primarily speaks a language other than English at home and requires assistance in acquiring English proficiency. Every MLL student is provided with instruction in English as a New Language (ENL), ensuring they develop reading, writing, and speaking skills in English while receiving additional support in their native language.

MySchools
NYC MySchools is an online platform for NYC families to apply to public schools from 3-K to high school.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
All schools are required to have either a Parent Association (PA) or a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which advocate for students and families, provide updates on school matters, and organize activities. These organizations support schools by hosting workshops, arranging family-oriented events, fundraising, and coordinating volunteer efforts.

Priority in Admissions(PIA) Students
Criteria established during D15 Plan that gave priority in admissions for students who qualify as low-income, Multilingual Learners (MLL), or live in Temporary Housing (STH).

Restorative Justice
An alternative to punitive responses to wrongdoing. Inspired by indigenous traditions, it brings together persons harmed with persons responsible for harm in a safe and respectful space, promoting dialogue, accountability, and a stronger sense of community.

School Leadership Teams (SLTs)
The School Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for developing educational policies and ensuring resource allocation to support them. They conduct ongoing evaluations of educational programs, participate in school-based decision-making, and promote collaborative school cultures. SLT membership consists of the principal, Parent Association/Parent-Teacher Association President, United Federation of Teachers Chapter Leader, elected parents, staff members, and optionally, students and representatives from community-based organizations, with an equal representation of parents and staff according to the team's bylaws.

School Screens
Selection criteria some districts and schools use to admit students.

Student Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG)
The Student Diversity Advisory Group in New York is a committee or organization of students from diverse backgrounds who provide insights, perspectives, and recommendations on matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion within educational settings. Its purpose is to promote dialogue, understanding, and initiatives that foster a more inclusive and equitable environment for all students within the education system.
Students that Qualify as Low-income- Students are identified as low-income by NYC DOE if they have been identified by the Human Resources Administration as receiving certain types of public assistance or they were eligible for free or

reduced-price lunch.

Students in Temporary Housing (STH)
Students include those living in non-permanent housing situations, such as: homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, or are "doubled up" living with another family.

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