



# School Zones School Choice

## Overcrowding, Equity & Diversity in District 3

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### Introduction to District 3 Schools

Kindergarteners are admitted to a public school based on where they live. Approximately 8% are admitted to Gifted and Talented programs each year, and others to dual language and N.E.S.T. Programs. This traditional model is how most District 3 parents were admitted to kindergarten years ago, and it's the predominant model used around the country. A family registers for and attends the school closest to home.

### Catchment Zones and Neighborhood Schools

Each public elementary school has a geographic catchment zone, and this is genesis of the term, "neighborhood schools." A catchment zone is based on the available space that a school has, the number of children and staff that it can hold. Ideally, a school enrolls the number of children that it can accommodate, with siblings of children already in the school given preferential enrollment; and after, enrolling kids that live in the zone. If it has space after filling spots with kids in the zone, a school can enroll kids who live in the district but outside of the zone. When a school has too many kids living in the zone, a wait list is generated. For various reasons, many kids on the wait list are eventually able to enroll as families move, gifted and talented placements occur and for other reasons.

### Zone Line Changes

Schools that perpetually have wait lists become overcrowded; this is often because extra kindergarten sections are added, or extra kids are added to current sections. The conflict is derived from the regulation that stipulates a child's right to attend his/her zoned school. This is something called the Chancellor's Regulation, and several District 3 schools are overcrowded for this reason. The best remedy is a new school, but zone line changes take place to alleviate this condition when an adjacent school is able to accommodate additional children.

Later this year, the Department of Education will propose changes in District 3. After a period of discussion about the proposed changes, the statutory responsibility to approve these changes resides with the CEC3. The changes that are voted on later this year will be implemented in 2017.

### District 3 Demographics

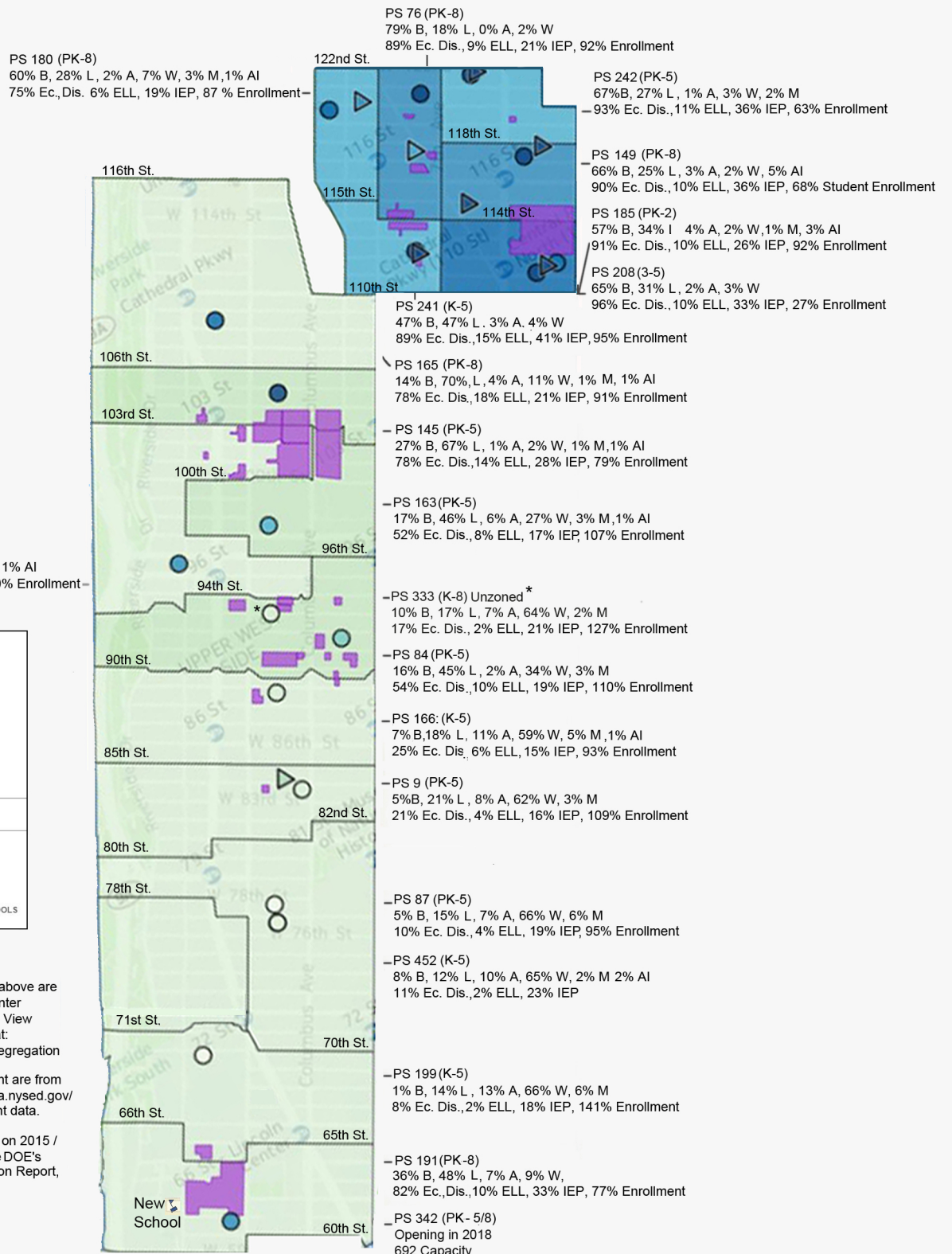
Total students: 23,000 (Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade)  
13,000 (Pre-Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade)

*Statistics below represent demographics for all 23,000.*

Asian	7.80%
Black	23.90%
Hispanic	34.70%
Other	3.70%
White	30.00%
Disabilities	15.70%
English Language Learners	5.60%
Free Lunch	52.80%

# District 3 Demographic and Enrollment Data

(Black, Latino, Asian, White, Multi-Racial, American Indian/Alaskan Native)  
 (Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners, Individualized Plan)



**PS 75 (K-5)**  
 25% B, 53% L, 3% A, 16% W, 2% M, 1% AI  
 69% Ec. Dis., 14% ELL, 29% IEP, 100% Enrollment

The map on the right and legend above are adapted from the New School Center for New York City Affairs website. View multiple maps and related study at: <http://www.centernyc.org/schoolsegregation>

The demographic stats on the right are from the NY State website at <http://data.nysed.gov/> See 2014/2015 student enrollment data.

The enrollment figures are based on 2015 / 2016 enrollment numbers and the DOE's Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization Report, Target Calculation 2014-2015.

### **Choice Model for Kindergarten Enrollment**

The following is a brief overview but it is important to understand that the Department of Education has not proposed and would not impose change to how our kids are enrolled without a great deal of interest expressed by the community. It is one of the main reasons why we parents need to stay involved.

### **District Wide Controlled Choice**

Controlled Choice is an alternative enrollment configuration that lifts zone lines for kindergarten enrollment, reducing the significance of where a student lives in relation to where he or she goes to school. Kindergarten Connect would still be used; after researching various options, schools are ranked in order of preference.

The following factors are among those that can be selected for priority:

- Proximity to School
- Family income and/or education
- Free lunch qualification
- English language learning (ELL)
- Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)
- Other factors as decided by stakeholders

Also note that with district wide choice, stakeholders work together to select the factors to be used and the percentages of the factors above. Grandfathering can be accounted for. Siblings are taken into account. Wait lists are generated. Ideally, a district wide controlled choice plan results in school enrollments at every school in the district that more closely reflect the demographics of the district itself. Under a functioning controlled choice program, no individual school has a significantly larger proportion of high needs and at risk learners than any other school.

### **Other Options for Choice**

Our community could opt to get creative with an approach that employs both catchment zones and choice. In fact, we already do at one school, Manhattan School for Children. It's enrollment follows more of an "All Choice" model, an admissions lottery, but if you live in district 3, you can rank this school when you apply for kindergarten.

Another way that choice could be implemented in District 3 would be to create a cluster of schools where the above levels could be tested.

Schools all around the city are also taking a more focused look at how enrollment shapes the success of the school. Parent led efforts in some districts are working to increase engagement within the school community and/or to target underserved populations within their current school zone.

Finally, the DOE recently initiated a pilot admissions program at seven schools this year where priority was granted to segments of students. Recognizing the desire to improve student outcomes for all children through admissions policy, the city's implementation of this pilot represents a new way to address segregation in New York City schools.

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### **Guiding Principles of Discourse**

- A handful of elementary schools in District 3 are overcrowded and others are under-enrolled – can the movement of zone lines or removal of zone lines effectuate more equitable utilization of school space?
- In addition to the typical triggers for rezoning, overcrowding and a new school (Riverside Center scheduled to open Fall 2018), zoning discussions should involve diversity among the affected schools, including socio-economic status, special needs, and students in temporary housing.
- The zoning committee's work is focused on providing impartial information to the community, getting feedback from parents and community leaders, and making recommendations to CEC3 regarding next steps in the zoning exercise.

## Traditional Zoning and Controlled Choice at a Glance!

	<b>Traditional Zoning</b>	<b>Controlled Choice</b>	<b>Hybrid/Pilot</b>
<b>Overcrowding and Under-enrollment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- slow and reactive to overcrowding</li> <li>- rarely affects under-enrollment at schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- addresses balance by matching all district seats to families</li> <li>- potential for loss of families in system is unknown</li> <li>- effect on under-enrolled schools is also unknown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- un-zoned schools could implement controlled choice on their own but does not likely affect overcrowding or under-enrollment</li> <li>- superzone with a cluster of schools: same</li> </ul>
<b>Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has not traditionally been a trigger for rezoning but parent leaders should request this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- top priority is to allot segments of students ahead of other students</li> <li>- can give voice to families not typically engaged with DOE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- partial implementation would directly be tied to diversity goal</li> </ul>
<b>Clarity of Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- familiarity of address being primary factor</li> <li>- process of moving lines too secretive</li> <li>- predicability always in question (will it work once changes take place)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- diversity factors and percentages are selected by community</li> <li>- uncertainty for families used to current process</li> <li>- parent resource center key to outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unknown in district 3</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high priority for district 3 given size</li> <li>- busing largely for special programming (G&amp;T, lang, IEP's)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high priority for district 3 given size</li> <li>- district may be subject to significant busing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high priority for district 3 given size</li> <li>- would be limited to small number of families</li> </ul>
<b>School Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community perception and equity of resources are important in zoning discussions</li> <li>- it takes years for improvement in quality as result of rezoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community perception and equity of resources are important for acceptance of school matches</li> <li>- it takes years for improvement in quality as result of controlled choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- community perception and equity of resources are important in decision making</li> <li>- improvement in school quality takes years</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability in Real Estate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- difficult to predict in district 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- with no zone lines, real estate changes may not cause imbalance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not likely applicable</li> </ul>

### **Glossary of Applicable Terms (listed alphabetically)**

#### **Admissions Lottery**

Schools without catchment zones and schools which share catchment zones with other schools sometimes admit students by lottery, which means that students/families rank potential schools in order of preference. Kindergarten Connect processes the applications for such schools via admissions priorities (Chancellor's Regulations A101), as well as mathematical probability.

#### **All Choice**

All choice is an enrollment protocol that offers families the option to enroll in any district elementary school. Admissions is based on lottery only. No zone lines exist for admissions purposes.

#### **Blue Book Capacity**

A public school's capacity for total number of students based on building specifications and projected school footprint.

#### **Catchment Zone**

Neighborhood schools have a catchment zone, which is the geographical area where attending families live.

#### **Chancellor's Regulations A101**

Admissions policy is administered per rules and regulations set forth in the A101 Chancellor's Regulations. A copy of this document is available online at [schools.nyc.gov](http://schools.nyc.gov).

#### **CEC3 (Community Education Council)**

One of the 32 Community Education Councils (CECs) in New York City, and contributes to shaping

educational policy in District 3. CEC3's responsibilities are established by state law and implemented through regulations of the Chancellor. These responsibilities include: approving school zoning lines, holding hearings on the capital plan, evaluating community superintendents, and providing input on other important policy issues. Members are selected for two-year terms by the PA/PTAs of the schools. Each CEC has 12 members, including nine parents selected by the district's PA/PTAs, two members appointed by the Borough President, and one student selected by the Community Superintendent.

### **CEC3 Zoning Committee**

The mission of the CEC3 Zoning Committee is to make recommendations to CEC3 regarding elementary school zone lines. The committee works in concert with the District Superintendent, the Office of District Planning, potentially affected schools, parents, and other stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of presenting the community with detailed information about proposed solutions. The committee is composed of CEC3 Members and District 3 stakeholders, and all meetings are open to the public.

### **Controlled Choice**

Controlled choice is an enrollment protocol that offers families more than one choice of school, while maintaining ethnic and racial integration. This model uses levers for geography, qualification for free or reduced lunch, individualized education plans, and English language learning.

### **Diversity in Schools**

The DOE tracks and reports statistics involving diversity among the following attributes: gender, race (asian, black, hispanic, other, white), students with disabilities (defined as students with an Individualized Education Plan/IEP), English Language Learners, and Poverty (measured as those students who qualify for free lunch).

### **Enrollment Structure or Scenario**

The phrase used to describe the way that families select and are matched to their elementary school for kindergarten. Examples are catchment zone, controlled choice, etc.

### **Ideal Zone Size**

Term used to describe the optimal number of kids living in a catchment zone, who attend public school, based on the school's kindergarten class size.

### **Kindergarten Connect**

The online and over the phone enrollment system for kindergarten enrollment. Application allow parents to rank their options in order of preference, with zones and admissions priorities remaining stipulated the Chancellors Regulations.

### **Neighborhood School (Zoned School)**

District 3 elementary schools (K-5 and PreK-5) and elementary/middle schools (K-8 and PreK-8) are mostly categorized as "zoned" schools, meaning that the school is meant to serve the students who grow up in the local neighborhood.

### **Overflow Placement**

Students who are placed on the waiting list for their zoned school are extended an offer to an alternate school. This placement may indicate another ranked school (second, third, fourth, etc choice) on the student's Kindergarten Connect application; however, if no seat is available at any of a student's ranked schools on Kindergarten Connect, a placement will be generated to a district overflow school.

### **Right to Return**

A family retains the right to return to their zoned elementary school for the first grade (only) if they attended kindergarten at an alternate school than their zoned school.

### **Shared Zone**

District schools which are located very close together may share a catchment zone with one another. Admissions criteria can be structured using a straight-forward lottery or using levers such as "controlled choice" indicators as described above.

### **Un-Zoned School**

A district elementary school which only admits students via lottery. It maintains no catchment zone.

**Zone Enrollment Rate**

Term used to describe the percentage of kindergarten students who enrolled at a school who live in the school's catchment zone.

**Zone Line**

Invisible lines drawn to reflect elementary school catchment borders. They typically run down the middle of a physical street, such that buildings on one side of a street are “zoned” for one school and those on the other side are “zoned” for a different school. Changes made to zone lines are proposed by the District Superintendent and Office of District Planning; they are approved by the District CEC.

**Zone Retention Rate**

Term used to describe the percentage of kindergarten children who live in a catchment zone who attend the neighborhood school.

**Zoned School Sibling Priority**

The NYC Department of Education distinguishes among four priorities of students during the admissions process. For families with a second child entering the school system, the sibling has the following priorities:

- Zoned students with a sibling who will be in grades one through five at the school
- All other zoned students
- Students living in the district but outside the zone, with a sibling who will be in grades one through five
- Students living outside the district with a sibling who will be in grades one through five
- All other students living in the school’s district but outside the zone
- All other students

**Zoned School Waiting List**

When a zoned elementary school has more zoned applicants than available kindergarten seats, remaining students are placed on a waiting list. Placement on this list is random, and offers are made to students in successive order if a seat becomes available by late October of the year in which a child enters Kindergarten.

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**Questions**

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