

FINDING ROOM FOR NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

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About the Author



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Executive Summary

Charter schools have become an important part of the public education landscape in New York City. In the 2017–18 school year, there were 227 charters educating 114,000 students, about 10% of the city’s schoolchildren. The strong academic achievement of students in these schools, as well as parental demand, points to the need for more charter schools.¹ One big impediment is lack of space.

Former mayor Michael Bloomberg championed charter schools and accelerated their growth via colocation, the granting of free space in traditional public school buildings. However, during his 2013 campaign for mayor, Bill de Blasio pledged to curtail the practice. In response, in April 2014 the New York State legislature began requiring the city to offer rental assistance to new charters that are denied space in public school buildings.

This report examines the de Blasio administration’s record regarding colocations, the extent to which there is space available for charters in underutilized public school buildings, and what additional steps the city and state might take to find room for charters.

Key Findings

- ✓ Enrollment in New York City charter schools continues to increase. However, the colocation of new or expanded charter schools in public facilities has slowed dramatically: in the last five years of the Bloomberg administration, 150 charter colocations were approved, or 30 per year; in the first five years of the de Blasio administration, 59 colocations were approved, or about 12 per year.
- ✓ More charters could be accommodated in underutilized public school buildings, especially in neighborhoods with many low-performing schools: in 2016–17, 192 buildings across the city had more than 300 empty classroom seats; 72 buildings had more than 500 empty seats.
- ✓ The cost of the lease-assistance program that helps charters to gain access to private space is growing rapidly: \$51.9 million in fiscal year 2018 and likely rising to \$62 million in fiscal year 2019.

FINDING ROOM FOR NEW YORK CITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

Introduction

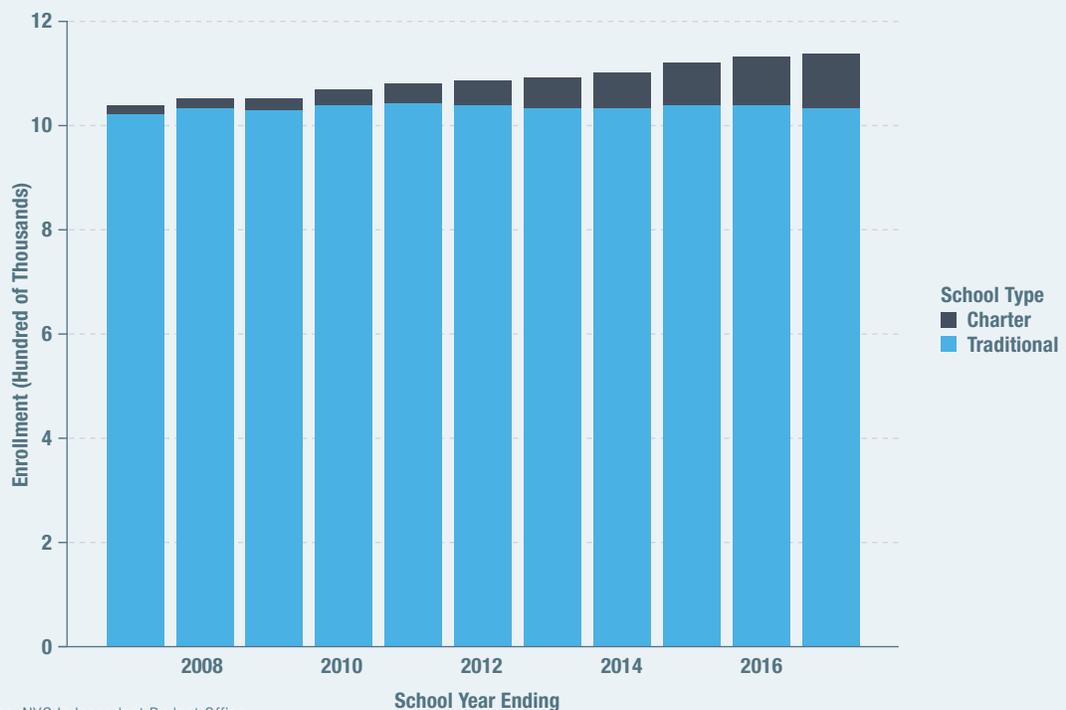
Charter schools have become an important part of the public education landscape in New York City, where the first charters opened in 1999. In the 2017–18 school year, there were 227 charters serving 114,000 students, about 10% of all New York City schoolchildren.²

Total enrollment in New York City public schools is increasing, but enrollment in traditional (“district”) public schools is virtually unchanged from a decade ago (**Figure 1**). In the 2006–07 school year, district schools enrolled 1,042,078 students. In 2016–17, district schools enrolled 1,036,169 students. Charter school enrollment, however, has grown from 15,545 students in 2007 to 105,065 students in 2017.

Students attending charter schools achieve impressive academic results. On the 2017 state exams, they outperformed district schools by 14 percentage points in math proficiency and by 8 percentage points in English proficiency.³ Low-income charter students outscored their district peers

FIGURE 1.

Enrollment in NYC Public Schools, 2007–17



Source: NYC Independent Budget Office

by 19 percentage points in math and by 12 percentage points in English.⁴ Charters are an attractive option for many parents: last year, 73,000 students applied for 25,200 charter seats—leading to a wait list of 47,800 students.⁵

Charter students’ academic achievement and parental demand both point to the need for more charter schools in New York City. Under the de Blasio administration, however, the practice of colocation, or the granting of free space to public charter schools in public school buildings, has been curtailed.

Public schools have been colocated with other public schools for as long as the city school system has existed. A 1905 book about the history of New York City schools notes that, in 1898, the year the five boroughs merged, “[i]n many cases, two or even three district school organizations or departments, each having its own principal, [are] in one building.”⁶ Colocating new district schools within existing buildings was a hallmark of innovative community school districts in the 1980s and 1990s. Under the Bloomberg administration, this blossomed into a citywide effort: the system supported the expansion of new, small district schools as well as charters, in an effort to offer more viable school choices to families and to make optimal use of building resources.

Today, more than 1,100 of the city’s 1,800 public schools—or more than two-thirds—share space inside public school buildings that are often quite large.⁷ Each school is assigned a segment of classrooms and hallways, while major amenities such as gyms and libraries are shared. Of these 1,100+ colocated schools, only 117 are charters.⁸

In April 2014, the New York State legislature passed a law stipulating that if the city does not provide new and expanding charters adequate space in a public school building, it must at least provide lease assistance so that charters can rent private building space. In 2017–18, 63 charters have been approved for lease assistance.⁹ The cost to the city is now over \$50 million per year, and finding and financing adequate private facilities in New York’s complicated and expensive real-estate market remains a challenge.¹⁰

Charter Access to Public Facilities Has Declined

According to the New York City Charter School Center, of the city’s 227 charters, 117 are currently in buildings owned or leased by the New York City Department of Education (DOE); 90 are in private (non-DOE) space; and 20 have some students in DOE space and some in private space.¹¹ As **Figure 2** illustrates, the percentage of charters housed exclusively in DOE space has declined over the past three years, from 60% to 55%; the percentage of charters in exclusively private space has risen, from 35% to 40%; and the percentage of charters using private and DOE space has risen from 5% to 6%.

One reason the Bloomberg administration was able to find room for charters in public school buildings is that it closed more than 150 low-performing schools.¹² The de Blasio administration has been more hesitant to close struggling schools, preferring instead to attempt school turnarounds by investing resources via the city’s Renewal School program. The city did announce in December 2017 that it planned to close or merge 19 schools (14 in the Renewal School program) because of

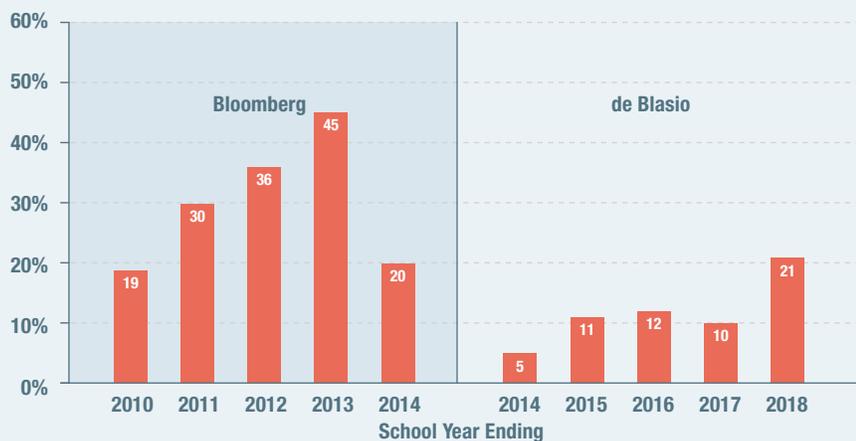
FIGURE 2.
Percentage of Charters by School Facility Type, 2008–17



Source: Author’s analysis of charter school addresses and property records. All charter schools in private buildings (those that receive lease assistance and those that do not) are counted as being in a private facility. Charter schools colocated in “charter partnership buildings” are counted as being colocated in DOE buildings; schools colocated in private facilities in which DOE pays the full cost of occupancy outside the state rental-assistance program are similarly counted as being colocated in DOE buildings. In 2008, no charters fell into the “mixed” category.

FIGURE 3.

Charter Colocation Approvals*



*I define colocations broadly and include all PEP approvals of new school colocations, expansions, extensions, and resitings; only revised approvals are excluded. The same school can be counted more than once if, say, it is collocated and, later, a grade expansion requires more space. DOE defines colocation more narrowly and reports 50 charter colocations thus far during the de Blasio administration.

Source: Author's calculations and DOE

poor performance or low enrollment.¹³

Before a charter can be collocated, DOE must produce an Education Impact Statement and an amendment to the Building Utilization Plan, both of which must be approved by the local Community Education Council and DOE's Panel for Educational Policy (PEP).¹⁴

I analyzed all PEP approvals of charter school space requests from 2009–10 through 2017–18. As **Figure 3** illustrates, the number of charter colocation space requests submitted and subsequently approved by PEP has declined during the de Blasio administration. In the last five years of the Bloomberg administration, 150 colocations were approved, an average of 30 per year. In the first five years of the de Blasio administration, 59 colocations were approved, an average of 12 per year. (The 2013–14 colocation tally is split between the Bloomberg and de Blasio administrations; see **Appendix** for all charter colocations under the latter.)

Most of the de Blasio administration's 59 approved charter colocation requests have been grade expansions. Only 18 new charter schools have been provided collocated space in public school buildings. Four additional new schools approved for colocation received temporary space while private space is being built or found. One school received collocated space for a pre-K program. And one charter school received collocated space for grades K–8 after it had to vacate

private space. Of the 14 new charters opening in 2018–19, 12 will do so in private buildings; an additional seven that received authorization to open in 2018–19 have had to delay their start because, among other reasons, they were unable to secure a suitable building.

When assessing whether to approve a charter colocation request, DOE gives priority to expanding existing charter schools, such as those that want to expand from, say, K–4 to K–8; to schools with proven track records; and to schools that might expand choice in a community by offering a different orientation, such as a single-sex charter, an arts-focused charter, or a charter targeting students with special needs.¹⁵

As discussed below, many of the most underutilized buildings in New York City are high schools. According to DOE, charters often decline space that is offered to them

and sometimes even object to being placed in a building with a different charter school.¹⁶ The Bloomberg administration would often collocate an elementary charter in a building with a high school, but the de Blasio administration refuses to do so for practical reasons (elementary and high schools are on different calendars, bathrooms need to be reconfigured, etc.) and for pedagogical reasons (it believes that it's better to have students of similar grades in the same building).¹⁷

As noted, in 2014 New York State changed the process by which New York City charter schools are offered facilities. (Charters must also be authorized by state regulators; see sidebar "**Getting State Approval**").

Getting State Approval

The number of New York City charters approved by the state's two authorizers, the New York State Board of Regents and the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, has declined slightly in recent years (**Figure 4**). However, the decline in approvals has been less steep than the decline in colocations between the two mayoral administrations. There were 79 state-level authorizations from 2010 through 2013 and 61 from 2014 through 2017.

FIGURE 4.

Number of New Charters Authorized

	BoR	SUNY	Total
2010	5	13	18
2011	7	15	22
2012	11	14	25
2013	6	8	14
2014	4	23	27
2015	3	5	8
2016	4	8	12
2017	8	6	14

Source: NYS Board of Regents and SUNY Charter Schools Institute

Charter schools that are newly opened or expanding grade levels must now first request colocated space from the city. If DOE does not have adequate space for the charter in a public school building (or a private building, at no cost), the charter is entitled to rental assistance. In July 2017, rental assistance for eligible charters was increased to a maximum of 30% of per-pupil funding, or \$4,358 for 2017–18.

While fewer new charters are being authorized, many existing charters are growing, and requests to the city for more space for these schools continue apace. Since January 2014, the city has received 161 requests for space from new or expanding charter schools. It has denied 111 (69%) of these requests and approved 50 (31%).¹⁸ Of the 111 schools denied space, 107 have gone through a successful appeals process and are eligible for lease assistance; of this group, 63 have had their leases approved and are currently receiving financial assistance or soon will receive it.¹⁹ (Several more charters are in the process of having their leases approved; they will begin receiving support once they have students in their private buildings in 2018–19.) Because the city must formally deny a charter’s request for space before offering rental assistance, DOE agreed in 2017 to expedite the provision of rental assistance to charters that prefer it over colocation.

Is There Space for Charters in Public School Buildings?

To answer this question, the author examined DOE’s

annual Enrollment, Capacity & Utilization Report, commonly referred to as the Blue Book, which identifies the capacity of each DOE building, based on a set of uniform assumptions. (The most recent Blue Book covers 2016–17.) As **Figure 5** indicates, average building utilization rates vary by community school district, though the districts with the greatest number of charter students in public school buildings have some of the lowest building utilization rates.

The citywide school building utilization rate has risen slightly, from 92.8% in 2013–14 to 94.7% in 2016–17. In 2016–17, the average building utilization rate for community school districts ranged from a low of 52.1% (i.e., roughly half of capacity—or very undercrowded) in community school district 16 (Bedford-Stuyvesant) to a high of 126.4% (i.e., roughly a quarter over capacity—or very overcrowded) in community school district 20 (Borough Park / Bay Ridge / Dyker Heights / Sunset Park). Twenty-five of the city’s 32 community school districts saw building utilization rates decrease between 2015–16 and 2016–17. Nine community school districts saw building utilization rates decline between 2013–14 and 2016–17.

One argument that has been offered for limiting the growth of charter schools is that charters cause overcrowding in public school buildings. But Blue Book data indicate that charters generally do not cause overcrowding in public school buildings.²¹ Quite the opposite: in the nine community school districts with more than 3,000 charter school students in public school buildings, the average building utilization rate is 81.2%, compared with 94.7% citywide; of the 12 community school districts with building utilization rates exceeding 100%, half have *no* charter school students in public school buildings.

In 2016–17, 192 school buildings across the city had more than 300 empty classroom seats—the city-defined threshold that a building is underutilized and potentially has space to colocate (**Figure 6**). Of these buildings, 72 had more than 500 empty seats.

Why are so many buildings left idle when charter schools are being turned down for colocation space? According to DOE, some of these buildings are in neighborhoods where the student population is expanding, requiring space to be left aside to accommodate future growth; in other cases, the city has alternative plans for the unoccupied space. Still, 133 public school buildings in New York City have had more than 300 empty seats every year since 2013–14 (see Appendix); and 63 of these buildings have had more than 500 empty seats every year since 2013–14.

FIGURE 5.

Average Building Utilization Rates by Community School District*

Community School District	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	Δ 2013–14/2016–17	Δ 2015–16/2016–17	Colocated Charter Students, 2016–17
Citywide	92.8	95.8	95.8	94.7	1.9	-1.1	52,433
1	80.4	82.0	83.1	79.1	-1.3	-4.1	1,129
2	88.4	90.1	91.4	91.5	3.1	0.1	1,348
3	93.0	93.3	85.9	85.3	-7.6	-0.6	3,268
4	88.3	95.2	92.6	88.5	0.1	-4.1	2,727
5	84.6	88.4	86.6	82.5	-2.1	-4.1	5,066
6	89.2	91.3	89.7	88.0	-1.2	-1.6	1,290
7	85.3	87.8	88.3	87.0	1.7	-1.3	3,900
8	86.9	89.6	89.6	89.4	2.4	-0.2	3,140
9	89.1	93.2	94.9	93.0	4.0	-1.9	1,223
10	101.5	104.2	103.1	102.8	1.3	-0.3	1,022
11	97.7	101.2	101.6	99.1	1.4	-2.6	918
12	89.0	91.9	92.2	90.7	1.8	-1.5	1,758
13	80.8	85.2	85.4	85.5	4.7	0.0	3,326
14	80.7	83.3	80.8	78.2	-2.5	-2.7	3,004
15	97.3	102.1	102.6	102.3	4.9	-0.3	796
16	58.4	56.3	53.4	52.1	-6.4	-1.4	1,970
17	78.4	79.7	79.0	72.3	-6.1	-6.7	4,293
18	68.7	68.6	68.1	67.9	-0.7	-0.2	2,076
19	75.6	77.7	78.4	76.7	1.0	-1.7	3,121
20	118.9	125.8	126.2	126.4	7.5	0.3	0
21	91.6	96.0	99.0	100.9	9.3	1.9	967
22	102.7	106.5	107.7	107.2	4.6	-0.5	1,181
23	69.9	73.2	72.4	72.8	2.9	0.4	3,376
24	111.5	114.2	116.2	113.8	2.3	-2.4	0
25	114.1	120.1	121.8	122.1	8.0	0.4	0
26	118.8	120.1	120.8	120.3	1.5	-0.5	0
27	94.8	97.9	99.2	100.8	6.0	1.6	409
28	103.7	108.5	109.9	108.2	4.5	-1.6	0
29	88.3	90.8	91.0	90.0	1.7	-1.0	326
30	99.3	103.5	103.7	102.1	2.9	-1.5	825
31	99.2	102.2	101.3	101.1	1.9	-0.2	0
32	70.7	69.2	66.7	64.4	-6.3	-2.4	1,774

*Building utilization rates reflect actual enrollment compared with the official student capacity of each building. DOE uses separate formulas to determine capacity for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, as well as for special-education programs.²⁰

Source: DOE

FIGURE 6.

Underutilized Public School Buildings, 2016–17

Borough	Total Public School Buildings	300+ Empty Seats	500+ Empty Seats
Bronx	282	29	12
Brooklyn	411	99	40
Manhattan	220	37	13
Queens	329	21	7
Staten Island	82	6	0
Citywide	1,324	192	72

Source: DOE

To be sure, the bare numbers aren't the whole story. Without physically surveying all 133 buildings, it is impossible to say with certainty whether they can all accommodate additional schools. The Blue Book provides only a year-old snapshot of a building's utilization, but some of the 133 buildings include schools that are being phased in or are expanding; some of the 133 buildings already contain several schools/programs, so adding another might not be appropriate; 48 of the 133 buildings are classified by DOE as "high school-level" buildings, which restricts their use to other high schools.

Nevertheless, even if high school-level buildings and buildings that already house four or more schools/programs are excluded from the tally, there are still 81 buildings that have had at least 300 empty seats for the past three years (see sidebar "**Room for More**"). In these buildings, the number of empty seats ranges from 310 to 1,208.

Where Are Charters Requesting Space?

New York City's public school buildings have space for more charters. But not all charters may wish to locate in the areas where these buildings are situated. Unfortunately, there is no public information on outstanding charter requests for space in public school buildings. We do know, however, that 21 new charter schools have been authorized to open in 2018–19 or 2019–20 (**Figure 7** and Appendix). In the districts where these

Room for More

Closer examination of these partially occupied 81 public school buildings indicates that room for collocating charters surely does exist. For example:

- **J.H.S. 72** (133–25 Guy R. Brewer Boulevard, Queens). The building houses M.S. 72 and Redwood Middle School, which have 442 and 329 students, respectively—with 711 empty seats.
- **P.S. 157** (850 Kent Avenue, Brooklyn). The building houses 508 students, with 656 empty seats.
- **P.S. 145** (100 Noll Street, Brooklyn). The building houses 619 students, with 577 empty seats.
- **I.S. 339** (1600 Webster Avenue, Bronx). The building houses I.S. 313 and I.S. 339, which have 308 and 491 students, respectively—with 594 empty seats.
- **P.S. 106** (1328 Putnam Avenue, Brooklyn). The building houses 455 students, with 473 empty seats.

Source: DOE

new charters will open, 60 public school buildings have had at least 300 empty seats for the past three years, and 26 buildings have had at least 500 empty seats for the past three years.

Figure 7 suggests that there is significant overlap between the neighborhoods where charters wish to locate and the neighborhoods that have space available in public school buildings. **Figure 8** shows that there is also significant overlap between school districts with many low-performing schools and the school districts where new charters will open during the next two years: the numbered districts indicate those where new charters will open; and the red dots indicate elementary and middle schools where less than 15% of students scored proficient on the 2017 New York State math and English language arts exams, as well as high schools with graduation rates below 60%.²²

Over the past three years, the number of charters receiving rental assistance to access private building space has nearly tripled, from 22 in 2014–15 to 63 in 2017–18. The cost to city taxpayers is growing fast, too: \$51.9 million in fiscal year 2018 and likely rising to \$62 million in fiscal year 2019.²³ For charters, rental assistance is no cure-all, either: finding and financing ade-

FIGURE 7.

Charters Scheduled to Open in 2018–19 or 2019–20

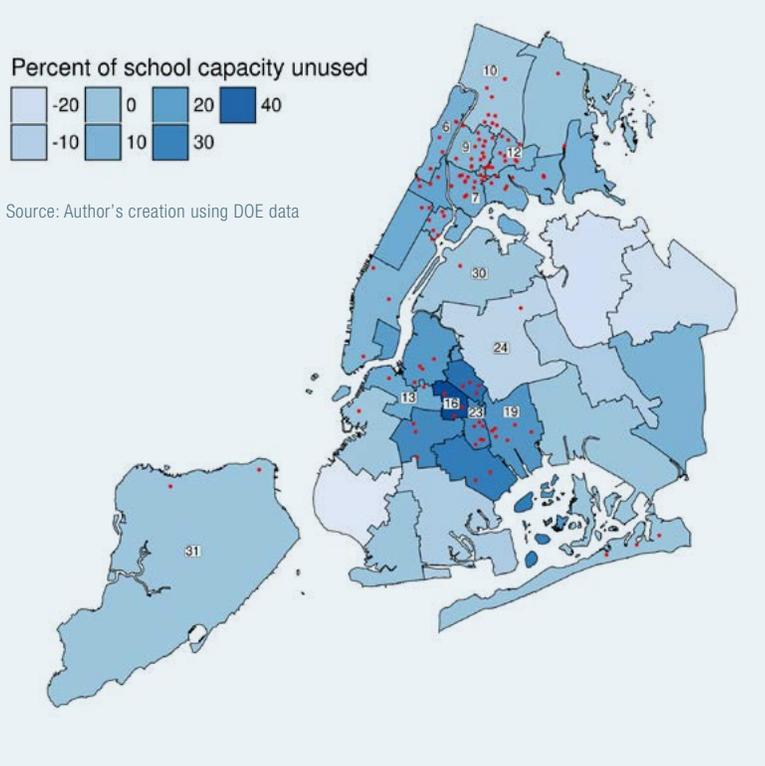
School District	New Charters	Buildings with 300+ Open Seats in School District*	Buildings with 500+ Open Seats in School District*	Building Utilization Rate in School District, %*
6	1	4	2	88.0
7	2	4	0	87.0
9	2	4	3	93.0
10	3	4	2	102.8
12	4	3	2	90.7
13	1	9	2	85.5
16	2	8	5	52.1
19	2	8	4	76.7
23	1	5	1	72.8
24	1	1	1	113.8
30	1	1	1	102.1
31	1	9	3	64.4

*2016–17

Source: DOE

FIGURE 8.

Charters Are Opening in Areas with Many Low-Performing District Schools



quate private facilities in New York’s complicated and expensive real-estate market can be challenging even with the subsidy.

Conclusion

Some of New York City’s community school districts—notably, those with struggling schools where many charters wish to open—enjoy substantial amounts of underutilized space. There are at least three reasons that charters should be offered such space. First, they are public schools. Second, they improve life outcomes for tens of thousands of students, many from poor families, who would otherwise be trapped in low-performing traditional public schools. Third, New York City would benefit financially from doing so: it pays nearly \$52 million per year for charters to access private space, and that cost could easily double over the next few years if the city continues to reject a high percentage of charter colocation requests.

Recommendations

- **Include charters in school facilities planning and funding.** Total enrollment in New York City schools is increasing, but enrollment in district schools is flat and charter enrollment is growing. Charter space requests should be treated equitably, and charters should be viewed as part of the overall facilities picture, not separate from it.
- **Create public policies that take advantage of unique private/public solutions.** The city should consider reinstating Bloomberg-era policies such as the Charter Partnership Program, which used innovative public/private financing to build new schools.
- **Close more low-performing schools, and use some of the space to open more charters.** The Bloomberg administration closed more than 150 low-performing schools, which opened up space for new schools (district and charter). The de Blasio administration has closed only a handful of low-per-

forming schools, preferring to invest more than \$500 million in its Renewal School program, which has shown limited success.²⁴

- **Reconsider the policy of not colocating elementary schools with high schools.** The de Blasio administration has declared that it will not colocate elementary schools with high schools, and it is often reluctant to colocate middle schools with high schools. But eight of the 10 most underutilized school buildings in New York City are high school-level buildings. Across the city, many buildings with appropriate modifications—schools located on different floors, separate entrances/exits, etc.—successfully colocate elementary schools and high schools. The city’s many underutilized high school buildings should be offered as potential sites for charters—and the city’s charters should not dismiss them out of hand.
- **Survey non-DOE, city-owned buildings and determine whether any properties might provide viable sites for charter schools.** During the Bloomberg administration, the city looked to nonschool properties it held (such as adult learning centers) as potential sites for charter schools. In addition, two charter schools (Promise Academy and DREAM) were built on New York City Housing Authority property, via innovative private/public financing programs.
- **Survey state-owned land and buildings to determine whether any properties might be viable sites for charter schools.** For example, the 13-story Shirley Chisholm State Office Building at 55 Hanson Place in downtown Brooklyn is underutilized, according to state officials, and the state has considered putting the building up for sale.²⁵ The state could offer the building to the city, with the stipulation that part of it be used for charter school facilities.
- **Continue to examine former Catholic school buildings as potential sites for charter schools.** More than 100 Catholic schools have closed in New York City since 2000. Many have been converted to charter schools. In fact, early in the de Blasio administration, the city found room for three Success Academy charter schools by leasing closed Catholic school buildings in Harlem, Washington Heights, and Rosedale (Queens). The city should consider purchasing former Catholic schools to house district as well as charter schools, too.
- **Communicate and coordinate better with the charter sector.** The city should be more transparent about its selection criteria for making colocation decisions. It should also proactively solicit information from charters about their growth plans—and, perhaps, incentivize charters to open, or expand, in areas with struggling district schools.

Appendix

FIGURE 9.

Public School Buildings with 300+ Empty Seats Every Year Since 2013–14*

Building Code	Building Name	Borough	Community School District	Grade Level	Enrollment	Max. Capacity	Empty Seats	# of Schools
K455	BOYS & GIRLS HS	Brooklyn	16	HS	942	3,314	2,372	3 (16)
K420	FRANKLIN K. LANE HS	Brooklyn	19	HS	1,384	2,898	1,514	5
K515	SOUTH SHORE HS	Brooklyn	18	HS	1,764	3,075	1,311	6 (92)
K246	I.S. 246	Brooklyn	17	IS/JHS	442	1,650	1,208	1
Q410	BEACH CHANNEL HS	Queens	27	HS	1,632	2,786	1,154	4 (13)
M620	NORMAN THOMAS HS	Manhattan	2	HS	1,160	2,233	1,073	4
M490	MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HS	Manhattan	3	HS	2,517	3,544	1,027	6
K232	I.S. 232	Brooklyn	18	IS/JHS	4,66	1,443	977	3
X450	ADLAI E. STEVENSON HS	Bronx	8	HS	2,511	3,484	973	7 (44)
K495	SHEEPSHEAD BAY HS	Brooklyn	22	HS	1,478	2,450	972	4
K292	I.S. 292	Brooklyn	19	IS/JHS	983	1,949	966	3
K620	WILLIAM E. GRADY CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION HS	Brooklyn	21	HS	544	1,491	947	1 (5)
M535	PARK WEST HS	Manhattan	2	HS	2,218	3,135	917	5 (73)
K470	GEORGE W. WINGATE HS	Brooklyn	17	HS	1,434	2,328	894	4 (12)
K291	I.S. 291	Brooklyn	32	IS/JHS	1,024	1,918	894	3
K390	I.S. 390	Brooklyn	17	IS/JHS	561	1,449	888	2
K068	I.S. 68	Brooklyn	18	IS/JHS	577	1,453	876	2
Q435	MARTIN VAN BUREN HS	Queens	26	HS	1,556	2,404	848	2
K415	SAMUEL J. TILDEN HS	Brooklyn	18	HS	1,447	2,279	832	3
M520	MURRY BERGTRAUM HS	Manhattan	2	HS	1,291	2,122	831	4
K025	P.S. 25	Brooklyn	16	PS	228	1,004	776	2
K400	LAFAYETTE HS	Brooklyn	21	HS	1,842	2,612	770	5
K465	ERASMUS HALL CAMPUS	Brooklyn	17	HS	1,956	2,724	768	5
X475	JOHN F. KENNEDY HS	Bronx	10	HS	3,027	3,789	762	7
K111	I.S. 111	Brooklyn	32	IS/JHS	731	1,490	759	3
M164	I.S. 164	Manhattan	6	IS/JHS	246	1,001	755	1
X039	NEW SCHOOL FOR ARTS AND SCIENCE	Bronx	8	HS	325	1,075	750	2
Q400	AUGUST MARTIN HS	Queens	27	HS	1,046	1,793	747	4
K500	CANARSIE HS	Brooklyn	18	HS	1,150	1,891	741	3 (53) (77)
K610	AUTOMOTIVE HS	Brooklyn	14	HS	451	1,176	725	2
Q072	J.H.S. 72	Queens	28	IS/JHS	809	1,520	711	2 (38)
X455	HARRY S. TRUMAN HS	Bronx	11	HS	2,635	3,328	693	3 (14)
K458	BOYS HS	Bronx	13	HS	744	1,433	689	4 (12)

X113	I.S. 113	Bronx	11	IS/JHS	975	1,652	677	3
X410	WILLIAM H. TAFT HS	Bronx	9	HS	2,017	2,693	676	6
K113	I.S. 113	Brooklyn	13	IS/JHS	593	1,269	676	2 (58)
X440	DEWITT CLINTON HS	Bronx	10	HS	2,516	3,189	673	3 (96) (7)
M056	J.H.S. 56	Manhattan	1	IS/JHS	602	1,268	666	3
K440	PROSPECT HEIGHTS HS	Brooklyn	17	HS	1,332	1,991	659	4
K157	P.S. 157	Brooklyn	14	PS	508	1,164	656	1
K275	I.S. 275	Brooklyn	23	IS/JHS	956	1,595	639	4
K057	J.H.S. 57	Brooklyn	16	IS/JHS	394	1,020	626	2 (69)
K240	I.S. 240	Brooklyn	22	IS/JHS	791	1,416	625	1
M143	I.S. 143	Manhattan	6	IS/JHS	981	1,596	615	2
X401	BRONX REGIONAL HS	Bronx	12	HS	1,012	1,621	609	4
K335	P.S. 335	Brooklyn	16	PS	359	962	603	1 (78)
X147	I.S. 339	Bronx	9	IS/JHS	799	1,393	594	2
K320	P.S. 375	Brooklyn	17	PS	717	1,310	593	3
Q490	CAMPUS MAGNET HS	Queens	29	HS	1,623	2,210	587	4
M043	I.S. 172	Manhattan	5	IS/JHS	988	1,572	584	4
K145	P.S. 145	Brooklyn	32	PS	619	1,196	577	1
M827	AUX. SERV-MAN. LEARNING CENTER	Manhattan	2	HS	335	909	574	1
X192	I.S. 192	Bronx	8	IS/JHS	867	1,431	564	3
X098	I.S. 98	Bronx	12	IS/JHS	955	1,516	561	3
K324	I.S. 324	Brooklyn	16	IS/JHS	887	1,435	548	3
Q053	I.S. 53	Queens	27	IS/JHS	782	1,324	542	3
Q204	I.S. 204	Queens	30	IS/JHS	930	1,472	542	2
X148	I.S. 219	Bronx	9	IS/JHS	976	1,517	541	3
M081	MID-MANHATTAN ADULT LEARNING CENTER	Manhattan	3	HS	290	823	533	1
K027	P.S. 27	Brooklyn	15	PS	513	1,046	533	2
K660	WILLIAM MAXWELL CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION HS	Brooklyn	19	HS	491	1,019	528	1 (26)
K306	P.S. 306	Brooklyn	19	PS	493	1,020	527	1
K211	I.S. 211	Brooklyn	18	IS/JHS	869	1,392	523	2
K012	P.S. 12	Brooklyn	23	PS	385	881	496	2
K162	I.S. 162	Brooklyn	32	IS/JHS	425	916	491	1
K480	BUSHWICK HS	Brooklyn	32	HS	1,144	1,632	488	4
M088	I.S. 88	Manhattan	3	IS/JHS	1,051	1,538	487	3
X405	HERBERT H. LEHMAN HS	Bronx	8	HS	3,153	3,629	476	6 (54)
K106	P.S. 106	Brooklyn	32	PS	455	928	473	1
K655	BROOKLYN HS OF THE ARTS	Brooklyn	15	HS	1,388	1,856	468	2
K305	P.S. 305	Brooklyn	13	PS	253	718	465	2
K026	P.S. 26	Brooklyn	16	PS	391	856	465	2 (36)
K435	THOMAS JEFFERSON HS	Brooklyn	19	HS	1,336	1,796	460	4

K296	I.S. 296	Brooklyn	32	IS/JHS	858	1,318	460	2 (55)
K907	BROWNSVILLE DIPLOMA PLUS HS	Brooklyn	17	HS	248	704	456	1 (93)
K045	P.S. 45	Brooklyn	32	PS	672	1,128	456	1
Q849	I.S. 77	Queens	24	IS/JHS	1,020	1,465	445	1
M025	J.H.S. 25	Manhattan	1	IS/JHS	1,046	1,487	441	3
K269	P.S. 269	Brooklyn	22	PS	324	764	440	1
Q198	I.S. 198	Queens	27	IS/JHS	478	918	440	1
X184	I.S. 184	Bronx	7	IS/JHS	907	1,343	436	4
R445	PORT RICHMOND HS	Staten Island	31	HS	1,591	2,026	435	1 (8)
R880	P.S. 80	Staten Island	31	PS	1,340	1,774	434	1
X045	I.S. 45	Bronx	10	IS/JHS	891	1,319	428	2
X420	JAMES MONROE CAMPUS	Bronx	12	HS	1,671	2,099	428	4
Q142	P.S. 752	Queens	28	PS	308	733	425	2
X600	ALFRED E. SMITH HS	Bronx	7	HS	1,197	1,619	422	3
K460	JOHN JAY HS	Brooklyn	15	HS	1,919	2,339	420	4
K040	P.S. 40	Brooklyn	16	PS	503	923	420	2
R027	I.S. 27	Staten Island	31	IS/JHS	1,004	1,421	417	1
K003	P.S. 3	Brooklyn	13	PS	431	845	414	1
K071	I.S. 71	Brooklyn	14	IS/JHS	915	1,329	414	2 (56)
K242	P.S. 235 ANNEX	Brooklyn	18	PS	530	943	413	2
K081	P.S. 81	Brooklyn	16	PS	442	851	409	2
X155	P.S. 754	Bronx	7	PS	626	1,033	407	2
K805	WATER'S EDGE EDUCATIONAL	Brooklyn	13	HS	1,173	1,579	406	3
K061	I.S. 61	Brooklyn	17	IS/JHS	915	1,320	405	1
M052	I.S. 52	Manhattan	6	IS/JHS	838	1,242	404	3
K016	P.S. 16	Brooklyn	14	PS	562	965	403	2
X137	I.S. 391	Bronx	10	IS/JHS	1,143	1,545	402	2
K273	P.S. 273	Brooklyn	19	PS	335	733	398	1
K580	GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION HS	Brooklyn	13	HS	1,402	1,799	397	3 (6)
M047	J.H.S. 47	Manhattan	2	PS	413	807	394	2 (39)
K271	I.S. 271	Brooklyn	23	IS/JHS	1,123	1,517	394	3
K056	P.S. 56	Brooklyn	13	PS	380	773	393	2 (36)
K239	I.S. 239	Brooklyn	21	IS/JHS	1,270	1,660	390	1
X174	I.S. 174	Bronx	8	IS/JHS	1,236	1,624	388	3
K263	P.S./I.S. 323	Brooklyn	23	PS	742	1,130	388	2 (49)
R002	I.S. 2	Staten Island	31	IS/JHS	867	1,254	387	1
Q059	I.S. 59	Queens	29	IS/JHS	899	1,285	386	2
Q690	HS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT	Queens	28	HS	610	993	383	1 (50)
K147	P.S. 147	Brooklyn	14	PS	712	1,088	376	2
K138	P.S. 138	Brooklyn	17	PS	971	1,346	375	2

K117	I.S. 117	Brooklyn	13	IS/JHS	744	1,118	374	2 (97) (34)
X650	JANE ADDAMS HS	Bronx	8	HS	864	1,236	372	2
K190	P.S. 190	Brooklyn	19	PS	269	639	370	2
M208	P.S. 208	Manhattan	3	PS	316	683	367	2 (43)
X655	SAMUEL GOMPERS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION HS	Bronx	7	HS	1,196	1,563	367	3 (23)
K383	I.S. 383	Brooklyn	32	IS/JHS	1,293	1,659	366	2
Q067	J.H.S. 67	Queens	26	IS/JHS	881	1,246	365	1
M625	HS OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION	Manhattan	2	HS	1,895	2,249	354	5
M218	I.S. 218	Manhattan	6	IS/JHS	1,117	1,470	353	3
K178	P.S. 178	Brooklyn	23	PS	404	755	351	1 (34)
R061	I.S. 61	Staten Island	31	IS/JHS	1,061	1,410	349	1 (8)
K252	I.S. 252	Brooklyn	18	IS/JHS	540	886	346	2
X144	I.S. 144	Bronx	11	IS/JHS	1,114	1,449	335	3
K196	P.S. 196	Brooklyn	14	PS	618	952	334	2
X145	I.S. 145	Bronx	9	IS/JHS	922	1,235	313	4
K054	P.S. 54	Brooklyn	13	PS	283	595	312	1 (41)
K345	P.S. 345	Brooklyn	19	PS	639	949	310	1
M460	WASHINGTON IRVING HS	Manhattan	2	HS	2,614	2,923	309	6
Q109	I.S. 109	Queens	29	IS/JHS	1,039	1,344	305	1
M440	BAYARD RUSTIN EDUCATIONAL COMPLEX	Manhattan	2	HS	2,438	2,741	303	6 (8)

*PS = primary school; IS/JHS = intermediate school/junior high school; HS = high school. # of schools = number of schools/organizations/programs located in the building. Often, buildings include programs—such as a special-education District 75 location—that house only a few dozen students. If a school/organization/program has fewer than 100 students, it is not included in the count and the number of students is placed in parentheses. For example, I.S. 117 has two schools/organizations/programs with more than 100 students, one school/organization/program with 97 students, and one school/organization/program with 34 students.

Source: DOE

FIGURE 10.

Charter Colocation Approvals Under the De Blasio Administration*

Year Approved: 2017–18; Total: 21

Date Approved: 4/25/18

1. South Bronx Community Charter High School (school code: 84X581) colocated in building X790, beginning in 2018–19.
2. KIPP Freedom Charter School (84XTBD) in building X044, in 2018–19.
3. International Charter School of New York (84K766) in building K093, in 2018–19.
4. Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School (84K780) in building K458, in 2018–19.
- 5–6. Brooklyn Prospect Charter School (84K879) in building K117, in 2018–19.**
7. Community Partnership Charter School (84K702) in building K270, in 2018–19.
8. Uncommon Ocean Hill Collegiate Charter School (84K777) in buildings K221 and K892, in 2018–19.
- 9–10. Success Academy Charter School—Bronx 3 (84X380) and Success Academy Charter School—Bronx 4 (84X464) in building X039, in 2018–19.

Date Approved: 3/21/2018

11. New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx (84X587) in building X198, in 2018–19.

Date Approved: 2/28/18

12. Bronx Charter School for the Arts (84X730) in building X972, in 2018–19.
13. Success Academy—Bronx 3 (84X380) in building X145, in 2018–19.
14. Unity Preparatory Charter School of Brooklyn (84K757) in building K907, in 2018–19.
15. Achievement First North Brooklyn Preparatory Charter School (84K784) in building K377, in 2018–19.

Date Approved: 1/24/18

16. Ember Charter School for Mindful Education, Innovation and Transformation (84K406) in building K262, in 2018–19.
17. Achievement First Voyager Charter School (84K876) in buildings K091 and K891, in 2018–19.
18. Urban Assembly Charter School for Computer Science (84XTBD) in building X420, in 2018–19.

Date Approved: 12/20/2017

19. Icahn 7 (84X362) in building X107, in 2018–19.

Date Approved: 11/28/2017

- 20–21. Achievement First Aspire Charter School (84K680) and Achievement First Linden Charter School (84K788) in building K306, in 2018–19.

Year Approved: 2016–17; Total: 10

Date Approved: 5/17/2017

1. New York City Charter School of the Arts (84M263) in building M111, in 2017–18.
2. Washington Heights and Inwood Charter School (84MTBD) in building M164, in 2017–18.

Date Approved: 3/22/2017

3. New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities IV (84QTBD) in building Q410, in 2017–18.
4. Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy (84KTBD) in building K057, in 2017–18.

Date Approved: 2/28/2017

5. New York Center for Autism Charter School Bronx (84XTBD) in building X116, in 2017–18.
6. Uncommon Leadership Charter High School in building K420, in 2017–18.***

Date Approved: 1/18/2017

7. Success Academy Charter School—Brooklyn Middle School 1 in building K297, in 2017–18.***
8. Success Academy Charter School—Brooklyn Middle School 2 in building K246, in 2017–18.***

Date Approved: 12/21/2016

9. Achievement First Voyager Middle School (84K876) in building K092, in 2017–18.
10. Uncommon Kings Collegiate Charter School (84K608) in building K232, in 2017–18.

Year Approved: 2015–16; Total: 12

Date Approved: 06/22/2016

1. The New American Academy Charter School (84K736) in building K233, in 2016–17.

Date Approved: 4/20/2016

2. Academic Leadership Charter School (84X491) in building X155, in 2016–17.
3. Brooklyn Prospect Charter School (84KTBD) in building K117, in 2016–17.
- 4–5. Success Academy Charter School Bed-Stuy 1 (84K367) and Success Academy Charter School Bed-Stuy 2 (84K125) in building K033, in 2016–17.
6. Unity Preparatory Charter School of Brooklyn (84K757) in building K907, in 2016–17.

Date Approved: 02/24/2016

7. Middle School Grades of Achievement First Apollo Charter School (84K774) in building K292, in 2016–17.
- 8–9. Achievement First Brownsville (84K626) and Achievement First Apollo (84K774) in building K292, in 2016–17.

Date Approved: 01/20/2016

10. Success Academy Charter School—NYC 7 (84KTBD) in building K025, in 2016–17.

Date Approved: 12/16/2015

11. Success Academy Charter School—New York 6 (84KTBD) in building K297, in 2016–17.

Date Approved: 11/19/2015

12. Success Academy Charter School—New York 4 (84QTBD) in building Q053, in 2016–17.

Year Approved: 2014–15; Total: 10**Date Approved: 6/10/2015**

1. Icahn Charter School 7 (84X362) in buildings X093 and X893, in 2016–17.
2. Success Academy Charter School—Williamsburg (84K182) in building K050, in 2016–17.
3. Expansion of Success Academy Charter School—Cobble Hill (84K129) in building K293, in 2016–17.

Date Approved: 04/29/2015

4. Success Academy Charter School—Bronx 3 (84X380) in building X145, in 2015–16.
5. DREAM Charter School (84M382) in building M050, in 2015–16.
6. New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science IV (84QTBD) in building Q400, in 2015–16.

Date Approved: 03/25/2015

7. Beginning with Children Charter School (84K703) in building K157, in 2015–16.

Date Approved: 02/25/2015

8. The Bronx Charter School for Better Learning II (84XTBD) in building X144, in 2015–16.
9. Success Academy Charter School Bed-Stuy 1 (84K367) in building K033, in 2015–16.
10. Achievement First Bushwick (84K538) and Achievement First East New York (84K358) in building K111, in 2015–16.

Year Approved: 2013–14; Total: 5**Date Approved: 06/17/2014**

1. DREAM Charter School (84M382) in building M121, in 2015–16.
2. Harlem Prep Charter School (84M708) in building M121, in 2015–16.

Date Approved: 05/29/2014

3. American Dream Charter School (84XTBD) in building X030, in 2014–15.
4. Harlem Prep Charter School (84M708) in building M099, in 2014–15.
5. DREAM Charter School (84M382) in building M050, in 2014–15.

*Tally includes the expansion of charters in existing buildings, such as by enlarging from, say, K–5 to K–8.

**The grade expansion and extension of temporary colocation are counted as two colocations.

***School codes left out because charter is counted as an extension of another charter authorization.

Source: DOE

Endnotes

- ¹ New York City Charter School Center, “NYC Charter School Facts.”
- ² Ibid.
- ³ New York City Charter School Center, “Achievement in NYC Charter Schools.”
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ “NYC Charter School Facts.”
- ⁶ Archie Emerson Palmer, *The New York Public School* (New York: Macmillan, 1905), p. 284.
- ⁷ New York City Charter School Center, “Access to Space: Co-Location & Rental Assistance.”
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Author’s correspondence with DOE.
- ¹⁰ New York City Fiscal 2018 Budget. See p. 433 of FY18 Adopted Budget Supporting Schedules. The 2014 legislation included a provision for the state to reimburse the city for some of the cost of this program once the annual cost surpassed \$40 million. That level has been reached, and the city will be reimbursed for 60% of the amount over \$40 million one year after the costs are incurred. This shifts some of the burden from the city’s budget to the state’s budget, but taxpayers will still bear the cost.
- ¹¹ “Access to Space: Co-Location & Rental Assistance.”
- ¹² New York City Independent Budget Office, “Phased Out: As the City Closed Low-Performing Schools How Did Their Students Fare?” January 2016.
- ¹³ Patrick Wall, “New York City Plans to Close, Shrink, or Merge These 19 Schools into Other Schools,” Chalkbeat, Dec. 18, 2017. One school was subsequently removed from the closure list, while the city’s Panel for Educational Policy denied two other school closure requests and delayed a third; all four of these schools were in the city’s Renewal School program.
- ¹⁴ A handful of stand-alone, non-colocated charters in public school buildings do not need to go through the PEP approval process.
- ¹⁵ Author’s correspondence with DOE.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ See DOE, “Enrollment, Capacity & Utilization Report,” December 2017.
- ²¹ See, e.g., Rose Dsouza, “Parents Contest Charter Schools Proposed for Crowded District 2,” Chalkbeat, May 2, 2012.
- ²² We do not include District 75 special-education schools or transfer high schools designed for students who have dropped out or have fallen behind in credits.
- ²³ See New York City Council, “Fiscal Year 2018 Budget”; and New York City Council, “Fiscal Year 2019 Budget.”
- ²⁴ See, e.g., Marcus A. Winters, “Costly Progress: De Blasio’s Renewal School Program,” Manhattan Institute, July 18, 2017.
- ²⁵ Erin Durkin, “State May Sell Off Office building at 55 Hanson Place in Fort Greene,” *New York Daily News*, Jan. 31, 2012.

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Abstract

Former mayor Michael Bloomberg championed charter schools and accelerated their growth via colocation, the granting of free space in traditional public school buildings. However, during his 2013 campaign for mayor, Bill de Blasio pledged to curtail the practice. In response, in April 2014 the New York State legislature began requiring the city to offer rental assistance to new charters that are denied space in public school buildings. This report examines the de Blasio administration's record regarding colocations, the extent to which there is space available for charters in underutilized public school buildings, and what additional steps the city and state might take to find room for charters.

Key Findings

1. Enrollment in New York City charter schools continues to increase. However, the colocation of new or expanded charter schools in public facilities has slowed dramatically: in the last five years of the Bloomberg administration, 150 charter colocations were approved, or 30 per year; in the first five years of the de Blasio administration, 59 colocations were approved, or about 12 per year.
2. More charters could be accommodated in underutilized public school buildings, especially in neighborhoods with many low-performing schools: in 2016–17, 192 buildings across the city had more than 300 empty classroom seats; 72 buildings had more than 500 empty seats.
3. The cost of the lease-assistance program that helps charters to gain access to private space is growing rapidly: \$51.9 million in fiscal year 2018 and likely rising to \$62 million in fiscal year 2019.