

BROOKINGS



Planning for Quality Schools: Meeting the Needs of District Families

Phase One: Understanding Current School Supply
and Student Enrollment Patterns

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Chapter 1 - Project Overview

Impetus for this Project

This report is the first phase of a three-part project to help the District of Columbia create a firm analytical basis for planning for quality schools to meet the needs of the city's families. While the city's overall population is growing, the number of school-age children living in the District is actually in decline. The availability of quality public schools, especially near housing that is appropriate for and affordable to families, will help determine how successful the city can be in attracting and retaining families with children.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (the OSSE) commissioned this project to study the patterns of school supply and student demand in order to better understand the choices parents are making in choosing schools, the relationship between school choice and school quality, and between school choice and neighborhood development. The Quality Schools Project will explore policy changes that can improve the availability of and access to quality school options throughout the city. This project is a joint effort of Brookings, the Urban Institute, and the 21st Century School Fund. Together, the three organizations bring unique perspectives and expertise on education, housing, and neighborhood development in the District.

Key Research Questions

The Quality Schools Project is divided into three phases. In this Phase One report, we provide a comprehensive profile of the supply of public primary and secondary educational schools in the District and of the students attending these schools in the 2006-07 school year. This report addresses questions such as: What types of public schools are available in the District and who is attending them? How do students get access to various types of public schools? Where are students attending school? Where do students live in relation to the schools they attend? The Phase One report looks at patterns of school supply and student enrollment across the full spectrum of public education options in the city: DC Public Schools (DCPS), public charter schools, and voucher-supported private schools.

Phase Two and Phase Three will be conducted simultaneously, with anticipated completion in spring 2008. Using longitudinal data, Phase Two will further explore student mobility among and between DCPS and public charter schools and will address questions such as: What schools and neighborhoods are experiencing the greatest – and least – change in student enrollment? To what extent are these changes – or stability – driven by residential mobility or school choice? How has neighborhood change and environment affected student attendance patterns? Focus groups conducted with parents around the city will shed light on factors that contribute to the choice of one type of school over another.

Phase Three will examine current education and housing policy and planning and how it influences school supply and patterns of enrollment. It will explore the impact of educational and community development plans and policies on school and neighborhood quality. With input from public and city agency stakeholders, the report will attempt to identify planning and policy gaps and inefficiencies that create barriers to high quality school options. Finally, Phase Three

will propose options for policy and planning reform that will provide the underpinning for an efficient system of high quality public schools in communities throughout the city.

Policy Usefulness

The information and recommendations provided in these three reports will serve city policymakers in several ways. First and foremost, it is critical for the city to have accurate baseline information on where students are living and attending school and how these patterns of enrollment align with the public school supply. This information, coupled with a thorough analysis of observed enrollment behavior, can help educational policymakers with school planning decisions related to facilities' allocation, co-location opportunities, projected enrollment changes, and budget decisions. The study team has already contributed its analysis of enrollment patterns to assist the city's educational leaders in making school reorganization decisions. Knowledge about where and why children are deciding to attend school can also inform housing and neighborhood planning policy, and allow the city to better assess whether its current policies in these areas are encouraging or discouraging the family-friendliness of the District.

Methodology

The Study Team is utilizing a multi-faceted approach to the research, analysis, and development of recommendations in this project. In Phase One, the Team compiled data relevant to the research questions and conducted analysis of school supply and enrollment patterns. The Team also began conducting the focus groups with parents to develop qualitative information about school choice that will help inform our analysis in Phase Two. With OSSE, the Study Team met with both agency and public stakeholders to secure input on the Phase One research questions and analysis. Using the findings from Phase One, OSSE and the Study Team will hold similar discussions to solicit input on the research questions for Phases Two and Three. In addition to utilizing information from the focus groups, in Phase Two the Team will analyze longitudinal data of student enrollment and housing and neighborhood change. In Phase Three, the Study Team will build on the quantitative and qualitative work of Phases One and Two – as well as on other studies and research on school choice and quality – to propose various policy and planning options that will be brought to public and agency stakeholders for discussion.

To support the quantitative study and analysis, the Study Team has compiled two data sets, one of school-level data and the other of student-level data. The school-level data set includes over 120 descriptors for each public school. The student-level data set contains 10 descriptors per student, including race, language proficiency, special education status, free and reduced lunch eligibility, grade, and school attended. Reliable and up-to-date school- and student-level data are critical in order to make solid education policy decisions. Currently, it is difficult for both city decision-makers and independent analysts to assemble and analyze such data. It took many months for the Study Team to acquire, assemble, and prepare even the basic data necessary for this analysis of educational demand and supply in the District. The study team thanks DCPS and the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) for making their data accessible¹, and is grateful for the

¹ The Study Team received access to the student-level data set through the terms of Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) with DCPS and the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) that protect the privacy of students.

hard work of OSSE in filling in data gaps and sharing their longitudinal Multi-Year Enrollment Automated Database (MEAD).

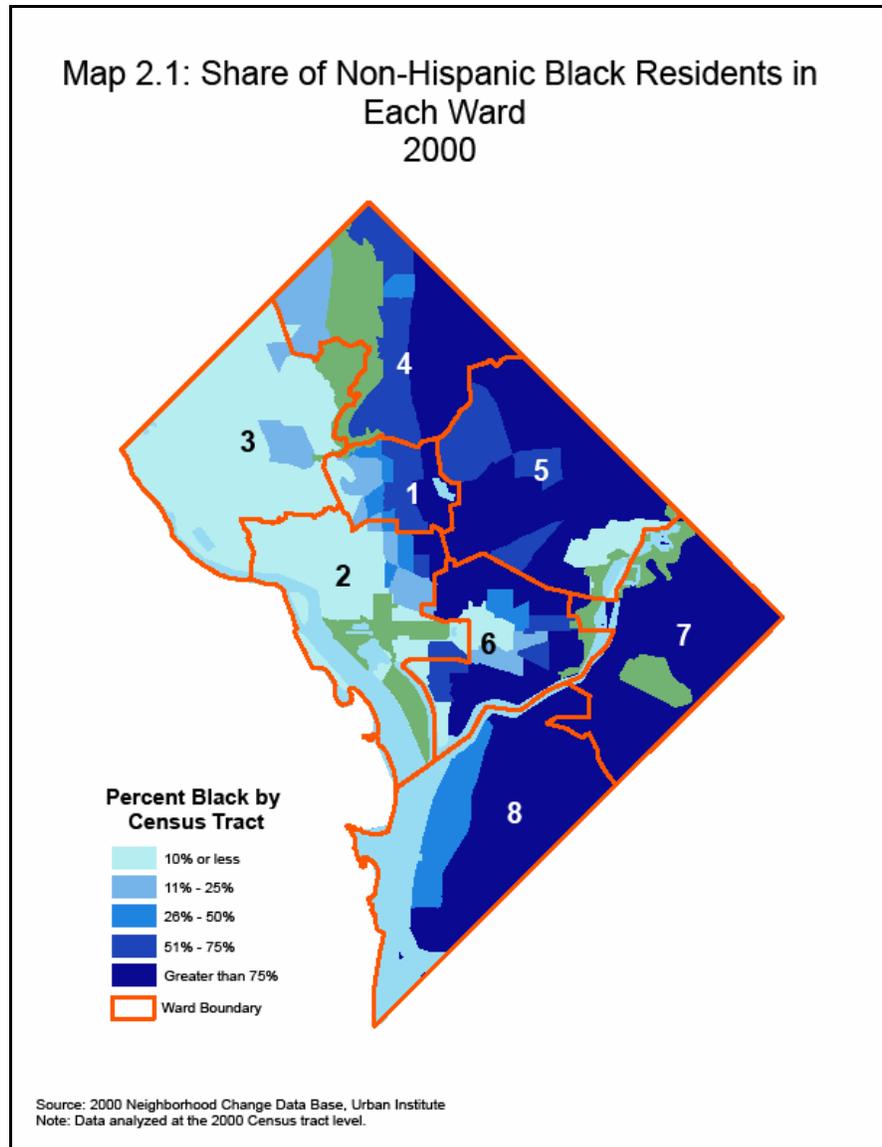
The study team's data difficulties illustrate how important it is for the city to invest in a comprehensive school-related data system that encompasses both DCPS and public charter schools and can track individual students over time and to ensure that the data are up-to-date, reliable and easily accessible. Such investment is crucial to well-informed decision-making. The greatest challenges are with data on the public charter school facilities and public charter school students. For example, in the school supply data set, there is no data on the condition of public charter school facilities. DCPS conducted building assessments in 1992, 1998, and most recently in 2006. There is no such assessment of public charter school buildings, nor is there any public database with information on the size of public charter school buildings. For this report, the Study Team called each public charter school to obtain square footage information, although in some cases the information obtained may be incomplete. There were a number of schools for which the PCSB did not have electronic student data, and in some cases the grade levels of public charter students were not included in the data. In response to this challenge, the OSSE is working with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer and other educational stakeholders to create a Statewide Longitudinal Education Data warehouse program, SLED. The data warehouse will be the main repository of current and historical public education student data in the District of Columbia. It will standardize student academic information currently stored in various local education agencies (LEAs) and once complete will enable tracking of student information statewide over multiple years and in multiple education institutions.

Chapter 2 - Phase One Executive Summary

After decades of population decline and economic distress, the District of Columbia is undergoing a transformation. Growth in jobs and population and renewed investment in the city's downtown and many residential neighborhoods have all contributed to the District's resurgence. But the city is still struggling to attract and retain families with children. Most newcomers are singles and childless couples, and although the District's population has increased since 2000, the total number of school-age children has declined slightly.

Conditions in both the housing market and the public school system contribute to this trend. In recent years, home prices and rents have soared beyond the reach of many lower and middle-income residents. Many of the city's schools suffer from long-standing physical, management, and academic problems. The availability of quality public schools, near affordable family-friendly housing, will help determine the city's future success in attracting and retaining families with children.

Today, the District's population is becoming increasingly diverse, with rising numbers of whites and Hispanics and a declining share of blacks. Still, the District remains highly segregated along both racial and income lines. The populations of Wards 7 and 8 are over 90 percent black, while nearly all of the city's white residents live in Wards 2 and 3. And in 2006, median household income for the city's white residents was \$92,000, almost three times as high as the \$34,000 median household income of the city's blacks.



Map 2-1: Share of Non-Hispanic Black Residents

These stark disparities are reflected in the public school student body. Almost half of all white public school students live in Ward 3, and almost none live East of the River. In contrast, more than half of all black public school students live East of the River, while Hispanic students are heavily concentrated in Wards 1 and 4. The latest public school enrollment data – in both DC Public Schools (DCPS) and public charter schools – confirms the continued low participation in the public schools by white families. Less than one-third of white school-age children are enrolled in public schools, compared with almost 90 percent of black and Hispanic school-age children.

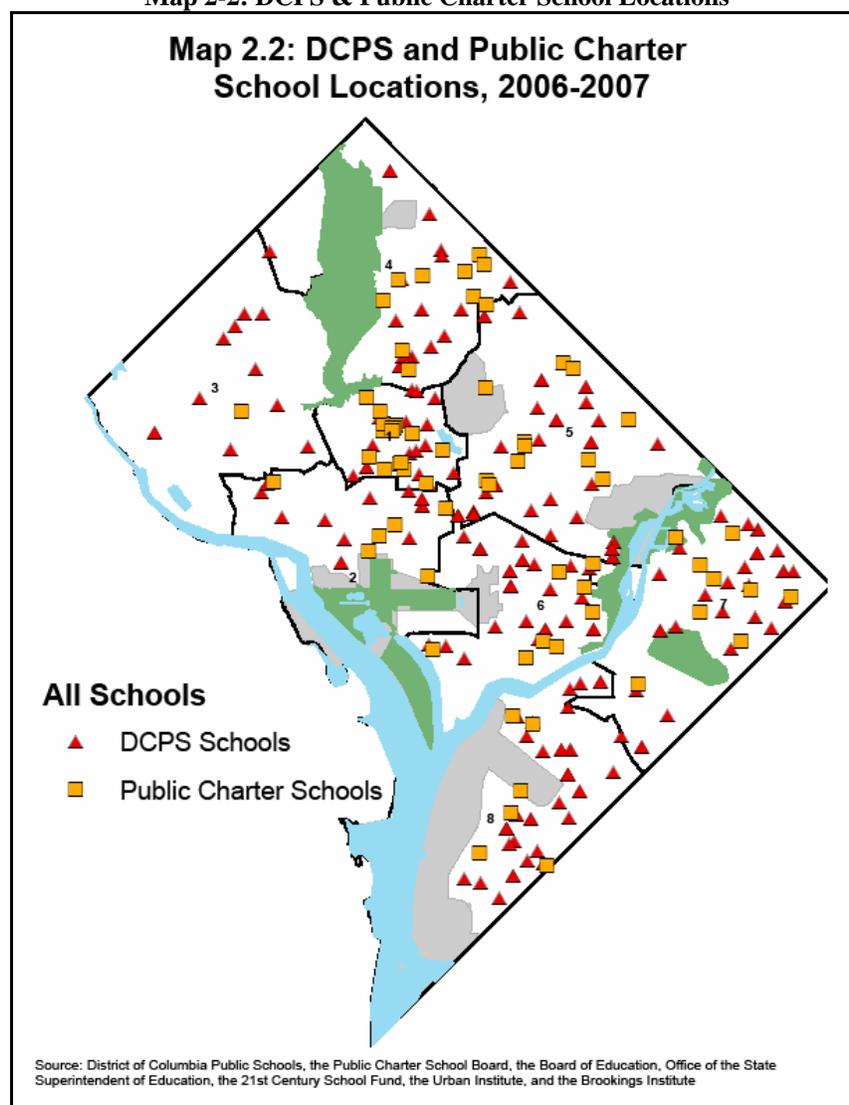
Education policy in the District provides a wide range of school choices – through DCPS out-of-boundary policies, city-wide magnets, public charter options, and federally-supported vouchers. This emphasis on choice has led to tremendous movement of students between types of schools.

The District now has the second-highest² charter participation rate of any school district in the country; only New Orleans has a larger share of students in charter schools. In addition, since Congressional passage of the DC School Choice Incentive Act in 2004, over 5,000 federally-funded scholarships have been awarded to assist students with tuition at private schools in the city.

Public School Supply

There are 234 public schools and distinct public school programs in the District serving pre-school students through adults without high school diplomas, a significant expansion of supply since 1997.

Map 2-2: DCPS & Public Charter School Locations



² Southfield, MI and Dayton, OH also had 27% of their public school students attending charters in SY2006-07; however, both these districts have far fewer students than the District of Columbia.

Access to these schools varies from a student's guaranteed right of attendance at their in-boundary DCPS school to the city-wide, lottery-as-needed system that governs admission to charter schools and the means-tested voucher program. This report groups schools into four categories – neighborhood, city-wide, assignment, and select – based on student admission, assignment or placement policies and practice. Neighborhood schools – those which primarily serve students who live nearby – make up over half of all DCPS schools, compared with less than 20 percent of charter schools. Most charter schools are city-wide, attracting students who live over a mile away.

The District's public schools offer a wide range of educational programs, including basic curriculum, themed or alternative pedagogy, career technical, special education, alternative education, and adult education. The distribution of educational program types is uneven across the city. Only 8 of the District's 59 themed or specialized public schools are located East of the River, and special education programs are concentrated in Ward 5, with 9 of the city's 19 special education schools or centers located there.

Not surprisingly, the District's public schools are highly segregated by race and ethnicity. Of the 234 public schools and programs, all but 26 have student populations that are more than 90 percent minority, while 7 of these 26 schools are majority white. Moreover, in one-fifth of all public schools, more than 10 percent of students are designated as having limited or no English Proficiency (LEP/NEP).

The city's public schools primarily serve students from low-income families. Looking at shares of students that are eligible for free and reduced lunch, nearly 60 percent of all public schools are either low income or very low income, with over half of these schools located in Wards 5, 7, or 8. By contrast, over 80 percent of the public schools in Ward 3 are high income and there are no high income schools in Wards 5 or 8. Nearly two-thirds of DCPS schools were ranked in poor physical condition in 2006. In addition, many public schools perform poorly with respect to standardized test scores.

Student Enrollment Trends

In 2006-07, 72,378 students were enrolled in DCPS and public charter schools, close to the same number as the previous year, but substantially lower than a decade earlier. Since 1997-98, the number of students attending DCPS schools has dropped by almost one-third, while public charter enrollment has grown by over 400 percent.

A rising share of public school students chose charter schools in school year 2006-07, with charter enrollment increasing 13 percent from 2005-06. Citywide, more than one of every four public school students attends a charter school, but the share varies widely by students' place of residence and grade level. Only 5 percent of the public school students living in Ward 3 attend charters, compared with 29 percent in Wards 5 and 7. The share of students enrolling in charter schools is highest for the middle grades and lowest for grades 1 through 5. Over one-third of public school students in 6th through 8th grade attended charters in 2006-07, compared with only 22 percent of students in 1st through 5th grade.

There is also a strong racial component to school choice in the District, with 28 percent of African American public school students and 24 percent of Hispanic students attending charter

schools, compared with only 14 percent of white students (for a total of only 479 white charter students). Differences between racial groups vary somewhat by grade level, although white students at every level are substantially less likely than blacks or Hispanics to attend charter schools.

The wide range of public school offerings leads to diversity of commuting patterns. DCPS students from every ward and at all grade levels travel shorter distances than their charter school counterparts. The share of students who live within easy walking distance of their schools (less than ½ mile) is much higher among DCPS students than charter students, with the largest gap among the youngest students. Two-thirds of DCPS students in kindergarten through 5th grade attend school within a ½ mile of their home, compared to less than one in five charter students.

Special Education

In 2006-07, there were 10,857 public special education students in the District, just over 15 percent of all public school students. This is on the high end compared to other high-poverty urban school districts. Twenty percent of all special education students are enrolled in charters, compared with over 26 percent in the general student population.

Special education students, like the general student population, are concentrated East of the River, and a disproportionate share of black public school students are classified as special education students (compared to white and Hispanic public school students). As with the general student population, the share of special education students attending charters is lowest in Wards 2 and 3. More unusual is the enrollment of public special education students in non-public schools (where their tuition is paid by DCPS). Almost half of all public special education students living in Ward 3 attend non-public schools, compared with only 15 to 20 percent of special education students in the other seven wards.

Approximately 4,000 students receive daily school bus transportation to special education in the District and surrounding jurisdictions. Nearly 1,600 of these students receive daily transportation to non-public programs, with half of these students traveling to schools in the District.

Alternative and Adult Education

Slightly more than 3,000 public school students – 5 percent of all public school students – attended an alternative or adult education school in the 2006-07 school year. These schools primarily enroll students with behavior problems, students at risk of not graduating from or already dropped out of a traditional high school, or adults who wish to finish their high school education. The District offers relatively few public alternative education schools or programs, significantly fewer than in the past.

The vast majority of students attending alternative and adult education schools in the 2006-07 school year were over the age of 22. Half attended public charter schools, nearly double the share in the general public school population. This reflects the large enrollment (1,389 students at multiple campuses) at Carlos Rosario, a public charter school that offers basic adult education geared to international students. There is a stark racial divide between enrollment in DCPS and

charter alternative programs. Eight out of 10 African American alternative education students attended DCPS schools, while almost nine out of 10 Hispanic alternative education students attended charter schools.

Archdiocese Students

Students receiving vouchers for private school tuition represent the final segment of the publicly-supported student population in the District. Although legal issues prevented the study team from acquiring data for all students receiving Opportunity Scholarships, data were available for the Archdiocese of Washington schools, which enroll over half of all voucher students. The residential distribution of the 2,340 children living in the District and enrolled in Archdiocese K-8 schools differs from that of the public school population. Almost one-fifth of Archdiocese students live in Ward 4, while only one-quarter live East of the River. While Ward 3 is home to only 3.7 percent of public school students, 11.3 percent of Archdiocese students live there. On average, Archdiocese students travel farther to school than their DCPS counterparts, but not as far as public charter students.

Chapter 3 - Historical Context: Housing, Schools and Governance

The District's political history, housing and population changes, and social demographics all impact today's public education system and the choices that parents make within it.

Historical Context

Like many other Southern cities, Washington, DC operated separate schools for black and white children from the post Civil War era through the mid-20th century. After the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and a related District case, *Bolling v. Sharpe*, the DC Board of Education moved quickly to desegregate the schools, beginning the 1954-55 school year with integrated facilities³. However, the system struggled to provide quality education to all students, with racial tensions in the schools and wide variations in student achievement levels contributing to the challenging circumstances. In addition, demographic changes in the city as a whole were reflected in the school system. At the time of the *Brown* decision, 57 percent of public school students were black. Within a dozen years, more than 30,000 white students had left the system⁴, and today black students comprise over 80 percent of the public student population, a trend towards de-facto re-segregation that is repeated in many urban areas around the country.

Despite deep segregation along racial lines at mid-century, there was a significant professional and middle-class African American population living in thriving neighborhoods.⁵ However, like many cities, the District lost both white and African-American middle class residents to the suburbs in the post war years. This hollowing out of the middle class exacerbated the District's highly bifurcated income distribution patterns, with concentrations of residents at the top and bottom of the spectrum.

Federal public housing and urban renewal policies – in particular the clearance of the Southwest neighborhood in the 1950s and 1960s – contributed to the concentration of poverty in neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River.⁶ In the late 1960s, the city entered a period of accelerated decline. Riots following the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. destroyed several commercial corridors in African-American neighborhoods, leaving a legacy of boarded-up buildings that lasted for decades. During the 1970s, the District lost over 100,000 residents, and population continued to fall throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This population decline triggered a decline in tax revenues, and the District government struggled to provide public services. The population of public school students also declined steadily, from a high of 146,000 in 1960 to 100,000 in 1970 and 80,000 in 1980.

The District's struggles during this time contrasted with economic and population growth in the surrounding region. Employment in the Washington metropolitan area grew by 63 percent

³ Cozzens, Lisa, "Brown v. Board of Education." *African American History*, <http://fledge.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/early-civilrights/brown.html> (25 May 1998).

⁴ "Worn Down by Waves of Change: Bureaucracy, Politics Beat Back Succession of Superintendents and Plans," April Witt, *The Washington Post*, June 11, 2007, A01

⁵ "Homes for an Inclusive City: A Comprehensive Housing Strategy for Washington, DC", *Comprehensive Housing Strategy Task Force*, Washington, DC, April 5, 2006

⁶ "Crossing the River: Race, Geography, and the Federal Government in Anacostia," Mary Halnon, University of Virginia

between 1980 and 2000, while the number of jobs in DC grew only 7 percent.⁷ By 1998, the District's unemployment rate was 9 percent, nearly three times higher than the average in the metro area.⁸ The city's fortunes finally turned in the late 1990s, as jobs, employment, and population all increased.

Housing Changes

Revitalization of the city's downtown and several residential neighborhoods in the early 2000s attracted an influx of higher-income residents who helped drive a turnaround in the city's housing market. However, these changes have not been equally positive for all the city's residents. Although the recent revitalization of many neighborhoods has helped attract new, more affluent residents to the District, contributing to population growth since 2000, the number of school-age children has actually declined slightly.

Table 3-1: Change in DC's Total Population and School- Age Children (Ages 5-19)

	2000	2006	Percent Change
Total Population	571,042	581,530	1.84%
School-age Children	102,844	100,024	-2.74%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates

Public school enrollment was essentially flat from 1997 to 2004, and dropped slightly in 2005 (it now appears to have leveled off at this lower amount). Housing market trends can explain some of the city's difficulty in attracting and retaining families with children. Much of the new housing being built or converted is high-density, high-cost units that are more likely to attract singles and childless couples than families. In addition, the housing boom has triggered an affordable housing crisis, with home sale prices and rents rising beyond the reach of many middle and lower-income residents, especially in gentrifying neighborhoods. As explained in the Urban Institute's report on *Housing in the Nation's Capitol 2006*, "recent home buyers in the District are less likely than existing homeowners to have a student enrolled in the public school system."⁹ In addition, condominiums – whose residents historically have far fewer students enrolled in the public schools compared with residents of single-family owned or multi-family rentals – make up a significant and growing share of the city's housing stock.

Race and Income in the District

In addition to a shift in household makeup, the District is also experiencing change in its racial and ethnic composition. Long a predominantly African-American city, the District lost black residents between 1990 and 2000, while its Hispanic and Asian populations grew slightly.¹⁰ Between 2000 and 2006, the city experienced an additional 6 percent decrease in black residents, coupled with a 14 percent increase in non-Hispanic white residents. Demographers predict that

⁷ Margery A. Turner, Thomas Kingsley, Kathryn Pettit, Christopher Snow, Peter Tatian, "Housing in the Nation's Capital 2002," Fannie Mae Foundation, Washington, DC: 2002, pp. 6,8

⁸ HNC 2002, p. 8

⁹ HNC 2006, p. 7

¹⁰ "Washington, DC In Focus: A Profile from Census 2000," *Living Cities: The National Community Development Initiative*, The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2003

by 2020 the District will no longer be majority black, instead resembling New York or Los Angeles, with no single racial or ethnic group in the majority.¹¹

The city remains highly segregated along both racial and income lines. Residents living East of the Anacostia River are overwhelmingly African-American and have significantly higher poverty and unemployment rates and lower educational attainment than those living elsewhere in the city, particularly west of Rock Creek Park. In 2006, median household income for whites in DC was \$92,000, almost three times higher than the \$34,500 median household income of the city's blacks.¹² The gap between the District's highest and lowest-income households is greater than in every U.S. city except Atlanta and Tampa.¹³

According to Census data, in 2000 over 90 percent of the residents in Wards 7 and 8 were black, while 80 percent of the population in Ward 3 was white. Nearly two-thirds of the city's white population lived in Wards 2 and 3¹⁴ (see Map 1). More current data confirm that today, the District's public school students live in neighborhoods that are highly segregated along racial and ethnic lines. Half of white public school students (51 percent) live in Ward 3, and almost none live East of the River. In contrast, over half (53 percent) of black public school students live East of the River, and less than one percent live in Ward 3. Three quarters of Hispanic public school students live in Wards 1 and 4, and very few live East of the River. Only about 1,200 (out of more than 70,000) public school students are classified as Asian or other, and none of them live East of the River or in Ward 5.¹⁵

In addition to reflecting residential segregation patterns, the makeup of the city's public schools also reveals an overall lack of participation in public schools by whites. Although white children make up over 13 percent of the District's school-age (ages 5-18) population¹⁶, white students constitute only 5 percent of the city's total public school population. Just under one-third (3,521) of all white school-age children (11,298) attend public schools. In comparison, over 90 percent (57,706) of all black (63,861) and 88 percent (7,130) of all Hispanic (8,017) school-age children attend public schools.¹⁷

Table 3-2: Participation in Public Schools by Race/Ethnicity, SY2006-07

	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Other
Share of School-Age Pop (5-18)	13.1%	74.0%	9.3%	3.6%
Share of Public School Pop	5.1%	82.9%	10.2%	1.8%
Share of School-Age Pop in Public Schools	31.2%	90.4%	88.9%	40.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 Population Estimates, DCPS & Public Charter student enrollment data

¹¹ "DC May Be Losing Status As a Majority-Black City," *The Washington Post*, May 17, 2007, A01

¹² "DC's Two Economies: Many Residents are Falling Behind," DC Fiscal Policy Institute, October 24, 2007, p. 16

¹³ William Frey, quoted with permission in DCFPI report, "DC's Two Economies"

¹⁴ Neighborhood Info DC manipulation of Census 2000 data

¹⁵ Urban Institute analysis of 2006-07 student-level data from DCPS and Public Charter School Board

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 Population Estimates

¹⁷ Brookings Institution manipulation of U.S. Census Bureau 2006 Population Estimates. The school-age population estimate for children ages 5-18 includes some 18-year-old college students, which is likely to particularly inflate the number of white students age 18. To calculate a more accurate public school participation rate, the number of white children in that age range is conservatively estimated to be the same as at the other ages. Specific calculations can be found in Appendix A: Technical Methodology

Chapter 4 - Public School Supply

The complexity of school supply in the public sector cannot be overstated. There are schools that vary in governance, curriculum, pedagogy, size, location, hours, and grades served. Within each of these basic areas there can be major differences, even as some commonalities can be found within the DCPS sector and within the public charter school sector. The public schools change yearly. Both DCPS and public charter schools are changing—by opening and closing schools; changing grade configurations; adding or subtracting grades; moving locations of schools; as well as making ongoing adjustments to programs, curriculum, services, and personnel, as would be done in the normal operation of a school system or operation of a public charter school. Adding private school options through vouchers (in DC, “Opportunity Scholarships”) to this tremendous array of public school choices increases the complexity.

In order to understand the supply of public schools available to parents and students in the District of Columbia, the Study Team has created a basic framework to describe the range and diversity of public schools available. In Phase Two of this report we will use this framework, as well as additional analysis of enrollment patterns and focus group interviews with parents and students, to further describe and analyze the choices parents and students are making.

In this section, the pre-school through 12th grade public schools are described by how they are governed, the types of educational programs offered, the demographic composition of their enrollment, school enrollment size, and facilities size and condition.¹⁸

Education Sectors

The public and private sectors both offer education for pre-school through 12th grade students. Private schools are available for a fee under the conditions and at the discretion of the private school operator. This study does not examine private schools in the District. However there are 162 private PS-12th grade schools in the District.¹⁹ They enroll students from the District, as well as students from Virginia and Maryland. There were 1800 students in 2006-07 who attended District of Columbia based private schools paid for by federal funds through the Opportunity Scholarship Program, commonly referred to as vouchers.²⁰

Within the public education sector, parents and guardians of school-age children in the District have many school options. During the 2006-07 school year, there were 234 public schools serving pre-school through adults without high school diplomas. These public schools were all available free to residents of the District of Columbia. There are two types of schools in the public sector—the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) schools and the public charter schools.

¹⁸ A school is defined as an entity with separate administrative leadership and staff for a particular enrollment. We use the same definition of school for public charter schools. In the case of public charter schools, one charter entity (LEA) may operate multiple schools or may just operate one school. The 2006-2007 audited school report list formed the basis for the list of public schools. The full list is included in Appendix B.

¹⁹ DCSchoolSearch.com, list of private schools for 2004-2005 school year.

²⁰“District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program,” Government Accountability Office report, GAO-08-9, November 2007.

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Schools

DCPS schools are governed and operated by the District government (formerly by the DC Board of Education) under the control of the Mayor. DCPS is a large local education agency (LEA) and in 2006-2007, DCPS operated 162 schools²¹. DCPS is funded as one LEA and has a central office responsible for supporting these 162 local schools with oversight, human resources (including collective bargaining agreements), administrative data and information services, facilities management, logistical support for security and food service, as well as curriculum, standards and other academic, instructional, and evaluative support. The local schools are allotted a portion of the overall DCPS budget and are permitted some local school control over staff allocation and local school planning.

The number of public schools is not identical to the number of DCPS public school buildings and locations because DCPS has “school within schools” to create small learning communities, as well as special education centers and School To Aid Youth (STAY) programs that have separate administration and students and staff within school buildings. For example, the Spingarn building houses Spingarn SHS, Spingarn STAY, and Spingarn Special Education Center. This report defines a school as a self-contained school or program with its own administration. In addition, the DCPS Choice Program schools that operate under a single administration but are located in two different buildings, at Taft and Douglas, are counted as two separate schools. The 162 DCPS schools are in 151 different locations²².

Public Charter Schools

Public charter schools are governed and operated by private non-profit boards under the jurisdiction of the Public Charter School Board. Each charter school receives the same Uniform Per Student Funding allocation from the city as DCPS and must operate in accordance with its individual charter. The Public Charter School Board conducts annual reviews of public charter schools. Each public charter operator is its own LEA and as such is responsible for the same array of functions as the combination of DCPS central office and a local DCPS school. Some public charter LEAs operate more than one school.

When public charter schools were first introduced in the District of Columbia, the DCPS Board of Education and the Public Charter School Boards were both authorizers of public charter schools. Now, all public charter schools are under the jurisdiction of the Public Charter School Board. In school year 2006-07 there were 72 public charter schools²³, but 55 charter school operators, or public charter LEAs. Forty-four public charter school boards operate only one public charter school and 11 operate more than one, with Friendship and Community Academy operating the most with five public charter schools each. The distribution of schools by sector

²¹ This number varies from the 156 DCPS schools reported in the OSSE’s State of Education report. That report omits the 4 DC Alternative Learning Academies, Jackie Robinson Center, DC Corrections Detention, and Youth Services Center because they are not located in DCPS facilities, while those schools are included in this count. The State of Education report counts Headstart Consolidated as a school, which this report does not.

²² This number varies from the 141 DCPS buildings reported in the OSSE’s State of Education report for the reasons described above. In addition, this report counts Webb, Wheatley, and Hardy as separate buildings since all three will remain open as DCPS schools once renovation construction is complete.

²³ This number differs from the 70 reported in the OSSE’s State of Education report because it includes both the lower and middle schools at William E. Doar PCS, as well as the Community Academy Online school.

by ward in 2006-2007 is summarized in Table 4.1. A list of schools by sector and ward is in Appendix B.

Table 4-1: Number of Schools and Enrollment by Sector and Ward 2006-2007

Ward	DCPS Schools	PCS Schools	Ward Total	Enrollment Total of Schools in Ward ²⁴
1 ²⁵	16	15	31	9,594
2	12	5	17	4,084
3	10	1	11	5,069
4	18	11	29	8,693
5	32	12	44	10,454
6	21	11	32	9,455
7	23	10	33	11,971
8	30	6	36	12,401
Total ²⁶	162	71²⁷	233	71,721²⁸

Educational Programs

We have identified six basic types of educational programs provided in the city's public schools. These program varieties distinguish schools from one another. Most schools are basic education schools, established as an elementary, middle/junior, or senior high school with students divided into grade levels roughly by age, and with a classroom teacher for each grade in the elementary schools and subject area teachers in the secondary schools. However, DCPS and public charter schools also operate specialized grade level schools and career and technical schools, as well as special, alternative and adult education schools.

1. Basic Education School

A school with a basic educational program is one that is defined by a traditional grade level classroom curriculum and instruction model. This designation is almost derived in the negative, i.e. there are no special programs that define the school. There are 140 public schools that use a traditional curriculum and pedagogy. A basic high school is defined here as a comprehensive high school which is primarily organized around subject area departments.

2. Themed or Specialized School

There are 59 schools characterized by a theme, special focus, and/or alternative pedagogy. A school with a themed educational program is a school which is structured around a particular curriculum or content area—for example, McKinley HS of Science and Technology, Ellington HS for the Performing Arts, and Washington Math, Science and Technology Public Charter School. Other schools are identified as specialized because of their use of a particular pedagogy. These schools teach a basic curriculum but do it using alternative pedagogies. For example, the

²⁴ These enrollment totals represent the number of students attending DCPS and public charter schools in each ward, not the number of public school students who live in each ward.

²⁵ Carlos Rosario, Education Strengthens Families, and Booker T. Washington are counted only once, but they have multiple sites where they offer afternoon or evening classes.

²⁶ Oak Hill is in Maryland.

²⁷ Excludes Virtual Public Charter School operated by Community Academy, with enrollment of 111 students.

²⁸ Total audited enrollment for school year 2006-07 is 72,378. There are 546 students in Pre-K incentive program, Headstart consolidated program, DC corrections treatment and Oak Hill Academy, as well as 111 students in Community Academy Public Charter School Virtual School.

Montessori programs at Watkins Elementary and Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS emphasize student-centered learning methods but the content of what is taught is the same as a basic elementary school. Only 8 of the city's 59 themed or specialized schools are located East of the River.²⁹

3. Career Technical Education School

There are five career technical education public schools in the District. Four are public charter schools and one is a DCPS school. Within the comprehensive DCPS high schools are programs with a career and technical focus, such as the Cardozo Construction Academy. However, only the M.M. Washington High School identifies itself as a Career and Technical School. The four charter schools with a career focus – Latin American Youth Center, Young America Works, Hospitality, and IDEA PCS – offer construction, hospitality, and internship-based career education.

4. Special Education School

There are 19 public schools and School-Within-a-School centers that serve only students with special learning, emotional, and physical needs. Fourteen of these schools or centers are operated by DCPS and 4 are operated by public charter schools. Most of the special education students are educated as part of the regular public schools.

5. Alternative School

There are 10 alternative education public schools to which students are assigned or enroll because of a history of difficulties with traditional schools. The alternative schools often work with students who have had chronic behavioral problems. These may operate on a full time or part time basis and include Oak Hill under the District's authority and Maya Angelou, a public charter school.

6. Adult Education School

The District also offers five public adult education schools. Three are DCPS-operated STAY programs for adults. There are two adult education programs operated by the public charter schools—by far the largest is Carlos Rosario, which educates students at its main building and at five different locations, mostly in Ward 1. Other than Ballou STAY, there is no adult education public school east of the River. The adult education programs in the District provide classes primarily for adults who are getting their high school diploma or GED. High school students who have failed a course can also use the STAY programs to make up a course in order to graduate.

²⁹ Burrville ES (Montessori), Woodson Business & Finance Academy, Nalle ES (Montessori), Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School (Public Policy), SEED PCS (Residential), and Septima Clark PCS (All-Boys) in Ward 7; Early Childhood Academy PCS (Core Knowledge Curriculum) and Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS (Law & Justice) in Ward 8.

Table 4-2: Number of Public Schools (DCPS and Charter) by Educational Program and Ward

Ward	Basic	Themed Academic ³⁰	Career Technical	Special Education	Alternative Education ³¹	Adult Education
1	11	17	1	1	3	2
2	8	7	0	2	0	0
3	7	4	0	0	0	0
4	20	5	1	2	0	1
5	21	9	1	9	3	1
6	19	9	1	2	1	0
7	25	6	1	0	1	0
8	29	2	0	3	1	1
Total	140	59	5	19	9	5

Educators in both DCPS and the public charter schools have introduced variations on the basic educational program into the public schools. However, there are more thematic or specialized schools among public charter schools than in DCPS schools.

This is particularly pronounced at the middle grades level, where DCPS had no thematic middle schools among its middle and junior high schools in 2006-2007 (Jefferson JHS, with its science partnerships is a partial exception to this and Hardy MS is exploring a themed arts focus). In contrast, every public charter middle school offered some theme or specialized focus.

The situation at the senior high level is different. In DCPS, 9 of 19 senior high schools operate as magnet schools, either on their own, or as schools within schools such as at Dunbar and Woodson. Within the other ten comprehensive high schools, the schools have developed academies and other foci around various career and academic curriculum. Of the 11 public charter high schools (public charter high schools serving grades 6, 7, or 9-12) most are specialized or themed. However, Friendship, which is by far the largest charter high school (2006-07 enrollment of 1213 students), has a traditional high school program more like the DCPS comprehensive high schools.

At the elementary level, of the 101 DCPS public elementary schools operating in 2006-2007, only 14 had clearly defined specialized programs or themes (excluding special education schools). Among the 23 public charter schools serving grades PS through 8th grade, 13 had a special theme or approach to instruction that defined their school identity. For example, E.L. Haynes is a year-round expeditionary learning public charter school which served preschool through 4th grade students in 2006-2007, while DC Bilingual, Elsie Whitlow Stokes, LAMB, and ABC all utilize bilingual instruction models. There are some notable, and even nationally regarded, innovative public schools in DCPS, such as the Oyster Bilingual Elementary School and the Emilia Reggio-based early education School-Within-School program at Peabody, but most DCPS elementary schools are organized around a basic program.

³⁰ The Community Academy, Virtual Academy, is a distance learning school without a ward location.

³¹ The three alternative educational schools for adjudicated youth are omitted from this table.

School Enrollment Size

There is a body of research on school enrollment size indicating that children, particularly those from low income families, are more likely to graduate, attend more regularly, and achieve at higher levels in a small school than a large school.³² The related issue of class size, and parental preference for smaller classes, will be explored in greater detail in Phase Two.

The definitions used for determining school size rating are in table 4.3. They are different by grade level. The research on school size does not have a standard definition of small. However, in general schools that serve less than one class per grade at the elementary level are considered small. Schools can begin to serve two classes per grade at around 300 students in a Preschool through 5th grade school. At the middle and high school levels, since they serve fewer grades, higher enrollments still constitute small schools.

Table 4-3: Ratings of School Size

Enrollment Size	Elementary Schools	Middle/Junior High / PS-8 Schools	High Schools/ PS-12 schools
Very Small	< 200 students	<300 students	<400 students
Small	200-300 students	300-400 students	400-800 students
Medium	300-450 students	400-600 students	800-1200 students
Large	450-600 students	600-800 students	1200-1600 students
Very large	> 600 students	>800 students	>1600 students

The public schools in the District of Columbia are overwhelming small as measured by enrollment size. However, in many cases, particularly in the DCPS schools, the low enrollment is in a building designed to serve far more students, so the small enrollment is not an intentional program related decision, but the result of neighborhood demographic change and loss of students to other DCPS schools and to public charter schools.

For public charter schools, in many cases there has been a desire to be small by design. However, some schools have been limited by facility constraints, as public charter schools have had limited and difficult access to excess DCPS space and so had to locate and finance school building space in an expensive and competitive real estate environment.

Table 4-4: School Enrollment Size by Ward

Ward	Very Small	Small	Medium	Large	Very Large
1	14	6	8	0	0
2	10	5	2	0	0
3	2	3	2	4	0
4	9	8	8	2	0
5	15	12	3	2	0
6	9	14	2	3	1
7	10	8	11	3	1
8	5	6	19	0	1
Total ³³	74	62	55	14	3

³² Patricia A. Wasley, Michelle Fine, Matt Gladden, Nicole E. Holland, Sherry P. King, Ester Mosak, and Linda Powell, "Small Schools, Great Strides," 2000; also www.smallschoolsproject.org.

³³ Special education, Alternative education, Adult education, Pre-K incentive program, Headstart consolidated program, DC correction treatment, Community Academy Public Charter School Virtual School are excluded.

Over half of all public school students are attending schools that are either small or very small. Only 17 percent of all public school students attend large or very large schools.

School Demographics

In addition to programs and school size, a school is often described by who attends the school. The demographics of schools are described here by the racial composition of the school, the income distribution of families of students, the English language proficiency, and the special education population of the school. (Appendix B contains demographic data by school.)

The racial homogeneity of the District of Columbia's public schools is striking. 208 of the 234 public schools in the District of Columbia are over 90% African American or Hispanic (Predominantly Minority: <10% non-Hispanic white). 108 of these 208 schools are 98% or more African American. There are 7 schools that are majority white³⁴, all at the elementary level, but none over 90% white. The schools in wards 3 and 6 are the most racially diverse, but most of the public schools in the District of Columbia are not racially diverse.

Table 4-5: Number of Schools by Racial Composition by Ward

Ward	Predominantly Minority <10% Non-Hispanic White	Majority Minority: 10 to 50 % Non-Hispanic White	Majority White: 50 to 90 % Non-Hispanic White
1	29	3	0
2	12	5	0
3	0	6	5
4	28	0	1
5	43	1	0
6	27	4	1
7	33	0	0
8	36	0	0
Total	208	19	7

There is some demographic diversity with children who are English language learners. There are 46 public schools with 10 percent or more of their students who have Limited or No English Proficiency. The LEP/NEP designation indicates that the students are not proficient in English and includes students of all linguistic backgrounds.

Table 4-6: # of Schools with over 10% LEP/NEP and Number of LEP/NEP Students in those schools

Ward	10-25% LEP/NEP	25-50% LEP/NEP	>50% LEP/NEP	# of Students
1	8	9	4	2,184
2	2	4	0	412
3	4	1	0	298
4	9	3	3	1,143
5	1	1	0	70
6	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0
Total	24	18	7	4,107

³⁴ Janney ES, Key ES, Mann ES, Murch ES, and Stoddert ES in Ward 3, Lafayette ES in Ward 4, and Reggio Emilia SWS at Peabody ES in Ward 6 are the only schools with greater than 50% white students.

The public schools in the District primarily serve students from families that are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.³⁵ There is greater variation in DCPS and public charter schools by free or subsidized lunch eligibility than by race. High schools tend to report much lower levels of eligibility for free or reduced price lunch than in the feeder schools from which the students came, a practice which suggests substantial underreporting. In Table 4.7, schools are classified according to the percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch.

Table 4-7: Number of Schools by Percent of Students Eligible for Subsidized or Free Lunch by Ward

Ward ³⁶	Very low income: > 80%	Low income: 60-80%	Moderate income: 40-59%	Middle income: 20-39%	High income: <20%
1	11	7	6	1	0
2	3	7	2	3	2
3	0	0	0	3	8
4	4	12	7	2	1
5	13	14	11	1	0
6	6	11	4	2	0
7	7	17	5	0	0
8	14	18	2	1	0
Total³⁷	58	86	37	13	11

Special education includes distinctive programmatic, pedagogical and support service foci. There are 19 special education schools. This includes the 17 schools with over 50% of the students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and the two SAIL public charter schools³⁸ (with 48% of their students with IEPs) which use an arts based inclusion model for advancing all students academically and socially.

Table 4-8: Schools by Percent Special Education Students, by Ward

Ward	50-100% Special Ed Students	25-49% Special Ed Students	15%-24% Special Ed Students	10-14% Special Ed Students	0-9% Special Ed Students
1	1	1	6	10	10
2	0	2	2	5	8
3	0	0	1	0	10
4	1	2	3	7	15
5	9	1	7	9	18
6	3	4	6	5	12
7	0	1	10	11	11
8	3	1	12	5	14
Total	17	12	47	52	98

³⁵ Eligibility for free or reduced price lunch varies by family size. In 2006-07, students in a family of four with annual income under \$25,155 qualified for free lunch; students in a family of four with annual income under \$35,798 qualified for reduced price lunch.

³⁶ Free or reduced price lunch data is from student level data. There are 28 schools which either combine data with another school, such as Wheatley and Webb or for which there is no student level data.

³⁷ Adult education (including DCPS STAY program), private tuition, Oak Hill, DC Corrections Treatment, DC Detention Facility are not included. Data is not available for Mary McLeod Bethune public charter school and Washington Academy public charter school.

³⁸ In SY2006-07, the reference year for this report, there was an upper and lower SAIL school. In SY2007-08, only the lower school remained open.

The programs and services offered in schools with special education students will vary based on the level and type of needs the students have. The program and services are described in each student's IEP. Students categorized in Level 1 generally have learning disabilities that can be addressed with the least program or service interventions, while students categorized in Level 4 require the most intensive interventions and hours of specialized instruction. (See special education section in Chapter 5 for additional detail on availability and utilization of special education services.)

Table 4-9: Schools by student special education level by ward

Ward	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total
1	233	393	156	170	952
2	103	170	94	89	456
3	171	105	59	47	382
4	235	409	128	239	1011
5	289	574	208	588	1659
6	239	455	183	689	1566
7	263	696	309	195	1463
8	299	701	321	424	1745
Total³⁹	1832	3503	1458	2441	9234

Facilities

The adequacy of public school facilities has been an issue for both the DCPS schools and the public charter schools, although the reasons have been somewhat different. In a DCPS survey of parents applying for out of boundary placement, 36 percent of parents listed facility condition as the reason they were applying for out of boundary placement. In DCPS, the problems have been largely related to building condition and to some extent how well the design of the school supports the educational program. However, in the public charter schools the issues have been primarily about access to sufficient space and the common issue of whether the space is designed to support educational programming and services. In the case of the public charter schools, the design issues have been more acute, as churches, warehouses and other spaces never designed for schools have been converted into school spaces. In DCPS, the primary design issue is one of obsolete space that can more easily be retrofitted to serve other educational purposes – such as conversion to early childhood or special education classrooms, or providing space to public charter schools.

The District has a range of public buildings constructed from the turn of the 19th century to its most recent new public school, Bell/Lincoln Middle/High School. Many of the existing DCPS schools have multiple additions that have been added over the decades, which have created a tangle of design and conditions. Nearly 9,000 public charter school students are in former DCPS

³⁹ Adult education (including DCPS STAY program), private tuition, Oak Hill, DC Corrections Treatment, DC Detention Facility are not included. Data is not available for Mary McLeod Bethune public charter school and Washington Academy public charter school.

buildings. Public charter schools are also located in churches (some in church schools), in repurposed commercial and industrial space, and in entirely new buildings developed by the school.

There are approximately 17.3 million gross square feet of public school space in the District – in DCPS buildings as well as space in use by public charter schools. This number is based on actual building level data for all DCPS schools and for 52 of the 72 public charter schools. Since there is no database of public charter school facilities information, the 21st Century School Fund contacted each public charter school for information on their building size. The 20 schools that did not respond to the inquiry, or that did not know how much space they used, served approximately 3,400 students in 2006-2007.⁴⁰ If an estimate of 100 gross square feet per student is applied to these students, then the total estimated gross square footage in both DCPS and public charter schools would be about 17.3 million gross square feet of space. Approximately 16 million square feet of this space is under the control of DCPS, with 15 million in use for DCPS schools operating in 2006-2007. (Supplemental data on school building size, both DCPS and PCS, can be found in Appendix B.)

In 2006, as part of the DCPS facility master plan, the school district developed detailed building assessments for each DCPS school building. As part of this assessment, a “facility condition index” was developed to rank the condition of basic school building components and systems. Approximately half of the DCPS schools (103) were ranked in poor condition. There are no centralized data on the condition of public charter school facilities. (Supplemental data on DCPS FCI can be found in Appendix B.)

⁴⁰ Public charter school data was collected through phone survey in the fall of 2007 20 schools are missing from this survey.

Chapter 5 - Public School Students and Enrollment Patterns

Given the array of DCPS and charter school options available in the District of Columbia, what choices are the city's public school students making? And how do these choices vary among socio-economic groups and across the city's eight wards? This chapter describes the "demand side" of the District's public school system, describing the students and their enrollment choices. It focuses primarily on the 2006-07 school year, but also discusses significant changes from the prior year.

The analysis relies primarily on student-level enrollment data obtained from DCPS, the Board of Education, and the Public Charter School Board, which identify every student, his or her basic characteristics, home address, and school attended. Complete data are available for both the 2005-06 and the 2006-07 school years, and reflect enrollment patterns at the time of the city's official October count. (OSSE's official audited school enrollment data was not used because it does not include students' home addresses, a necessary variable for this study. See Data Appendix A for more details.) Data for DCPS enrollment are also available for two additional points in time during the 2006-07 school year, enabling the analysis to explore the extent to which DCPS students are entering and leaving DCPS schools during the year.

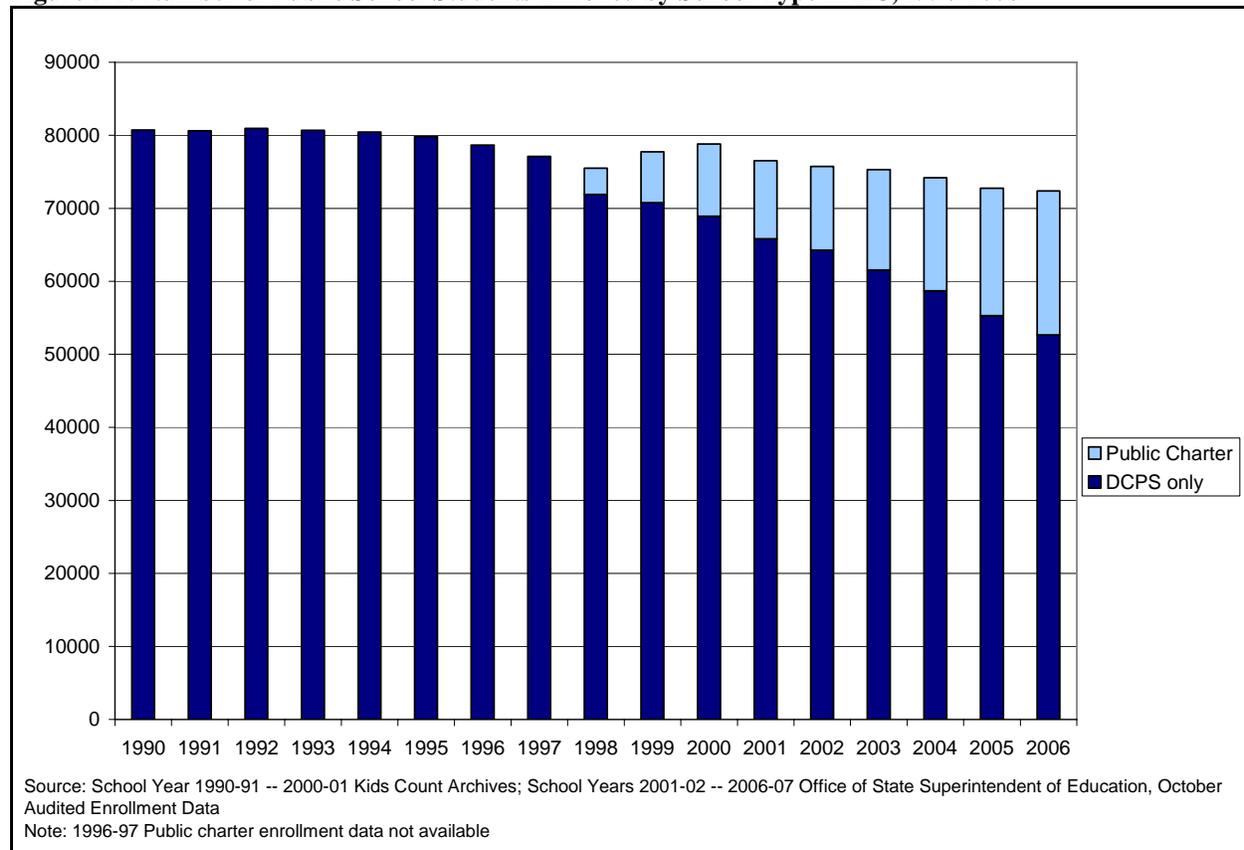
This chapter begins by describing the general student population – enrolled in pre-school through 12th grade in DCPS and charter schools.⁴¹ It then examines special populations, including students enrolled in special education programs, alternative student populations, and DC students attending archdiocese schools.

General Enrollment

In the 2006-07 school year, a total of 72,378 students were enrolled in DCPS and public charter schools, close to the same number as in the previous school year, but substantially below the level a decade earlier.⁴² As Figure 5.1 illustrates, total enrollment held almost constant between 1999-00 and 2003-04, with increases in charter school enrollment making up for steady declines in DCPS enrollment. In 2004-05 and 2005-06, growth in charter school enrollment fell short of declines in DCPS enrollment, and total enrollment declined. Specifically, total enrollment in 2005-06 was down 2 percent compared to 2004-05. But in 2006-07, total enrollment was down only about 390 students (less than 1 percent) compared to 2005-06.

⁴¹ Several categories of public school students are omitted from the analysis of the general student population: those over age 22, wards of the state, private tuition recipients, and students in custody. Students who receive special education services at DCPS or public charter schools are included here, but also discussed in greater depth below. The number of students in our analysis of the general public student population for 2006-07 is 69,827. This number is different from OSSE's audited enrollment numbers of 72,378 students in 2006-07.

⁴² Note that this analysis of enrollment trends over the last decade uses the city's official audited counts, provided by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). These counts differ from the total number of general enrollment students in our student-level data file. Specifically, the official count for 2006-07 is 2,551 higher than the number of general enrollment students for which student-level data are available.

Figure 5-1: Number of Public School Students Enrolled by School Type in DC, 1990-2006

Preliminary data for the current school year (2007-08) indicate a slight increase in total enrollment to 72, 490 students.⁴³ DCPS enrollment appears to have declined by 2, 375 students, nearly equal to the 2, 453 student gain in the charter schools. The trend in student enrollment since the start of the decade is consistent with evidence discussed earlier that, although the District of Columbia is now gaining population and households, the number of families with children living in the city is not growing, and may in fact be declining.

Although total enrollment has declined relatively slowly since the beginning of the decade, DCPS enrollment has dropped substantially, while charter enrollment has increased. In 2006-07, DCPS enrollment totaled 52,645, down 4.8 percent from the previous year and 26.8 percent below its level in 1998, the year after public charters were first introduced in the District. In contrast, the 2006-07 charter enrollment totaled 19,733 – up 13 percent from the 2005-06 level, and an increase of approximately 450 percent since 1998-99.

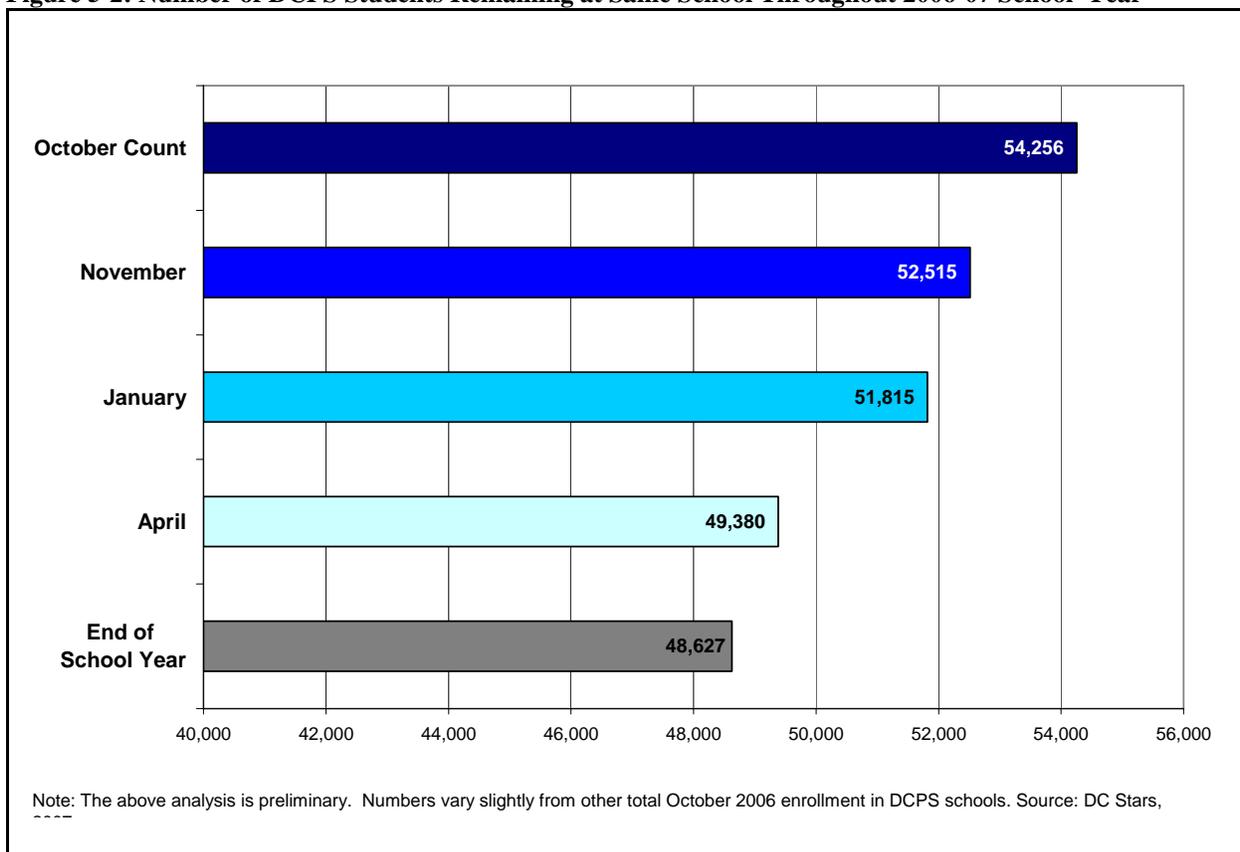
In 2006-07, just over one of every four general enrollment public school students (27 percent) was officially enrolled in a charter school, up from 24 percent in the previous school year.⁴⁴ It is important to note, however, that students change schools frequently, not only from one school year to the next, but also within the school year. Therefore, the city's official October

⁴³ This number is based on the October 5 enrollment count conducted at all DCPS and public charter schools. The audited numbers had not been released at the time of report publication.

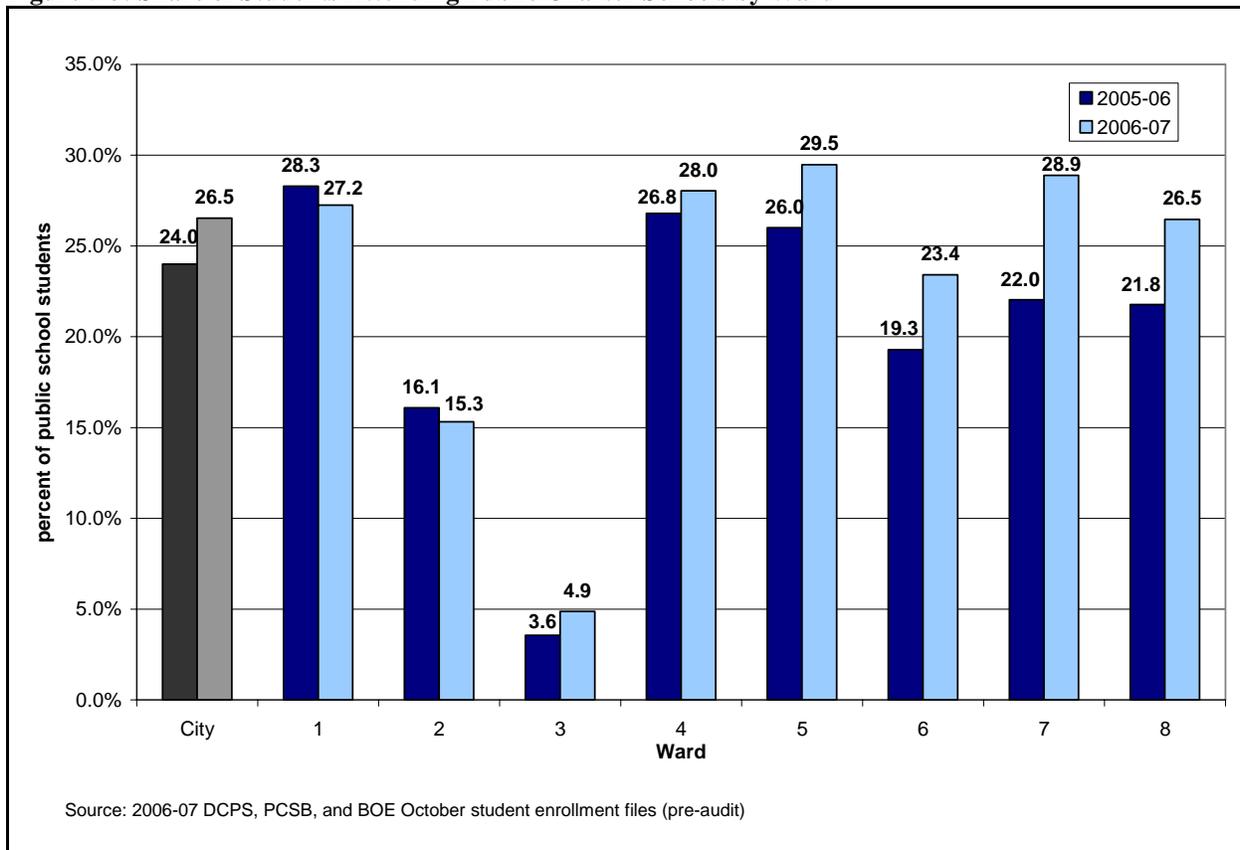
⁴⁴ The analysis in the remainder of the *General Enrollment* section uses the student-level enrollment data (not audited data) totaling 69,601 students in 2006-07.

enrollment counts may not fully reflect the distribution of students across types of schools for the full year. Preliminary analysis indicates that 3.2 percent of the students attending DCPS schools at the time of the 2006 October count had withdrawn from those schools by the end of November. Moreover, another 5.8 percent had withdrawn by April of 2007 (see Figure 5.2). In all, only 89.6 percent of the students initially enrolled stayed in the same DCPS school for the full 2006-07 school year. The issue of student mobility, including transitions between DCPS and charters will be discussed in greater depth in future phases of this study.

Figure 5-2: Number of DCPS Students Remaining at Same School Throughout 2006-07 School Year

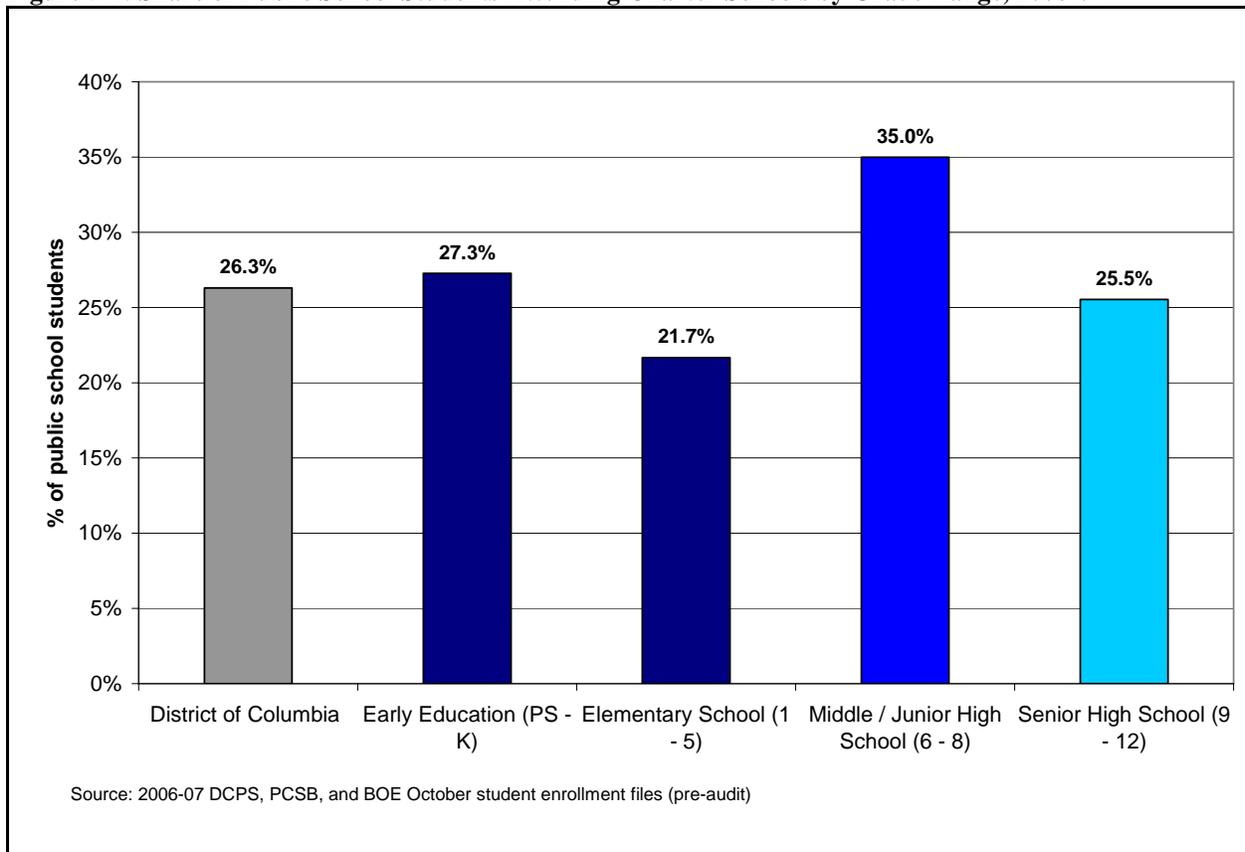


As Figure 5.3 illustrates, the share of students choosing charters varies substantially across the city's eight wards. The share attending charters is dramatically lower for students who live in Ward 3 (5 percent) and considerably lower in Ward 2 (15 percent) than in the rest of the city. In contrast, Ward 5 has the highest share of public school students attending charters at 30 percent, followed closely by Ward 7 (29 percent), Ward 4 (28 percent), and Wards 1 and 8 (27 percent each). Between 2005-06 and 2006-07, the share of students choosing public charter schools rather than DCPS schools increased substantially in Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8, while declining slightly in Wards 1 and 2, and increasing only modestly in Wards 3 and 4.

Figure 5-3: Share of Students Attending Public Charter Schools by Ward

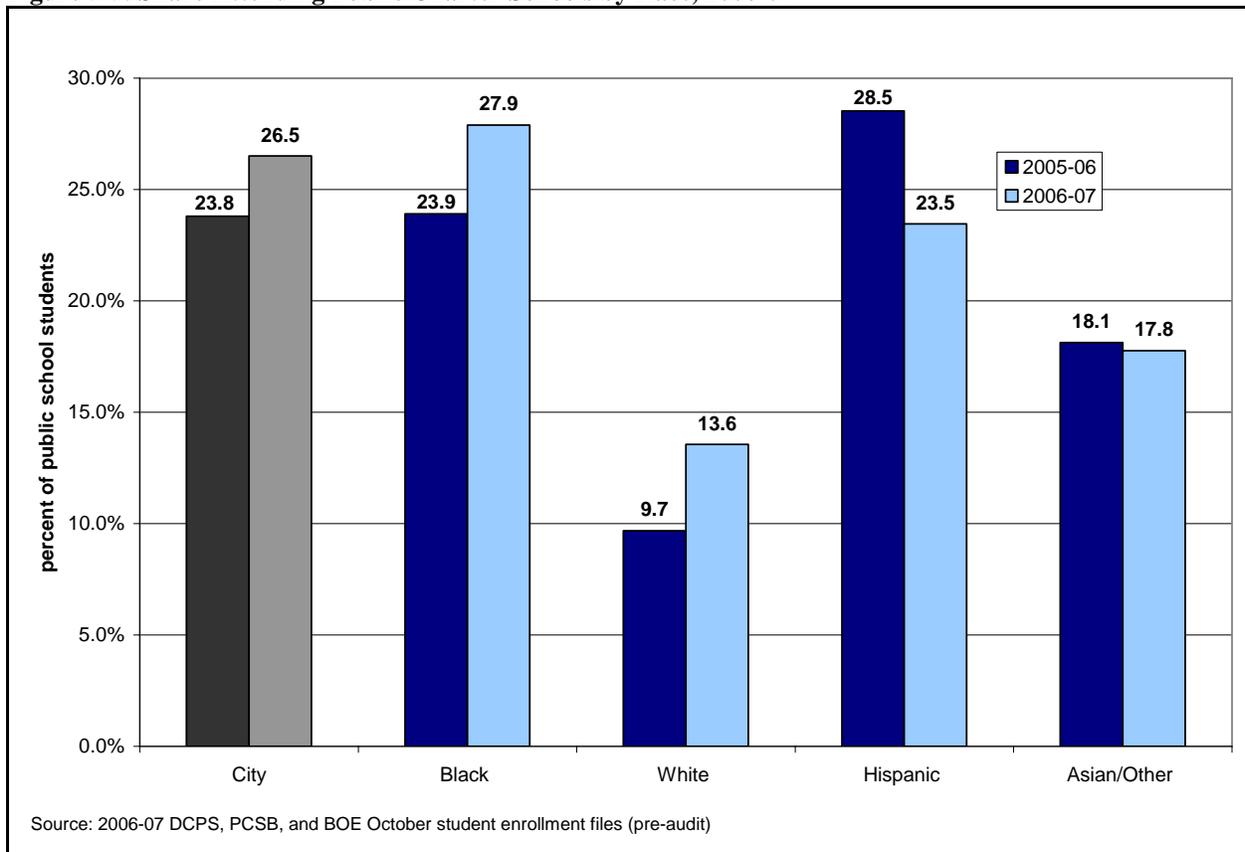
Low-income students in the District attended public charter schools at a slightly lower rate than higher income students. Specifically, in 2006-07, 25 percent of all public school students who were eligible for free or reduced price lunch attended public charter schools, compared to 29 percent of higher income students (those not eligible for free or reduced price lunch). Between the 2005-06 school year and the 2006-07 school year, charter attendance rose by two percentage points for low-income students and by four percentage points for higher income students.

Enrollment in charters rather than DCPS schools is highest among students in the middle school grades and lowest among students in first through fifth grade. As Figure 5.4 shows, in 2006-07, more than one-third of public school students in grades 6 through 8 attended charters (35 percent), compared to only about one in five students in grades 1 through 5 (22 percent). To some extent, these differences likely reflect the availability of charter school options at each grade level, discussed in Chapter 4.

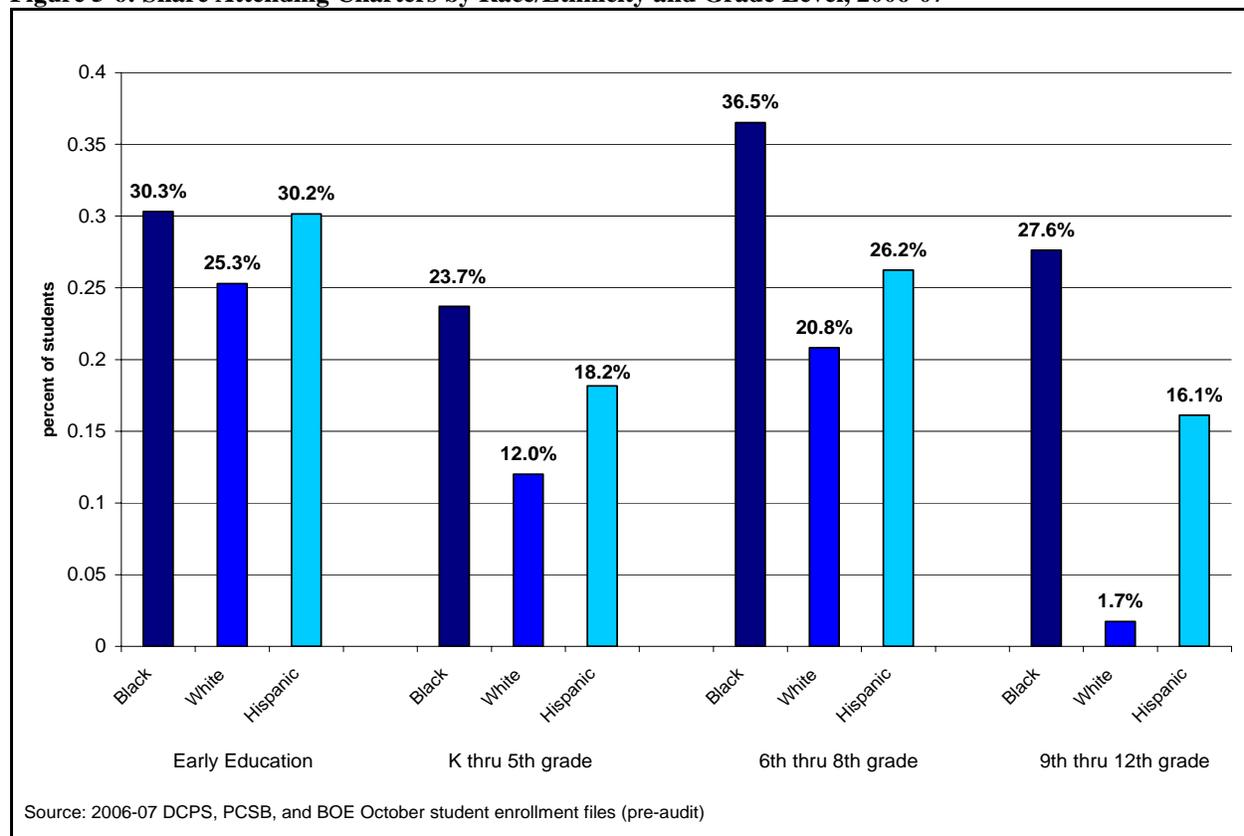
Figure 5-4: Share of Public School Students Attending Charter Schools by Grade Range, 2006-07

The share of public school students attending charters is substantially higher among African Americans and Latinos than among whites, as illustrated in Figure 5.5. Only 3,533 of the 69,800 city's public school students are white, and only 14 percent of these white students attended charters in 2006-07 (for a total of only 479 white charter school students).⁴⁵ In contrast, 28 percent of black students and 24 percent of Hispanic students attended charters (16,184 black charter students and 1,675 Hispanic charter students). Compared to the 2005-06 school year, the share of students attending charters increased among both blacks and whites, while declining among Hispanics. Specifically, the share of black students attending charter schools rose from 24 to 28 percent and the share of whites climbed from 10 percent to 14 percent, but the share of Latinos attending charter schools dropped from 29 percent to 24 percent.

⁴⁵ Our analysis is based on a subset of the student-level enrollment files (pre-audit). We exclude those students over age 22, wards of the state, private tuition recipients, and students in custody totaling 69,601 students in 2006-07. This number is different from OSSE's audited 2006-07 enrollment number of 72,378 students.

Figure 5-5: Share Attending Public Charter Schools by Race, 2006-07

Differences between racial groups vary somewhat by grade level, although white students at every grade level are substantially less likely than either blacks or Hispanics to attend charter schools (see Figure 5.6). The share of black students attending charters ranges from a low of 24 percent at the elementary level to a high of 37 percent at the middle school level. The share of Latino students attending charters ranges from 16 percent at the high school level to 30 percent for early education, although the share of Latino middle-school students attending charters is also quite high (26 percent). Finally, the share of white students attending charters ranges from almost zero at the high school level to 21 percent at the middle-school level and 25 percent for early education.

Figure 5-6: Share Attending Charters by Race/Ethnicity and Grade Level, 2006-07

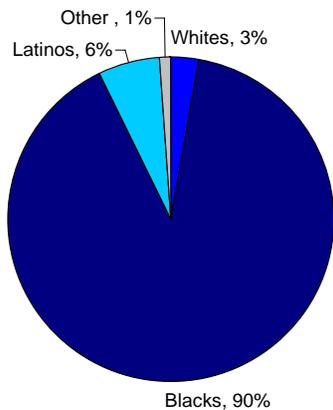
As discussed earlier in this report, the District's neighborhoods remain quite highly segregated on the basis of race, with the majority of black students living in majority-black neighborhoods in Wards 5, 7, and 8, while most white students live in Ward 3 and most Hispanic students live in Wards 1 and 4. To a large extent, the composition of individual schools reflects this pattern of residential segregation. As chapter IV discussed, most DCPS and charter schools serve predominantly black student populations, while a small number are majority white or Hispanic. Here we focus not on the racial and ethnic composition of individual schools, but on the experience of the average student from each racial and ethnic group. Specifically, we describe the extent to which the average black, Hispanic, or white student is exposed to students of the same or different racial and ethnic groups at school.⁴⁶

The average black student in the District of Columbia attends a school that is predominantly black (see Figure 5.7). In contrast, the average white student attends a school that is more diverse, with white, black, Latino, and other students. And the average Latino student attends a school that is majority minority – with roughly equal shares of black and Latino students, but relatively few whites. More specifically, 90 percent of school-mates for the average black student are also black; while for the average white student, 40 percent of school-mates are white, 40 percent are black and 20 percent are Latino or other; and for the average Latino student, 37 percent of school-mates are Latino, 52 percent are black and 11 percent are white or other.

⁴⁶ This approach to measuring patterns of segregation is called an exposure index. It has been shown to be effective for describing how segregation is experienced, particularly in multi-ethnic contexts. See Appendix A for methodological description.

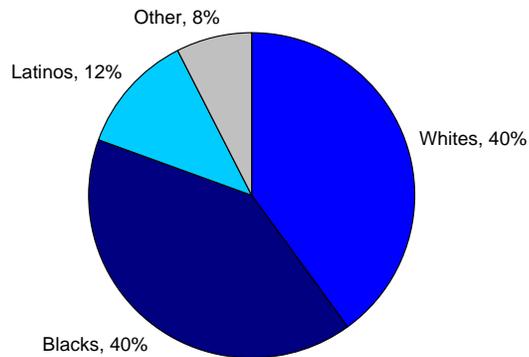
Figure 5-7: Racial Exposure Charts

5.7(a) Composition of School Attended by Average Black Student



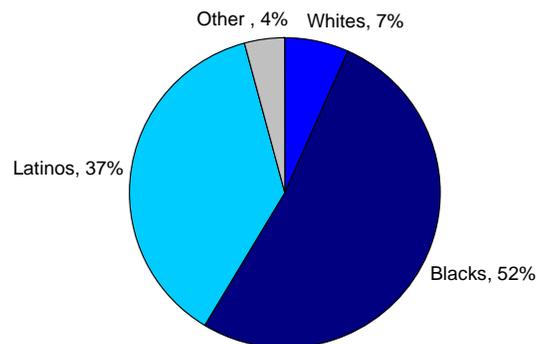
Source: 2006-07 DCPS, PCSB, and BOE October student enrollment files (pre-audit)

5.7(b) Composition of School Attended by Average White Student



Source: 2006-07 DCPS, PCSB, and BOE October student enrollment files (pre-audit)

5.7(c) Composition of School Attended by Average Latino Student



Source: 2006-07 DCPS, PCSB, and BOE October student enrollment files (pre-audit)

Interestingly, these average exposure patterns are very similar for DCPS and public charter students. Overall, blacks account for a larger share of public charter students than DCPS students, and this translates into greater exposure to black school-mates for all charter students, regardless of their race or ethnicity. However, in both DCPS and public charter schools, the average black student is exposed to predominantly black school-mates, while the average white student is exposed to a substantial number of white and black school-mates (but few Latinos) and the average Latino is exposed to a substantial number of Latino and black school-mates (but few whites).

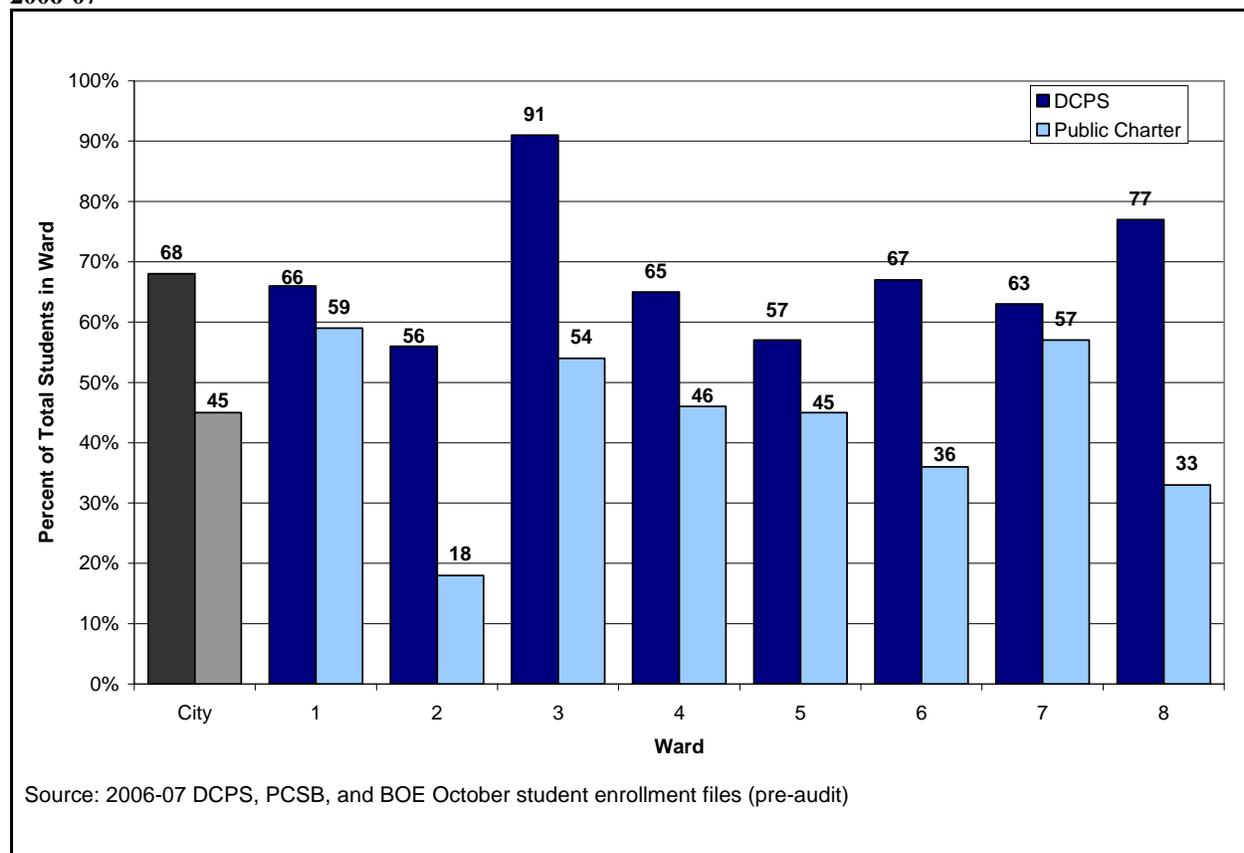
Patterns of school exposure differ more dramatically by grade level. For black students, the picture remains essentially the same: at every level school-mates are overwhelmingly black. But for white and Latino students, the share of same-race school-mates is dramatically higher in the early grades and quite low by high school. This is particularly evident for students attending DCPS schools, in part because DCPS elementary schools primarily serve students in their immediate neighborhoods, while both charter schools and middle- and high-schools draw from larger geographic areas.⁴⁷ To illustrate, in DCPS schools the share of school-mates who are white drops from 62 percent for the average white child in pre-school or pre-kindergarten to only 22 percent for the average white high school student. In public charter schools, the share of school-mates who are white is lower at every grade level, but still declines from 34 percent for the average white child in pre-school or kindergarten to only 1 percent for the average white high school student. This reflects the significant decline in white public school students as they progress up the grade pipeline, as well as the small share of those white students attending charter high schools – fewer than 10 students in 2006-07; virtually all of the 522 white public high-school students in the District attend DCPS schools.

This next section describes how far public school students traveled between home and school in 2006-07. There are a variety of factors that may influence whether a student chooses to attend a school near or far from their home. Such factors include DCPS and public charter admittance policies, knowledge of available school options, the location of DCPS and public charter schools (including proximity to parents' place of work), school quality (including test scores and facility condition), neighborhood change, etc. These factors will be explored in Phases Two and Three.

DCPS students are much more likely than charter school students to attend a school that is located in the same ward in which they live. Specifically, about two thirds of DCPS students (68 percent) attended a school in their own ward, compared to under half of charter students (45 percent). The shares of students attending school in the ward where they live varies quite substantially by ward, although DCPS students from every ward are more likely than charter students to attend school in the same ward. (This is not surprising since DCPS admittance policies favor children attending schools in their ward, while public charter admittance policies require a city-wide lottery for waitlisted students.) As shown in Figure 5.8, the share of DCPS students attending school in the ward where they live ranges from lows of 56 percent and 57 percent in Wards 2 and 5, respectively, to a high of 91 percent in Ward 3. The share of charter students attending school in the ward where they live ranges from a low of 18 percent in Ward 2 to highs of 57 and 59 percent in Wards 7 and 1, respectively.

⁴⁷ Analysis planned for the next phase of this study will also explore the patterns of mobility between schools and school types by race/ethnicity and grade level.

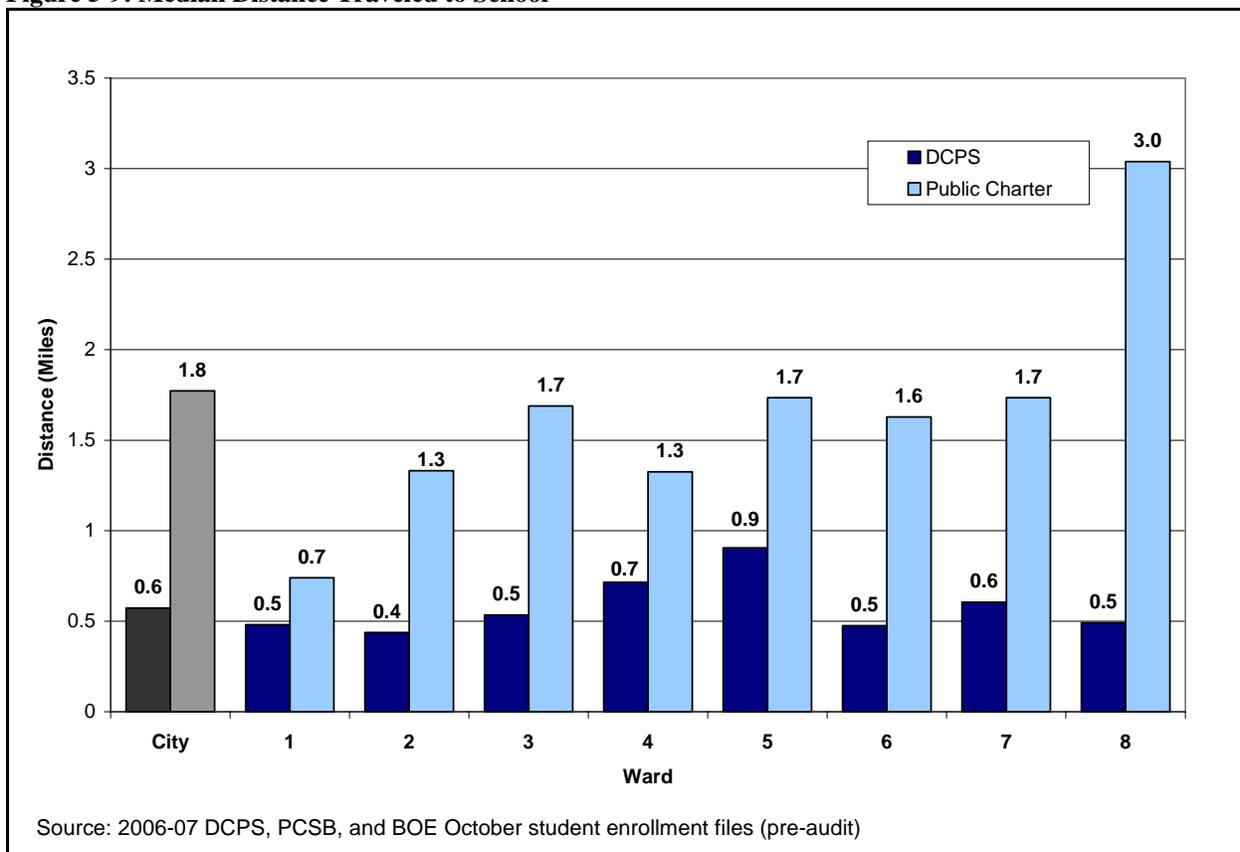
Figure 5-8: Share of Public School Students who Reside & Attend School in Same Ward by School Type, 2006-07



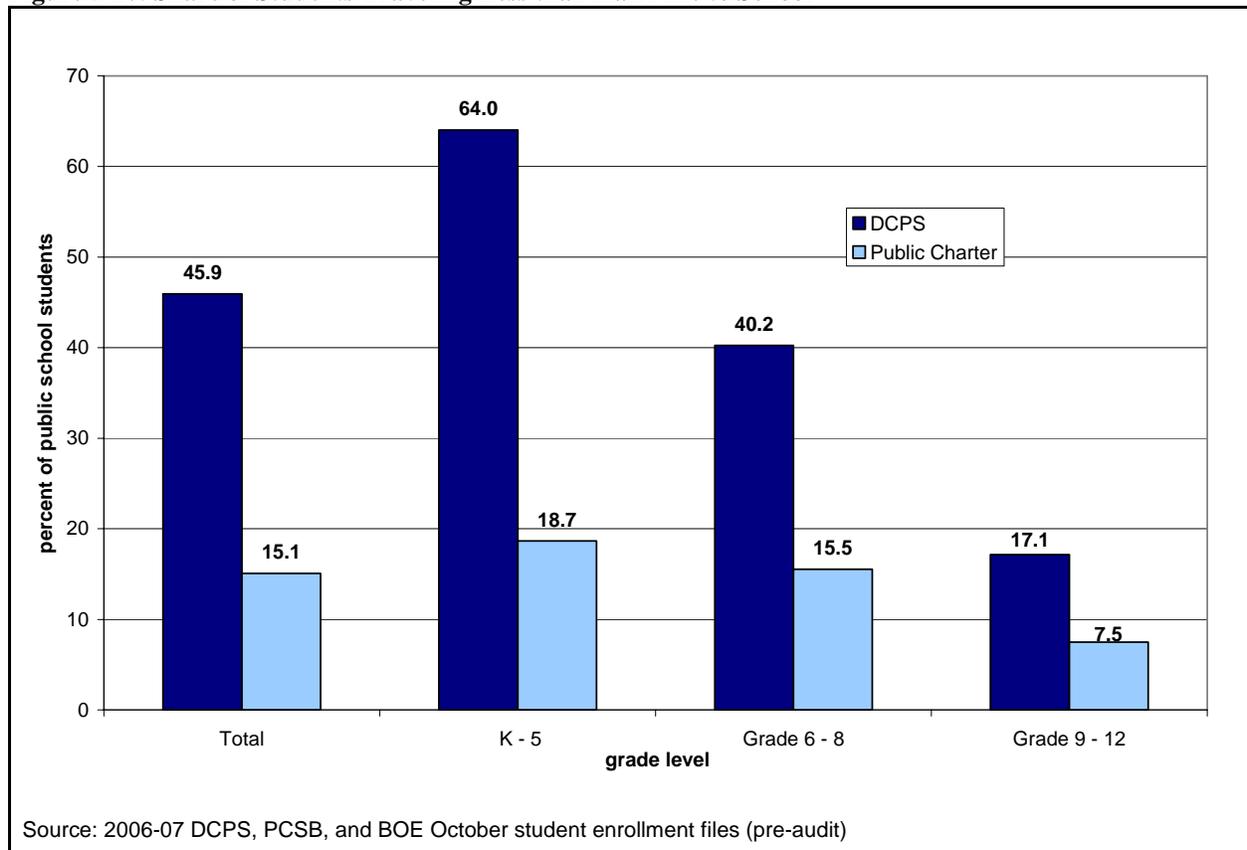
Not surprisingly, therefore, charter school students typically travel farther from home to school than DCPS students (see Figure 5.9).⁴⁸ Among DCPS students in the 2006-07 school year, the median distance traveled was 0.57 miles, while the median for public charter students was about three times that distance (1.77 miles).⁴⁹ The average distance between home and school varies by ward, but charter school students from every ward travel farther to school than their DCPS counterparts. The median distance traveled by DCPS students is below one mile in every ward, while the median distance traveled by charter students varies much more widely – from a low of 0.7 miles (among charter students living in Ward 1) to a high of 3.0 miles (among charter students living in Ward 8). The dramatic difference between Wards 1 and 8 reflect both the geography of the District and the wide variation in the number of charter schools located in these two wards (discussed earlier in Chapter IV).

⁴⁸ The distance traveled between a student's home and school was measured "as the crow flies" or the most direct route ignoring transportation patterns, geographical boundaries, etc. The number of public school students included in the distance analysis was 67,197 students. It was 2,630 students less than our general enrollment population (69,827) because we removed all students whose home address was listed as "DCPS headquarters" or 825 N. Capitol Street, NE, or who lived outside the District.

⁴⁹ The median distances traveled in 2006-07 decreased very slightly from the medians in 2005-06. Specifically, median distances in 2005-06 were .59 miles for DCPS students and 1.84 miles for public charter students.

Figure 5-9: Median Distance Traveled to School

The share of students who live within easy walking distance of their schools (less than half a mile) is much greater among DCPS students than among charter students. Only 15 percent of all charter students travel less than half a mile to attend school compared to 46 percent of all DCPS students. As shown in Figure 5.10, the share of students attending schools within a half mile of their homes is highest among younger children regardless of school type. But at every grade level, the difference between DCPS students and charter students is substantial. The biggest gap occurs among students in kindergarten through 5th grade, with two thirds of DCPS students (64 percent) attending schools within a half mile of their homes compared to less than one in five charter students. Even among high school students, however, there is a substantial difference, with 17 percent of DCPS high-school students attending a school within a half mile of home, compared to only 8 percent of charter students.

Figure 5-10: Share of Students Traveling Less than Half Mile to School

Special Populations

There are several groups of students that receive more detailed attention in the following section. While special education students represent just over 15 percent of the total student population, the cost of educating these students is disproportionate to their numbers. This is primarily the result of expensive tuition payments and transportation for students being educated in non-public schools. These high costs place spending pressures on the rest of the public school system, making it relevant to look at the enrollment choices of special education students.

The city's high drop-out rate makes it important to analyze the alternative education students in more depth. Understanding the choices that some students are making in efforts to complete high schools or obtain their GED may indicate ways the city can improve its offerings to this high-risk population.

Special Education Students

Many of the same patterns of enrollment observed in the general student population also hold true for special education students, although some important differences exist. The trends described below are based on analysis of student-level enrollment data obtained from DCPS and the Public Charter School Board, as well as student-level transportation data obtained from the DCPS Division of Transportation (DOT). The DCPS and PCSB data are from the city's official

October enrollment count, while the DOT data is from an October 2006 download of their database.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), reauthorized in 2004, guarantees a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students with disabilities. FAPE is defined as including special education and related services, provided at no cost to parents, in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP). The IEP, which describes the specific educational and other services required to meet each disabled student's needs, forms the basis for each disabled student's entitlement to an individualized and free appropriate education.

In the District, a child may be identified by either a parent or teacher as a possible candidate for special education services. Under current practice, many DCPS schools refer students to assessment as the first option in addressing the children's needs. Once a referral takes place, the student is evaluated and an IEP is developed if deemed necessary. After eligibility for services is determined, the child may be recommended for a program anywhere in the city that meets his/her needs. Federal law requires children be placed in the least-restrictive appropriate environment. Parents may request a due process hearing as result of a complaint related to initiation or change in child's special education identification, evaluation, or educational placement.

Public special education services in the District are delivered in a variety of school settings. DCPS offers local school-based programs – educational services for students with mild to moderate disabilities, often following an inclusion model and provided by the teams of special education teachers and related service providers – at each neighborhood school. City-wide cluster programs are specialized classrooms in general education schools that offer educational services for children with similar disabilities, such as emotional disabilities, hearing impairment, or autism. DCPS also offers separate special education programs for students with severe disabilities who require specialized instruction in a restrictive environment.⁵⁰ All charter schools offer local school-based programs, and several charter schools offer programs specifically targeted for a special education population. In this analysis, students who receive special education services through school-based or city-wide cluster programs are considered to be at “local” schools.

If a child's needs cannot be met by existing DCPS programs, he/she may be assigned – often through a settlement agreement or hearing officer decision – to a non-public program. Tuition for these private placements is paid by DCPS,⁵¹ and students are monitored by DCPS specialists in the Office of Special Education's Nonpublic Unit. Although charter schools are open to all students, DCPS cannot assign students to a special education charter school.

In 2006-07, there were 10,857 public special education students in the District⁵². This represents just over 15 percent of all public school students. In other high-poverty urban school districts,

⁵⁰ See Appendix C for a list of all DCPS and charter separate schools.

⁵¹ DCPS uses state funds to pay for the private placements.

⁵² This number differs from the 11,435 reported in OSSE's State of Education report. The State of Education report uses OSSE's audited enrollment count for 2006-07, while this report uses student-level files from the October enrollment count (pre-audit). The differences are primarily a result of data entry error and under-identification of special education students (especially for those students receiving tuition grants for private special education schools) in the DC STARS system and Board of Education records.

the percentage of special education enrollment ranges between 10 percent and 15 percent of the student population, putting the District on the high end.⁵³ The range of special education services accessed by these students varies in time and intensity from a few hours of instruction each week at a student's neighborhood school to full-time enrollment in a specialized program or separate special education school.

Of the 10,857 public special education students in 2006-07, 8,892 students (82 percent) were enrolled in DCPS or charter schools. The majority of these students (7,092 students) attended a DCPS school, and almost all of them were enrolled in a local traditional elementary, middle/junior high, or senior high.⁵⁴ Just over 10% of DCPS students (829 students, 11.7 percent) were enrolled in separate special education schools. 1,965 students – 18 percent of the total special education population – were enrolled in non-public programs (day and residential) with their tuition paid by DCPS.⁵⁵

Table 5-1: Special Education Students by Program Type, 2006-07

Special Education Students by Program Type, 2006-07									
	DCPS								
	Elementary	Middle/ Jr High	Senior High	Separate Program	<i>DCPS Total</i>		Public Charter	Non- Public	Total
# of students	3,265	1,259	1,739	829	7,092		1,800	1,965	10,857
%	30.1	11.6	16.0	7.6	65.3		16.6	18.1	100

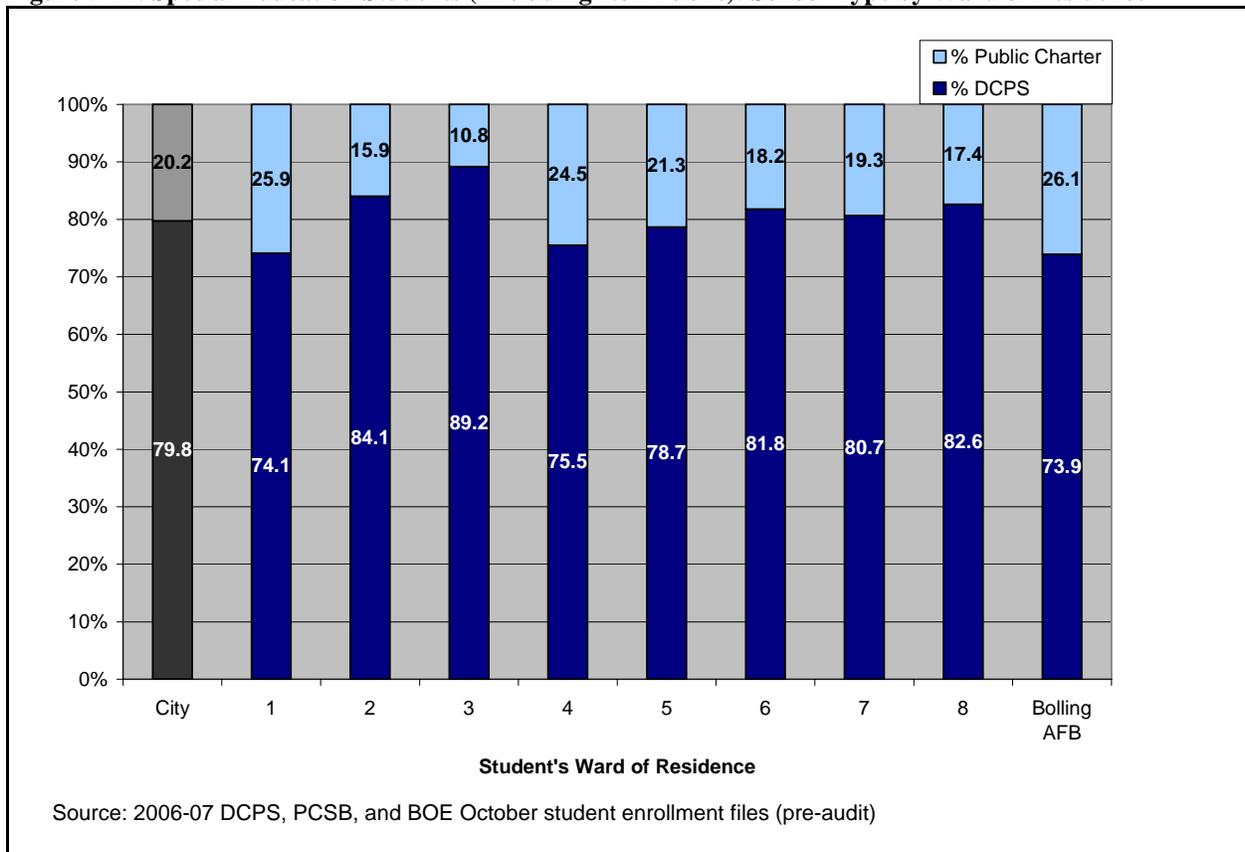
The percentage of special education students enrolled in charter schools is slightly lower than in the general student population, with 20 percent of special education students enrolled in charters, compared with over 26 percent city-wide in the general student population. Special education students make up 14 percent of the total DCPS population, while only 10 percent of charter school students receive special education services.

As with the general student population, the share of charter special education students varies depending on where the student lives (see Figure 5.11). The share of special education students attending charters is lowest in Wards 2 (15.9 percent) and 3 (10.8 percent), mirroring the trend of charter enrollment in the general student body. Ward 1 has the highest share of public special education students attending a charter school (25.9 percent), followed by Ward 4 (24.5 percent).

⁵³ Special education students as % of total enrollment in other high-poverty urban districts: Baltimore (15.4%), Chicago (10.8%), Los Angeles (10.5%); American Institutes for Research, *Special Education Financing Study for the District of Columbia*, October 2007.

⁵⁴ Almost half of the DCPS special education students attended local elementary schools (3,265 students, 46 percent).

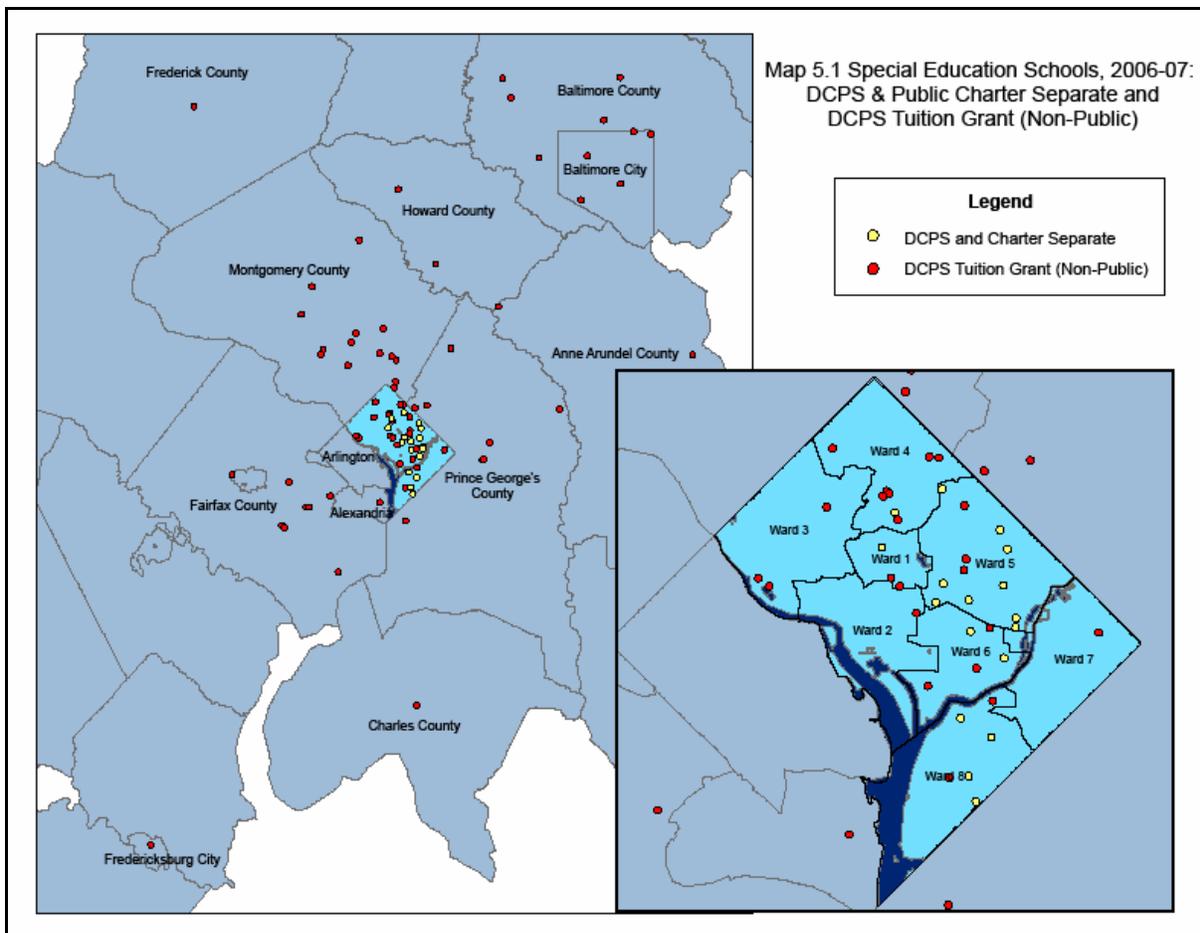
⁵⁵ Unless specifically noted, all subsequent discussion of the public special education students excludes those students who receive DCPS tuition to attend a non-public school.

Figure 5-11: Special Education Students (Excluding Non-Public): School Type by Ward of Residence

Special education students – in both DCPS and charter schools – are not distributed evenly throughout the city. Similar to their high numbers in the general public student population, special education students are concentrated east of the River. Special education students in Wards 7 and 8 account for almost half (48.9 percent) of the city’s public special education population, a figure slightly higher than the 44.1 percent of all the city’s public school students who live in those wards.

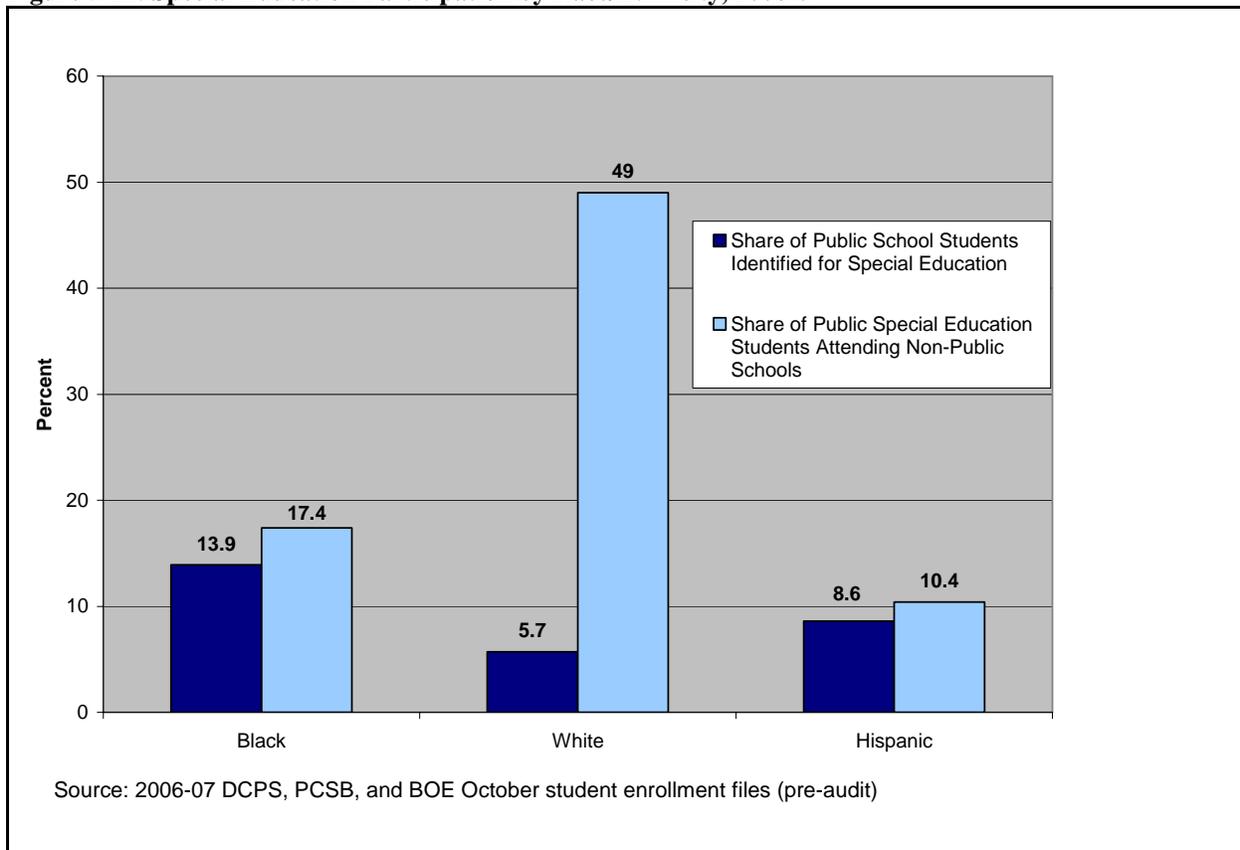
More unusual patterns occur in the enrollment of public special education students in non-public schools. Ward-by-ward comparisons reveal that almost half (45.5 percent) of all public special education students in Ward 3 attend non-public schools, compared with only 15 to 20 percent of special education students attending non-public schools in the other seven wards. This discrepancy may be a result of parents’ greater access to information about non-public school options, or greater ease in navigating the administrative and legal channels necessary to obtain such placements. Proximity to high-quality private special education schools may also be a factor in this high non-public participation rate.

Map 5.1 (below) displays the location of DCPS and public charter separate education schools, as well as all special education schools attended by children with DCPS private tuition grants.



Map 5-1: Special Education Schools, 2006-07

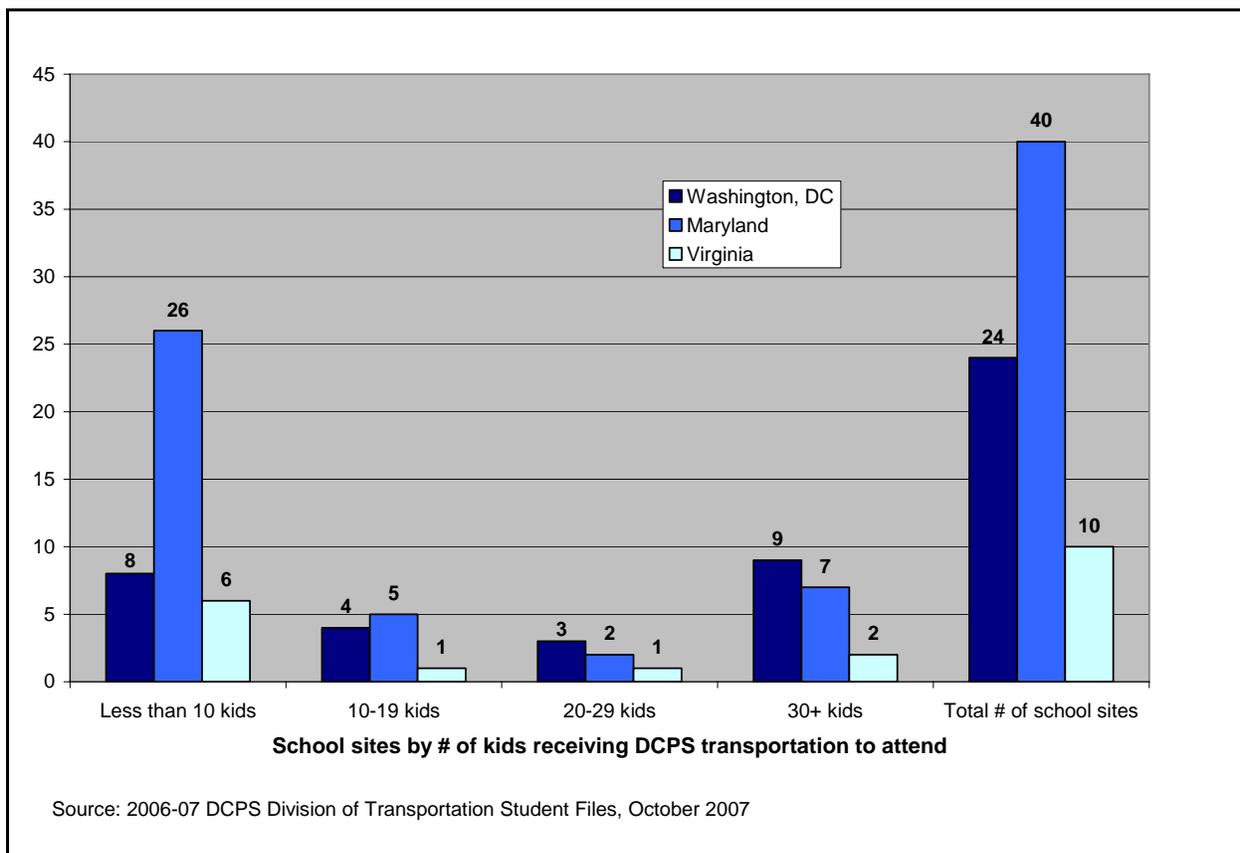
There are significant racial disparities in the special education population. A higher share of black public school students receives special education services than white or Hispanic public school students. Close to 14 percent of black students in DCPS and charter schools are designated to receive special education, compared to 6 percent of white students and 9 percent of Hispanic students. Black students make up a larger share of the public special education population (90.4 percent) than of the general student population (82.9 percent), while the share of white special education students (2.3 percent) is less than half of the share of white students in the general population (5.1 percent), and the share of Hispanic special education students is also lower (6.9 percent) than their share of the general student population (10.2 percent). One exception to this pattern is the proportionally higher share of white students in DCPS-paid non-public schools. Nearly 10 percent of the publicly-supported private special education population is white, close to five times the share of white students in the public special education population. Put differently, almost half of all white special education students receiving public support attend non-public schools, compared with 17 percent of all black special education students and 10 percent of all Hispanic special education students (see Figure 5.12). Unlike patterns in the general student population, white special education students have the highest participation in charter schools (24.4 percent), greater than both Hispanic students (22.1 percent) and black students (19.9 percent).

Figure 5-12: Special Education Participation by Race/Ethnicity, 2006-07

Approximately 4,000 students receive daily school bus transportation to special education programs in the District and surrounding jurisdictions.⁵⁶ These students are transported to DCPS neighborhood and city-wide schools, charter schools, and non-public programs. Nearly 1,600 students receive daily transportation to non-public programs in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Just over half these students (807 students) travel to schools within DC, with almost half again (371 students) attending one of two schools - High Roads Academy or Rock Creek Academy. Another 84 students attend Kingsbury Day School. Of those students traveling to Virginia (231 total), over 60 percent attend a single school, Accotink Academy, which is located almost 20 miles outside the District in Springfield, VA. By contrast, 26 of the 40 non-public special education schools attended by DCPS-supported students in Maryland receive 10 or less students (see Figure 5.13).

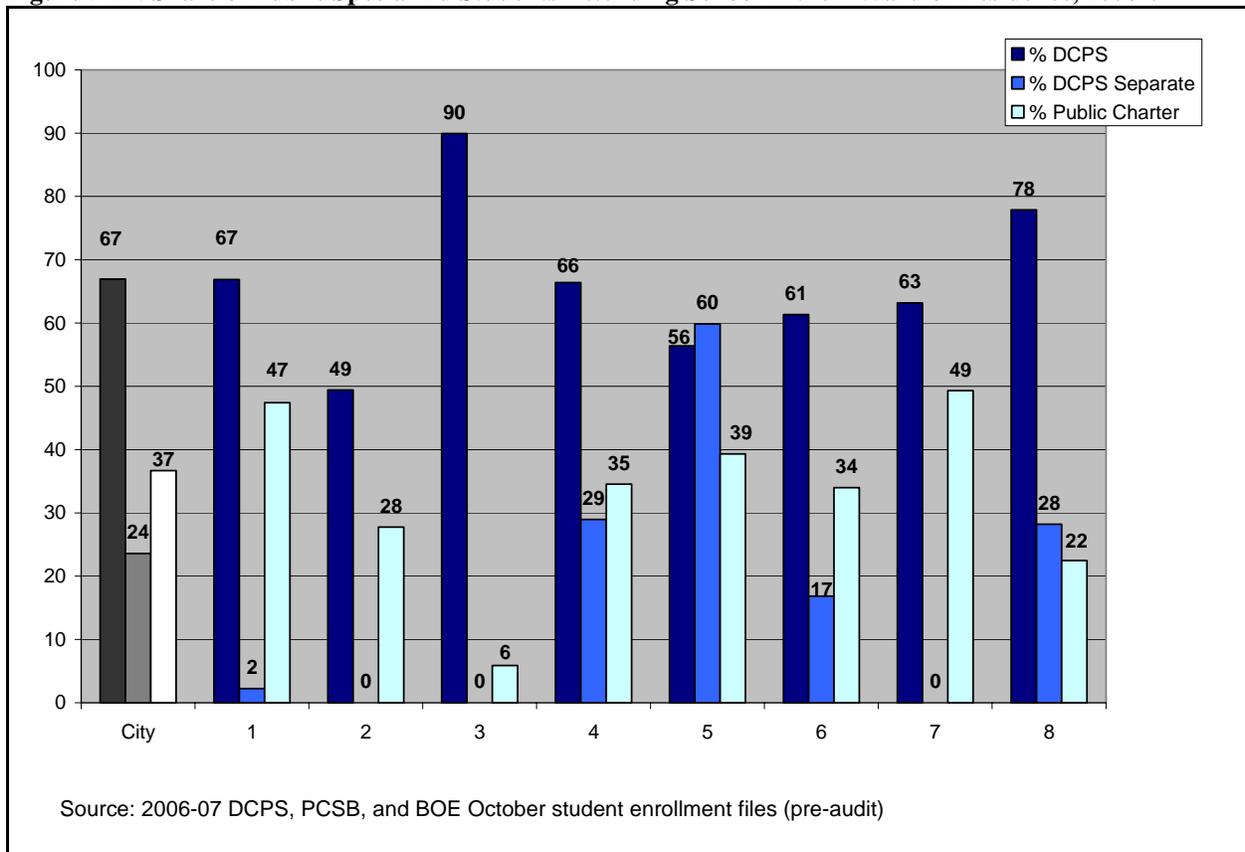
⁵⁶ According to DCPS Transportation Administrator David Gilmore, the number of special education students receiving transportation fluctuates somewhat throughout the year. For the past several years, the number has fluctuated between 3,800 and 4,200 students.

Figure 5-13: Special Ed Students Receiving Transportation: Non-Public Schools Attended by School Location, 2006-07



The following paragraphs describe how far public special education students traveled between home and school in 2006-07. As noted in the general enrollment section, there are a variety of factors that may influence whether a student chooses to attend a school near or far from their home, including DCPS and public charter admittance policies, the supply (or location) of DCPS and public charter schools, school quality, and neighborhood characteristics, and these factors may vary depending on student characteristics. These factors will be explored in Phase Two.

As Figure 5.14 shows, special education students attending local DCPS schools are most likely to live and attend school in the same ward. Nearly 90 percent of local DCPS special education students who live in Ward 3 also attend school there, followed by almost 80 percent of DCPS special education students who live and attend school in Ward 8.

Figure 5-14: Share of Public Special Ed Students Attending School in their Ward of Residence, 2006-07

Students attending DCPS separate special education schools are least likely to attend school in their ward. Only in Wards 4, 5 and 8 do more than 25 percent of separate school special education students live and attend school in the same ward. None of the special education students who live in Wards 2, 3, or 7 attend separate schools in their home ward. These patterns reflect the geographic distribution of such schools in the District. Nearly half (8) of the 15 DCPS separate special education program sites are located in Ward 5, with another one-quarter (4) located in Ward 8. There are no separate programs in Wards 2, 3, or 7.⁵⁷ Phase Three will examine whether there are benefits to either concentrating or decentralizing resources such as specialized programs, including whether school location is less important than quality of services for special education students who have access to DCPS-provided transportation. Special education students attending charter schools are most likely to live and attend school in the same ward in Wards 1 (47.4 percent) and 7 (49.3 percent).

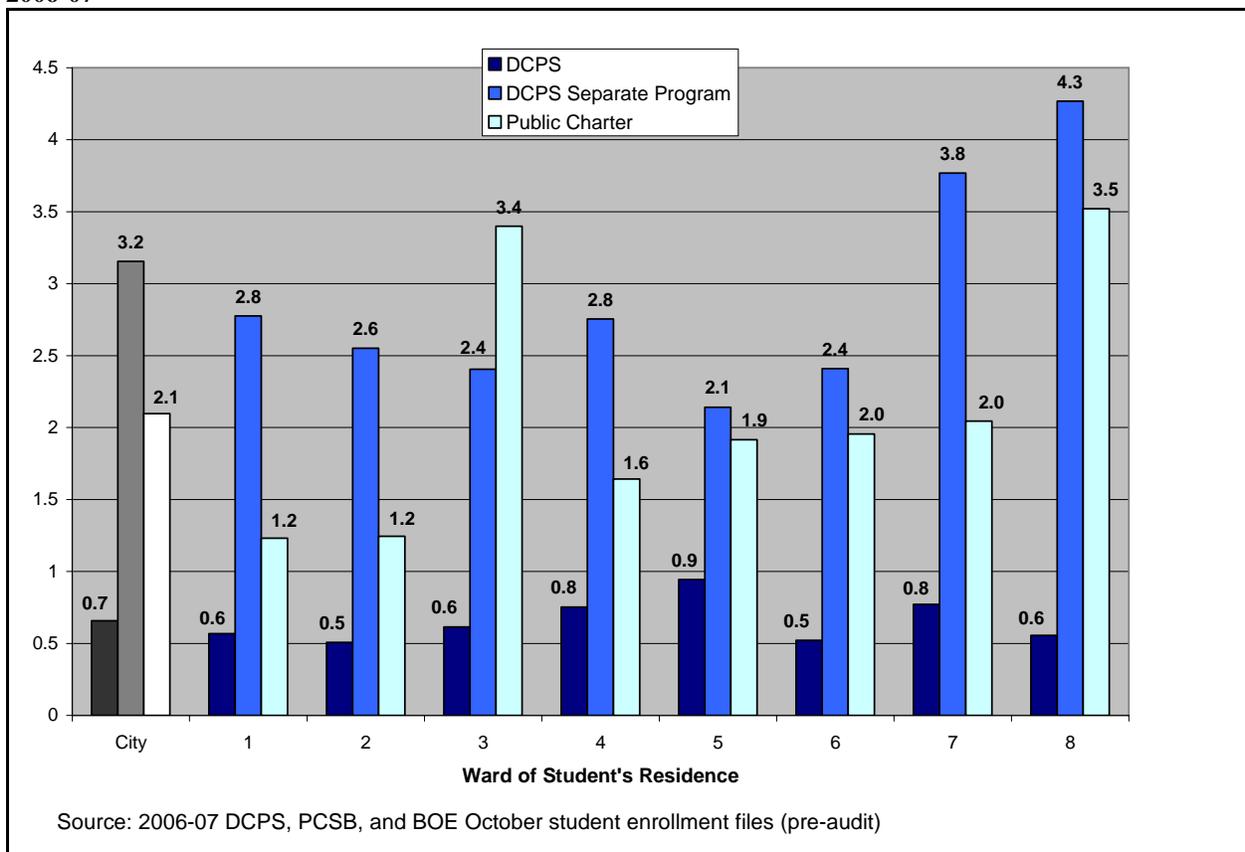
Consistent with these enrollment and residential patterns, special education students attending DCPS neighborhood schools are much more likely than special education charter students to attend schools that are close to their home. The median city-wide distance traveled by special

⁵⁷ The following schools are considered DCPS separate special education programs in this analysis: Browne Center (Ward 5), DC Alternative Learning Academy NW (Ward 1), DC ALA NE Freshman & Senior (Ward 5), DC ALA SE (Ward 8), Hamilton Center (Ward 5), Jackie Robinson School (Ward 8), Mamie D. Lee (Ward 5), MC Terrell Center (Ward 8), Moten Center (Ward 8), Prospect Learning Center (Ward 6), Sharpe Health (Ward 4), Spingarn Center (Ward 5), Taft Center (Ward 5), Washington Center (Ward 5). City Lights (Ward 5) and St. Coletta's (Ward 6) are the charter separate special education programs.

education students to a neighborhood DCPS school is 0.66 miles, compared with a median distance of 2.10 miles for charters, and 3.15 miles for DCPS separate programs. The share of students attending schools within a half mile of their homes is highest among the youngest children, but at every grade level, the difference between DCPS special education students and charter special education students is substantial. In grades K-5, almost 60 percent of DCPS special education students attend schools within a half mile of their home, compared to only 15 percent of charter special education students.

The median distance between home and school varies by ward, but charter school and separate DCPS special education students from every ward travel farther to school than their special education counterparts at neighborhood DCPS schools (see Figure 5.15). The median distance traveled by DCPS students to neighborhood special education programs ranges from lows of just over one-half mile (0.51 and 0.52, respectively in Wards 2 and 6) to a high of just under 1 mile (0.94 in Ward 4). Comparatively, median distance to school for charter special education students ranges from a low of over a mile (1.23 in Ward 1) to a high of 3.54 miles (in Ward 8). For students attending DCPS separate special education programs, the lowest median distance is still over 2 miles (2.14 in Ward 5) and the highest median is over 4 miles (4.27 in Ward 8).

Figure 5-15: Special Education Students Median Distance (Miles) Traveled to School by Ward of Residence, 2006-07



Students Attending Alternative and Adult Education Schools

Slightly more than 3,700 public school students (3,742), or 5 percent of all public school students, attended an *alternative* or *adult education* school in the 2006-07 school year. In this

section of the report, we use a broad definition of alternative education – that is, those schools and programs geared towards students at risk of education failure – similar to the National Center for Education Statistics’s (NCES) definition. We also included schools and programs geared towards adult education or for those adult students who had previously dropped out of high school and not received a high school or GED equivalency. The 15 DCPS and public charter alternative and adult education schools included in this analysis primarily enroll students with behavior problems, students at risk of not graduating from or already dropped out of a traditional high school, or adults who wish to finish their high school education.⁵⁸ Therefore, the data in this section include students of all ages.⁵⁹ However, this analysis does not include students who participated in in-school suspension programs at their local high schools, were wards of the state (foster children), private tuition recipients (voucher students), or students who were being detained in the DC Jail, DC Detention Facility, or other facilities for adjudicated youth (these students are included in a separate analysis below).

The District offers relatively few public alternative education schools or programs. DCPS offers STAY (Schools to Aid Youth) at three senior high schools (Ballou Senior High, Spingarn Senior High, and Roosevelt Senior High) enrolling a total of 1,231 students in 2006-07. STAY classes are typically held at night and are intended for students over age 16 who have dropped out of school and need a school environment different from a traditional high school program. Students can graduate with a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate from a STAY school. Luke Moore Academy is another DCPS alternative senior high school for students aged 16 to 23 who transferred from another school or who had previously dropped out. Luke Moore offers counseling and mentoring services, and students can graduate with a high school degree or GED. In 2006-07, 383 students were enrolled at Luke Moore. DCPS also offers CHOICE (Choosing Higher Options for Individually Centered Education) Academy at two school campuses, Taft and Douglas. CHOICE is a learning site for students who have been suspended for at least 25 days or expelled from a DCPS school. CHOICE provides students with academic support and behavior intervention, and students are required to attend CHOICE until their suspension time is completed and then they return to their previous school. In 2006-07, 26 students were enrolled at CHOICE.

Six public charter schools offer adult education programs. The Booker T. Washington PCS trains its students in the construction and building trades using hands-on, real experience learning. Booker T. Washington’s student body consists of mainly adults, high school dropouts, and the welfare-to-work population, and in 2006-07 the school enrolled 218 students. The Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School offers basic adult education geared to international students, including English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, GED classes, and citizenship training; workforce development classes; and supportive services such as bilingual counseling, college preparation, and scholarships. In 2006-07, the Carlos Rosario school enrolled 1,389 students at multiple campuses, making it the largest of the city’s alternative schools. Education Strengthens Families (ESF) Public Charter School offers English language instruction, computer literacy, and other adult classes, as well as pre-school classes for the adult student’s children aged 3 to 4.

⁵⁸ The 15 schools and campuses included in this analysis are Ballou STAY, Booker T. Washington PCS (day and evening), CHOICE Academy @ Taft, CHOICE Academy @ Douglas, Carlos Rosario PCS, ESF Bancroft, ESF Mary Center, LAYC, Luke C. Moore, Maya Angelou (Evans), Maya Angelou (Shaw), Next Step PCS, Roosevelt STAY, and Spingarn STAY.

⁵⁹ Fifty-two percent (or 1,944) of the alternative education students were over the age of 22.

Parents and children can attend classes simultaneously. ESF enrolled 125 students in 2006-07 at two campuses. The Latin American Youth Center's YouthBuild Public Charter School enrolls students between the ages of 16 and 24 who had previously dropped out of high school. In 2006-07, 65 students attended YouthBuild. YouthBuild's curriculum combines academics with vocational training, workforce skill building, and community service to help students prepare for college or the workplace. The Next Step/El Proximo Paso PCS is geared towards teen parents and youth who have dropped out of school or recently immigrated to the District. It provides comprehensive instruction as well as English as a Second Language classes, case management, and counseling. In 2006-07, Next Step enrolled 79 students. The Maya Angelou PCS, operating on two campuses, targets students who have not succeeded in traditional schools. The two campuses are open year round and students can train in either the catering or technology fields. In 2006-07, 447 students were enrolled on the two campuses.

The vast majority of students attending alternative education schools in the 2006-07 school year were adults over the age of 22. Approximately half (1,944) were 23 years old or older. More than half of the alternative education students attended public charter schools (58 percent) and the remaining students attended DCPS schools (42 percent). This is in stark contrast to the overall public school population, where 74 percent of all public school students attended a DCPS school and 26 percent attended a public charter school. The high share of alternative education students attending public charters reflects the fact that a little more than one-third of all alternative education students in the District attended Carlos Rosario, a public charter school.

A greater share of alternative education students are Hispanic compared to the overall public school population. Little more than one-third of the alternative education students (38 percent) in school year 2006-07 were Hispanic compared to only 10 percent of the overall student population. Little more than half of the alternative education students were African American (59 percent) in SY2006-07, significantly less than the 83 percent of African American students in the total public school population.

Black alternative education students were more likely to attend DCPS schools, while Hispanic alternative education students were more likely to attend public charter schools. Six out of 10 African American alternative education students attended DCPS schools and almost 9 out of 10 Hispanic students attended public charter alternative education schools. While the number of white students attending alternative education students was very small (only 23 students), almost all of these students went to public charter schools.

Roughly two-thirds of all the alternative education students lived in Wards 1, 4, 7, and 8 during the 2006-07 school year (see Figure 5.16). Ward 1 was home to the greatest number of alternative education students (855 students), and most of these students were Hispanic (71 percent or 610 students). The majority of Ward 1 alternative education students (66 percent) attended Carlos Rosario public charter school. Approximately one-fifth of alternative education students (or 747 students) lived in Ward 4. Again, most of these students were Hispanic (64 percent or 475 students) and a little more than half (57 percent) attended Carlos Rosario public charter, while one-fifth attended Roosevelt STAY. Finally, 16 percent (or 580 alternative education students) lived in Ward 8. Almost all of these students were African American and two-thirds (68 percent) attended STAY at Ballou Senior High School.

Figure 5-16: Alternative Education Students by Race/Ethnicity & Ward, 2006-07

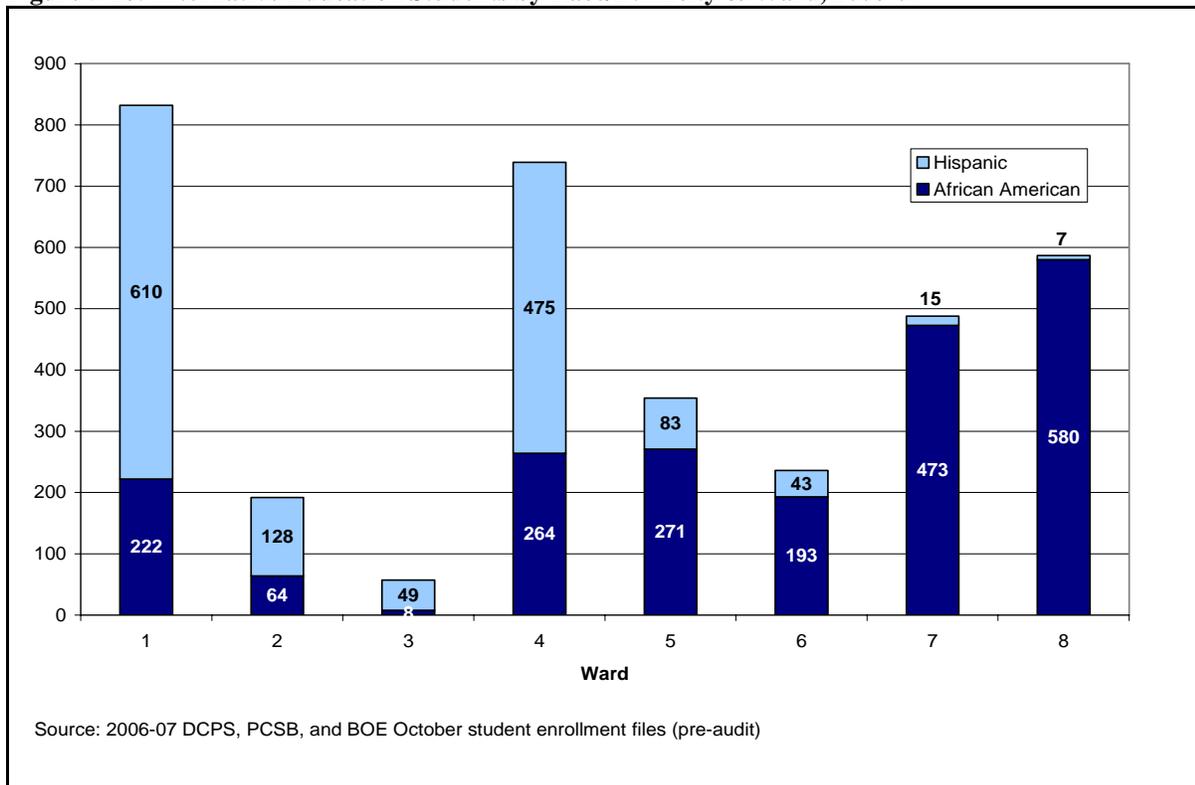
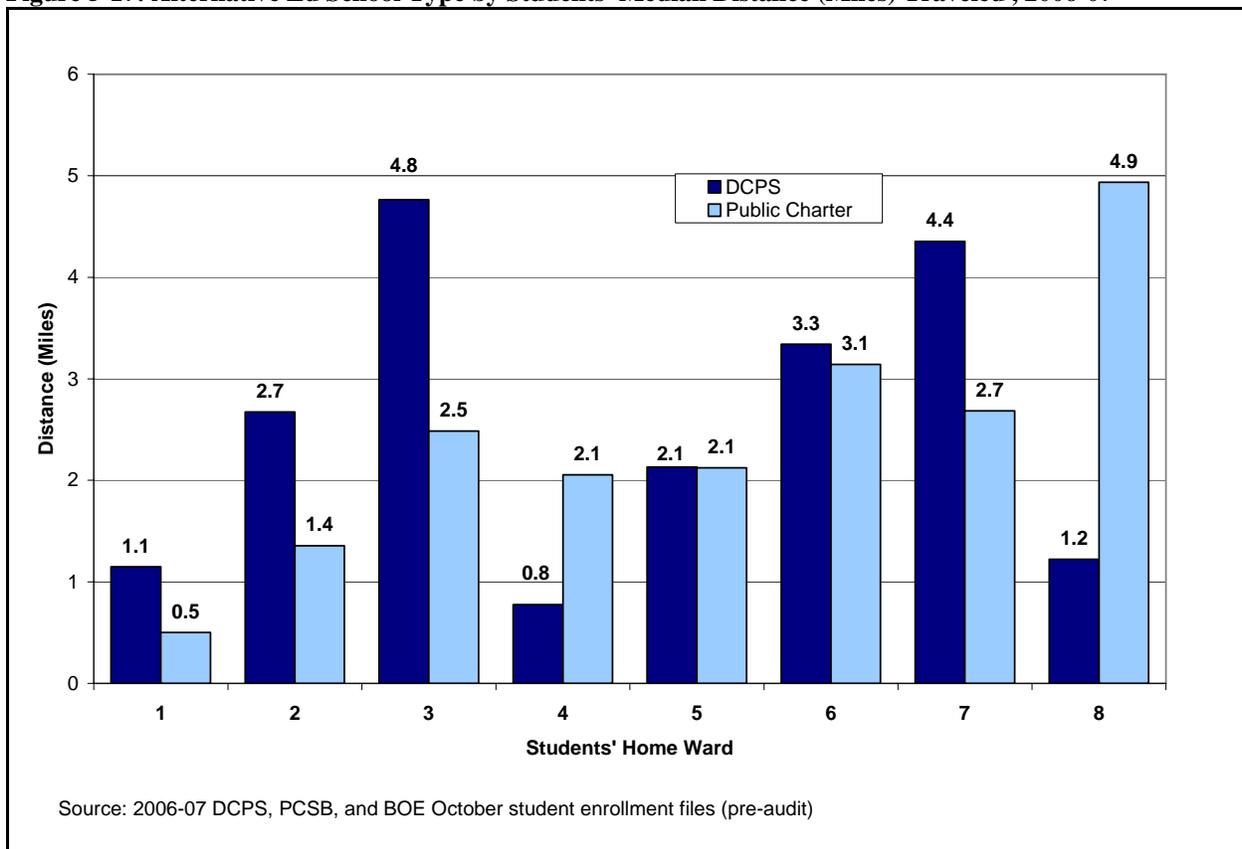
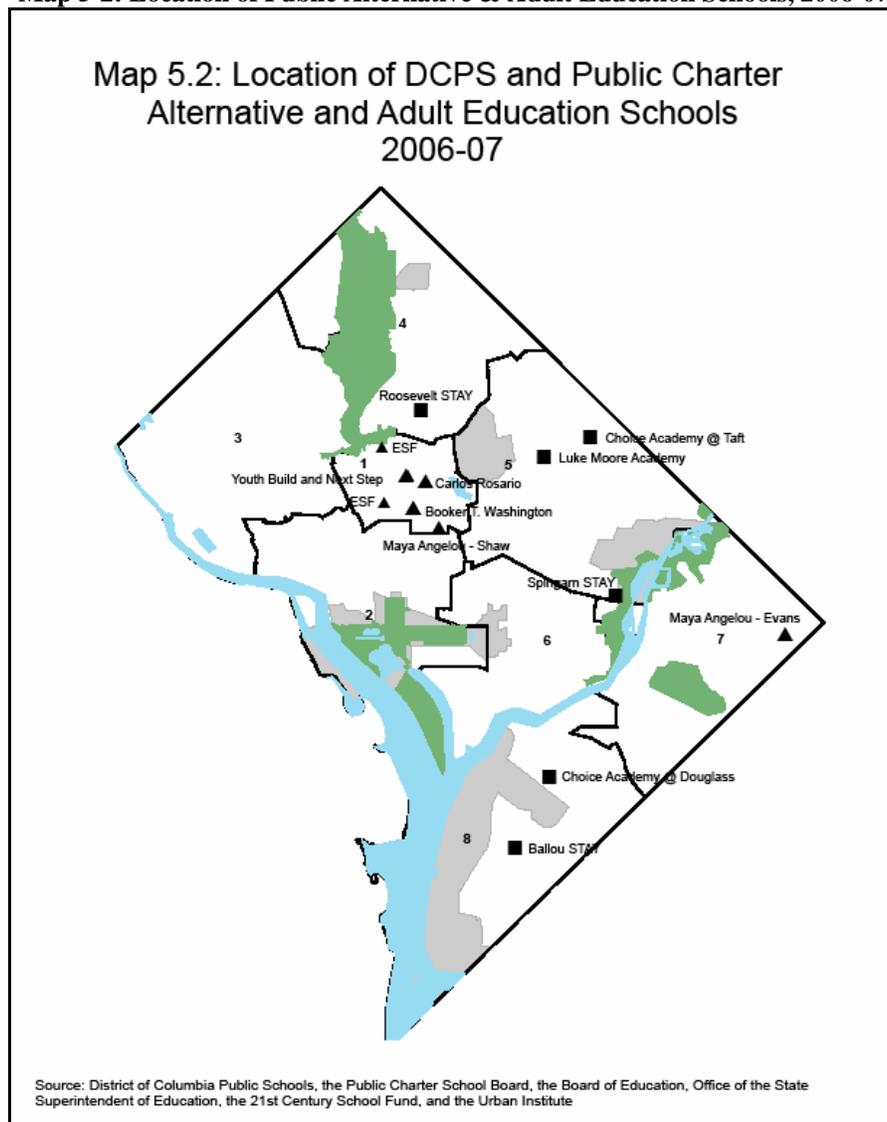


Figure 5-17: Alternative Ed School Type by Students' Median Distance (Miles) Traveled , 2006-07



As Map 5.2 shows, almost all of the public charter alternative education schools are located in Ward 1, while the DCPS alternative education schools are located in Wards 4, 5, and 8. Therefore it is not surprising that alternative education students who lived in those wards traveled a shorter distance to school than students living in wards without alternative schools (Figure 5.17). For example, in Ward 8, the median distance traveled for DCPS students was only 1.2 miles (because these students primarily travel to nearby Ballou) while public charter students in Ward 8 traveled a median distance of 4.9 miles (because the only charter alternative education schools were in Ward 1). Alternative education students living in Ward 1 – whether they attended DCPS or public charter schools – also traveled short distances to school, due to the concentration of alternative schools nearby, and Ward 4 DCPS alternative students traveled a median distance of only .8 miles. However, of the DCPS students living in the remaining five wards, all traveled a median distance greater than the overall senior high DCPS median distance of 1.47 miles. The alternative education public charter students living in Wards 6, 7 and 8 also traveled a greater distance than the overall public charter median distance for senior high school students of 2.46 miles.

Map 5-2: Location of Public Alternative & Adult Education Schools, 2006-07



Students detained in the DC Juvenile Justice System

DCPS provides educational services for youth while they are detained by the juvenile justice system.⁶⁰ In 2006-07, 133 students (less than 1 percent of the total student population) were enrolled in either Oak Hill Academy, Youth Services Center, or identified simply as students in a DC detention facility. More than half all the detained students (69 students) were enrolled in Oak Hill Academy, a part of the District of Columbia juvenile justice system; 33 students were enrolled at the Youth Services Center, an alternative school within a youth correctional facility for males and females grades 7 through 12; and 31 students were enrolled more generally at a DC detention facility. Three-fourths of the students lived in Wards 5, 6, 7 and 8, and almost all of the detained students were black (94 percent).

Archdiocese Students

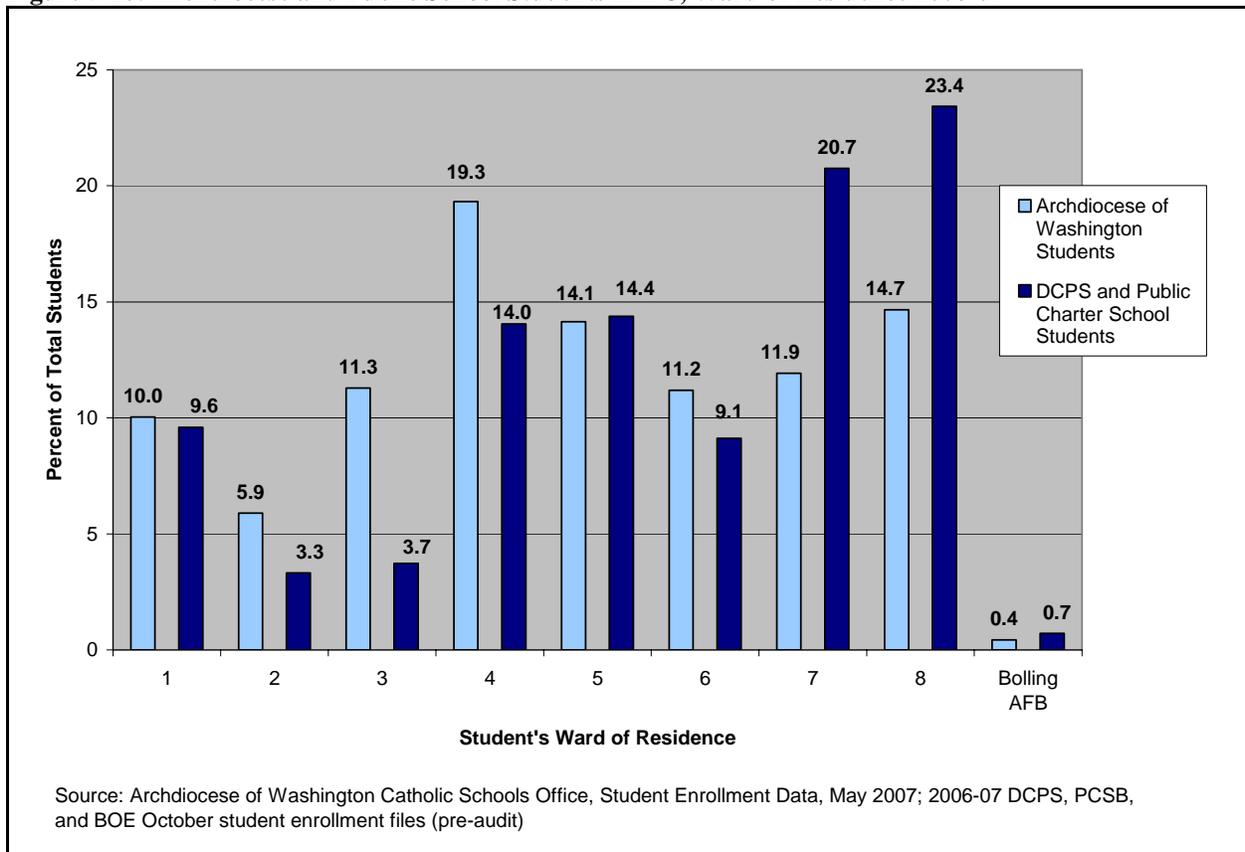
Students receiving vouchers for private school tuition represent the final segment of the publicly-supported student population in the District. The study team's efforts to acquire data from the Washington Scholarship Fund, which manages the voucher program, were unsuccessful. The next best available measure is the city's Catholic schools, which enroll a significant share of all voucher students in the District. The analysis below describes students at the 21 K-8 schools run by the Archdiocese of Washington. Although there are other Catholic schools run by individual parishes for which we do not have data, the schools included here account for almost one-half of the students receiving Opportunity Scholarships in 2006-07.⁶¹

There were 2,340 children living in DC enrolled in the 21 kindergarten to 8th grade Archdiocese of Washington Catholic schools in May 2007.⁶² The residential geographic distribution of these students differs somewhat from that of the public school population. The greatest share of Archdiocese students live in Ward 4 (almost one-fifth of all Archdiocese students in this sample), and about one-quarter live East of the River; this compares with only 13.6 percent of the public school population living in Ward 4, and close to one half (43.7 percent) living East of the River. The lowest share of Archdiocese students live in Ward 2 (5.9 percent), which is similar to Ward 2's share of public school students (3.4 percent). However, while Ward 3 accounts for only 3.7 percent of public school students, it accounts for 11.3 percent of Archdiocese students (see Figure 5.18).

⁶⁰ In July 2007, See Forever Foundation, a nonprofit that also runs the Maya Angelou Charter Schools, assumed management of the school at Oak Hill.

⁶¹ There are 961 students in the analyzed data set who received Opportunity Scholarships in 2006-07. The program awarded a total of 1,746 Opportunity Scholarships. Data limitations prevent a separate analysis of the Opportunity Scholarship students at the Archdiocese schools; however, we know that these students represent over 40 percent of the population being analyzed.

⁶² In November 2007, the Archdiocese of Washington announced its intention to convert seven of its Catholic schools to charter schools. Three of these schools are located in NW, two in NE, and three in SE DC. The Archdiocese would have to reach agreement with a charter operator, who would then apply to the PCSB to convert the schools.

Figure 5-18: Archdiocese and Public School Students in DC, Ward of Residence 2006-07

The majority of Archdiocese students are black but the percentage of white students is much higher than in the public schools. Approximately half (55.1 percent) of Archdiocese students are black, compared with 82.9 percent of the public school population. By contrast, white students make up 15.3 percent of the Archdiocese student body, compared with only 5.1 percent of the public school population. Hispanic students comprise 7.5 percent of Archdiocese students, compared with just over 10 percent of the public school population. There is some uncertainty in these figures, however, as nearly 20 percent of Archdiocese students did not have race identified in the records that were analyzed.

Over half of all Archdiocese students attend school in the same ward where they live. The highest proportion is in Ward 3, where almost three-quarters of Archdiocese students who live there also attend school there. The lowest proportion is in Ward 4, with just over one-third of students living there attending school in their home ward.

On average, students attending Archdiocese schools travel farther to school than their DCPS counterparts, but not as far as public charter students. The median distance traveled by Archdiocese students is 1.07 miles, compared with DCPS median of only 0.57 miles and a public charter median of 1.77 miles. As with the public schools, the median distance traveled by Archdiocese students differs across the city, ranging from a low of 0.62 miles in Ward 2 to a high of 2.44 miles in Ward 7. DCPS students living in Ward 2 also have the lowest median distance (0.44 miles), while the highest median distance for DCPS students is still under one mile (0.90 in Ward 5).

Chapter 6 - Looking Forward

This report provides a profile of the public school building and program supply, as well as student enrollment choices in the 2006-07 school year. Having established the “what” of school supply and demand in the District, the next two phases of this project will explore the “why” and the “how” to better align school options with parents’ expressed needs.

Specifically, Phase Two will explore relationships between residential location, neighborhood change and schools. For example, it will explore questions such as: How do neighborhood factors – such as housing types and prices, revitalization investments, or crime rates – affect school enrollment patterns? And, correspondingly, how do various indicators of school quality affect residential location choices and neighborhood trends? Comments received in focus groups conducted with parents across the District will provide an enhanced understanding of how parents make their school choices and from where they obtain information to what factors are most important in their decisions. This phase will also examine student mobility. Using the MEAD database, the study team will look at residential and school moves, as well as the patterns of attendance from one school to another in different areas of the city. An analysis of several years of historic student data will provide information on changes in the geographic distribution of students in the city, as well as moves between DCPS and charter schools. Phase Two also will include projections of the public school population, including identification of neighborhoods with high anticipated student growth or decline.

The third phase of this project will focus on policy reform in the District. Using examples from other urban jurisdictions, as well as interviews and working sessions with District officials, Phase Three will propose strategies to increase coordination across the city’s housing, planning, and school agencies. The study team will also consider changes to student assignment policy to better meet families’ needs and improve access throughout the city to quality public school options.