Tracking the K-12 Student Population in NYC - Office of the New York City Comptroller Mark Levine

Executive Summary

Over the last decade, New York City's K-12 student population has decreased dramatically. There are significantly fewer students across the City than there were a decade ago and NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) have seen a steep drop in enrollment. In SY2025-26, NYCPS saw its steepest drop in enrollment since the pandemic, losing 21,793 students, a three percent year-to-year decline of students.

There are many factors that impact school enrollment, from individual family decisions to population-level macro-trends. During the timeframe examined in this report, the number of children born each year in NYC has declined steadily, which is one contributing factor to decreasing school enrollment. Other factors like families with children leaving NYC and shifts in immigration patterns have also likely had an impact on NYCPS enrollment. This resource presents foundational school enrollment data to help New Yorkers understand the state of the student population in our education system.

Key Findings

- K-12 enrollment in NYCPS declined by 19% from SY2013-14 to SY2025-26, and enrollment is projected to continue to decline.
- In SY2025-26, NYCPS saw its steepest drop in enrollment since the pandemic, with a decrease of 21,793 students, a 3% year-to-year decline.
- The decline in NYCPS enrollment largely reflects a broader decrease in the number of school-aged children in New York City – not increased enrollment in other school types.
- Every NYCPS school district has seen declines in total students, but there is variation in the scale of these declines.
- As total enrollment declines, NYCPS is serving a student population with substantial needs: the numbers of students with disabilities and English language learners are increasing. Approximately 73% of students were in poverty and 14% were homeless or in temporary housing.
- Student population demographics are shifting.
- Black students made up 26% of NYCPS students in SY2013-14. In SY2025-26, that proportion was 19%.
- This reflects a decline in the overall Black student population and the larger decline in the Black population within the City.
- The proportion of Black students in NYCPS schools and charter schools combined decreased from 28% in SY2013-14to 23% in SY2025-26.
- The steepest drop in enrollment is between 5th grade and 6th grade, when parents need to decide where to send their kids to middle school.

- The rapid growth of charters was mostly before SY2020-21. Between SY2013-14 and SY2020-21, charter school enrollment increased by 66,107 students, with year-over-year increases as much as 18% from SY2013-14 to 2014-15. Since SY2021-22, the year-over-year growth in charter enrollment has never been above 4%, and most years has been less than 2%.
- Elementary and middle school charter enrollment is concentrated in the South Bronx, Northern Manhattan, and Central Brooklyn. These concentrations have changed little in the past five years.