

More than One Third of By Right and Citywide Schools Have Greater than 70% At Risk Enrollment

At risk enrollment increased after SY19-20 and continues to disproportionately impact schools in Wards 7 and 8.

In SY14-15, Washington, DC introduced a new funding category for students who are “at risk of academic failure” often referred to as “at-risk.” The five indicators used to classify a student as at-risk are the following (students can meet just one criteria to qualify): receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits; receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits; being identified as homeless; being in the foster care system; or, for high school students, being at least one year older than expected for the grade. Schools enrolling these students receive additional per pupil local funding in support of any additional needs.

In SY22-23, 52% of public school students (excluding adult and alternative students) were designated as at-risk. This is an increase of five percentage points since SY16-17 when the share of at-risk public school students was

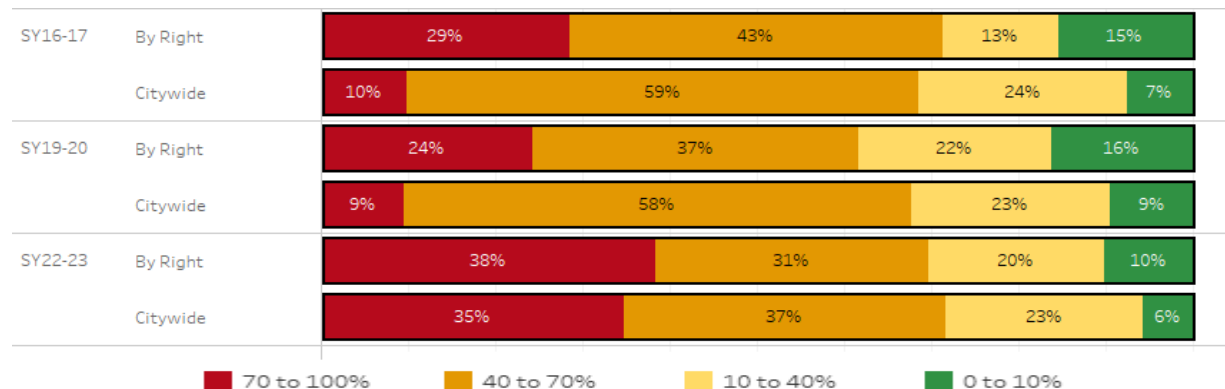
47%. The overall average started increasing after SY19-20. (See more about the shifts in the at-risk student population over time on EdScape.)

In this Edsight, we examine the share of at risk student enrollment focusing on two types of schools, by right and citywide. By right schools are DCPS schools where compulsory-aged students living in the school’s attendance zone have the right to attend at any time throughout the school year. Citywide schools are public charter schools and some DCPS schools that admit students living anywhere in Washington, DC via the My School DC lottery system.

At-Risk Concentrations by School Type

By right schools and citywide schools had nearly a proportional distribution of schools with a high concentration of at risk students (>70% of total enrollment) in SY22-23 (see

Figure 1: School At-Risk Concentrations, by School Type, Select School Years



Source: Audited enrollment, excludes adult and alternative schools.

continued

Figure 1). Among citywide schools in SY22-23, nearly 35% had a student population with an at-risk concentration of 70% or more. Similarly, 38% of by right schools had student populations with 70% or more at-risk students.

These statistics represent a dramatic increase in the share of schools with more than 70% at risk students, particularly for citywide schools, compared to six years earlier. In SY16-17, less than 10% of citywide schools had student bodies comprised of 70% or greater at-risk students.

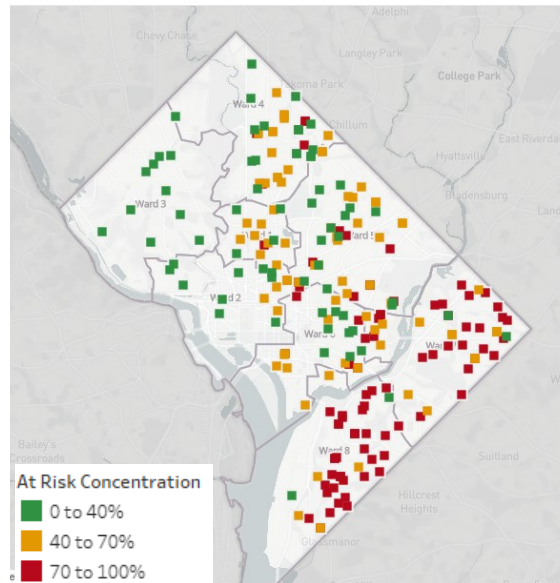
Among citywide schools, there are three predominant reasons for the increase in the share of citywide schools with high at-risk concentrations. First, 27 citywide schools' at-risk concentration increased enough over time to tip them from the 40% to 70% category to the 70%+ category. Second, of the 33 citywide schools that opened after SY16-17, 14 had 70%+ at-risk concentrations. And finally, 13 citywide schools closed during the time period and 77% of them had at-risk concentrations less than 70%.

High concentrations of at-risk students in schools is concerning because there is a [growing body of national research](#) that suggests that high concentrations of poverty undermine educational progress for students experiencing poverty. A [report from the Office of the State Superintendent](#) also found that at-risk students at schools with high concentrations of at-risk students experienced higher rates of chronic absenteeism than at-risk students who attended schools with lower concentrations of at-risk students.

Geographic Distribution of Schools by At-Risk Concentrations

This Edsight focuses on schools with greater than 40% and 70% concentrations because in FY23 schools with these concentrations started receiving additional supplemental funding. In FY23, 69% of by right schools and 72% of

Figure 2: Public Schools by At-Risk Concentration, SY22-23



Source: Audited enrollment, Note: includes DCPS and public charter schools except for adult and alternative schools, and schools with fewer than 10 at-risk students.

citywide schools received one of the two additional at risk concentration funds.

Figure 2 shows the concentration of at-risk students at each school as of SY22-23. All schools in Ward 3 and most of Ward 2 have less than 40% at-risk students and many have less than 10% (not shown). Conversely, most schools east of the Anacostia River have more than 70% at-risk students.

These patterns mirror the patterns of where at-risk students live in the District. In SY22-23, 64% of Ward 7 students and 74% of Ward 8 students were designated as at-risk. Across town, 12% of Ward 3 students were considered at-risk.

For more information about trends over time about at risk enrollment, patterns of where [at risk students live](#), and an interactive map of schools by concentrations of at risk enrollment (same as Figure 2), [see EdScape](#).

Feedback: Email Edsight.DME@dc.gov