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## LESSONS FROM **New York City's** **Small High** **Schools**

FREE WEBINAR:  
Tuesday, April 17, 2012  
2 to 3 p.m. ET

## Jaclyn Zubrzycki

Contributing writer, *Education Week*

## Lessons from New York City's Small High Schools

### Expert Presenters:



**Shael Polakow-Suransky**, chief academic officer and senior deputy chancellor, New York City Public Schools



**Rebecca Unterman**, research associate K-12 Education, MDRC

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*An Education Week Webinar:*

# LESSONS FROM NEW YORK CITY'S SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS

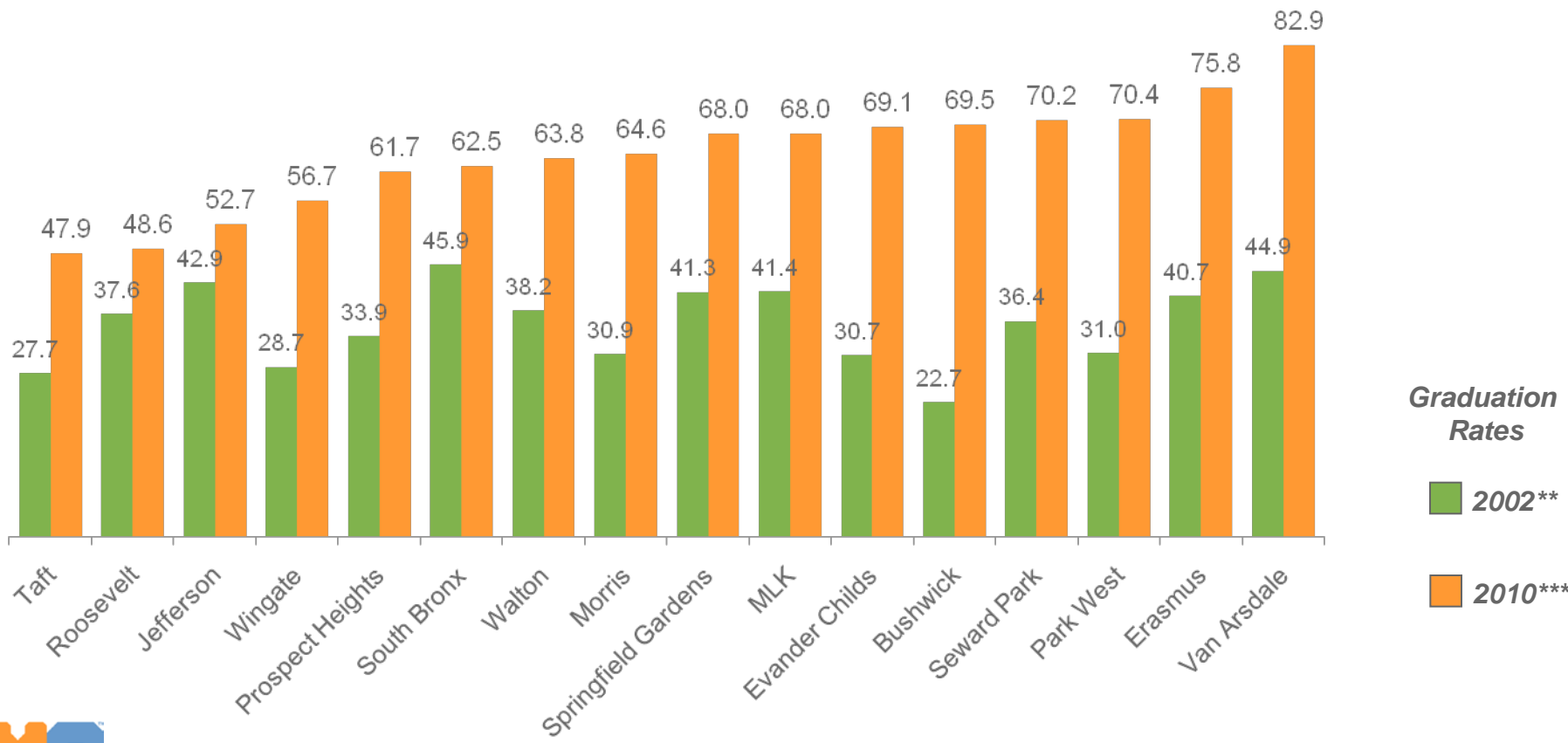
April 17, 2012

# SINCE 2002, MORE THAN 190 NEW HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE OPENED IN NYC

- Early college models that motivate students to accelerate their learning and earn credit for college courses while in high school
  - > *Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH)*
- Innovative whole school and targeted models for meeting the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities
  - > *Bronx International High School*
- Transfer high schools that prepare over-age/under-credited students for college and career readiness through differentiated and flexible pathways
  - > *West Brooklyn Community High School*
- Online and blended school models that reconfigure uses of time, staffing, and technology to personalize learning
  - > *iSchool*
- Career and technical education schools that offer a rigorous academic curriculum within the context of preparing students for 21st century careers
  - > *Academy for Careers in Television and Film*

# GRADUATION RATES AT NEW SCHOOLS ARE HIGHER THAN THE HIGH SCHOOLS THEY REPLACED

2002 vs. 2010 Graduation Rates at New Schools on Campuses That Phased Out Between 2004-2008\*



\*Schools presented on slide were all announced for phase out between 2002-2006. \*\*NYC traditional calculation includes Local and Regents Diplomas, GEDs, Special Education diplomas, and August graduates. It does not include disabled students in self-contained classrooms or District 75 students.  
 \*\*\*The NY State method, used since 2005, includes Local and Regents Diplomas and all disabled students. It does not include GEDs and Special Education diplomas. Beginning with the Class of 2009, students must pass 2 out of 5 Regents with a 65 or above to receive a Local Diploma.

# SINCE 2002, MORE THAN 500 NEW PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAVE OPENED IN NYC

## DISTRICT & CHARTER SCHOOLS

	Elementary	K-8	K-12	Middle	High	Secondary	Transfer	Total
Brooklyn	34	16	3	25	64	21	12	175
Manhattan	24	6	5	17	36	16	6	110
Queens	19	2	1	6	21	13	3	65
Staten Island	3	1	0	2	2	1	0	9
Bronx	31	8	3	33	70	18	6	169
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>528</b>



# SPOTLIGHT: THE MORRIS HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS

*The phase-out of Morris High School began in 2003. Four new small schools now reside in the building.*

MORRIS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE
CLASS OF 2001*
26.6%

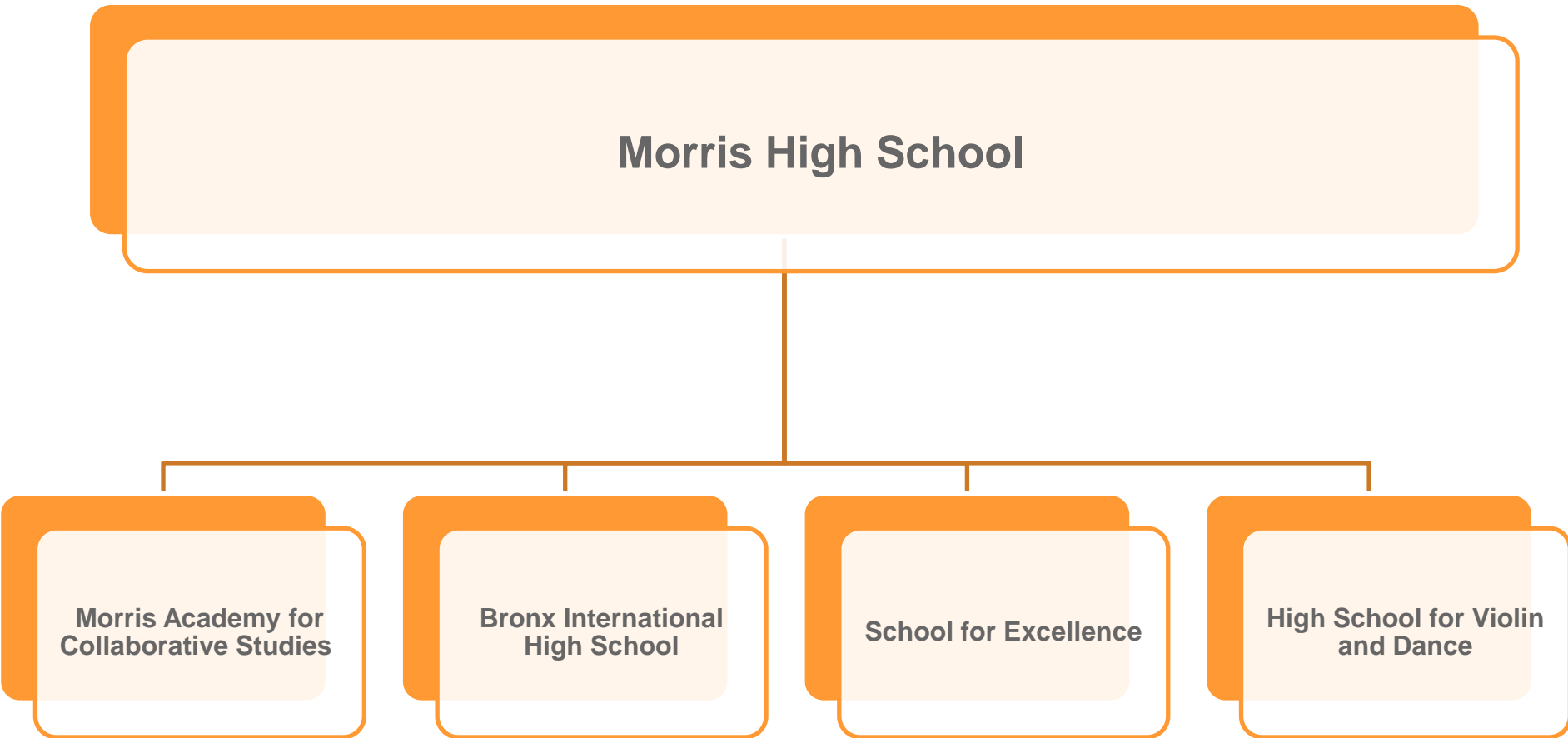
NEW HIGH SCHOOLS 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
CLASS OF 2010** New Morris High School Campus
64.6%

NEW HIGH SCHOOLS 6-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
CLASS OF 2010** New Morris High School Campus
80.7%

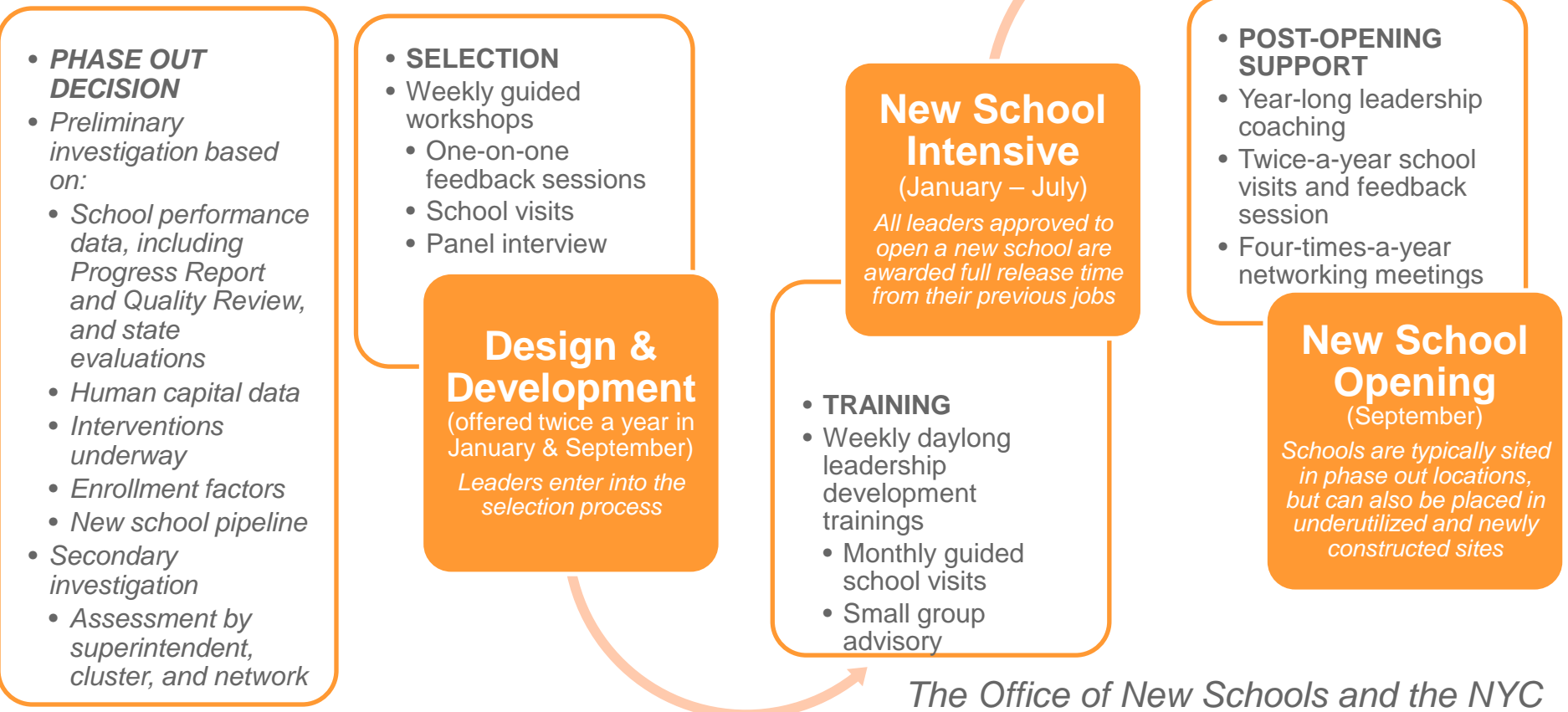
Incoming 9th grade demographic data	2001-2002 Morris High School	2008-2009 New Schools at Morris Campus
Hispanic and Black	98.5%	98.1%
English language learners	10.8%	14.2%
Students with disabilities	8.2%	12.0%

\*NYC traditional calculation includes Local and Regents Diplomas, GEDs, Special Education diplomas, and August graduates. It does not include disabled students in self-contained classrooms or District 75 students. \*\*The NY State method, used since 2005, includes Local and Regents Diplomas and all disabled students. It does not include GEDs and Special Education diplomas. Beginning with the Class of 2009, students must pass 2 out of 5 Regents with a 65 or above to receive a Local Diploma.

# SPOTLIGHT: THE MORRIS HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS



# A NEW DISTRICT SCHOOL: FROM CONCEPT TO CREATION



- **PHASE OUT DECISION**
- Preliminary investigation based on:
  - School performance data, including Progress Report and Quality Review, and state evaluations
  - Human capital data
  - Interventions underway
  - Enrollment factors
  - New school pipeline
- Secondary investigation
  - Assessment by superintendent, cluster, and network

- **SELECTION**
- Weekly guided workshops
- One-on-one feedback sessions
- School visits
- Panel interview

**Design & Development**  
 (offered twice a year in January & September)  
*Leaders enter into the selection process*

**New School Intensive**  
 (January – July)  
*All leaders approved to open a new school are awarded full release time from their previous jobs*

- **TRAINING**
- Weekly daylong leadership development trainings
  - Monthly guided school visits
  - Small group advisory

- **POST-OPENING SUPPORT**
- Year-long leadership coaching
- Twice-a-year school visits and feedback session
- Four-times-a-year networking meetings

**New School Opening**  
 (September)  
*Schools are typically sited in phase out locations, but can also be placed in underutilized and newly constructed sites*

*The Office of New Schools and the NYC Leadership Academy serve as evaluators, advisors, and coaches throughout all phases of the new school development process.*

# LEADER RECRUITMENT

## The Mentor School Program

- **Objective:** To develop a pipeline of aspiring principals within existing, high-performing NYC schools.
- **How it works:** Mentor principals nominate and develop candidates who are currently on staff in their schools to propose a new school. If the candidate is approved to open a new school in the spring, he/she will be on full release time for one year to learn the job of principal from his/her mentor.
- **Criteria for selection:** Three consecutive “A”s or “B”s on most recent Progress Report + “Well-developed” or “Proficient” on Quality Review + network support and recommendation

## Lead Partners

- **Objective:** To replicate successful school models and to provide leaders with additional support around instruction, student support, community partnerships, and professional development
- **How it works:** Lead partner organization brings forth a leader to propose a new school and coaches him/her through the Design & Development process.
- **Accountability:** Any lead partner partnered with a new school is evaluated on six criteria of principal’s choosing. Office of New Schools conducts three site visits a year to assess progress on six criteria.
- **Current partnerships include** Urban Assembly, Institute for Student Achievement, Internationals Network, Diplomas Plus, City University of New York (CUNY), Outward Bound, and New Visions

# DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT (D&D): THE SELECTION PROCESS

## Phase 1

- Submit Letter of Intent describing your background and instructional vision
- Attend D&D workshops #1 & 2, which includes delivering an elevator pitch to “parents & community members”

## Phase 2

- Submit and present draft of mission, instructional vision and model, and PD plan to a team of Office of New Schools coaches for critical feedback
- Attend D&D workshop #3 & 4, which includes providing specific feedback on instruction (video)

## Phase 3

- Submit draft of vision for community leadership and school culture
- Host school site visit to observe instruction, discuss feedback, and gather further information from applicant’s colleagues, students, and principal (if applicable)
- Attend D&D workshop #5 & 6, which includes participating in a collaborative group exercise

## Phase 4

- Submit completed application for review
- Attend panel interview, including 45-minute Q & A with panel of representatives from across the DOE, including Office of New Schools coaches

Rubrics scored and approvals announced

# NEW SCHOOLS INTENSIVE (NSI): THE TRAINING

**THE STRUCTURE:** 30 all-day weekly sessions from January to June; monthly guided school visits; off-site team-building retreat; small group (3-4) advisories by grade level; weekly embedded one-on-one advisor time with Office of New Schools and NYC Leadership Academy coaches; post-session survey data collected and used to drive curriculum and instruction; set of deliverables to be submitted by June

## Personal Leadership

- Goal setting
- Self-reflection
- Role play scenarios, including leading and facilitating groups
- Critical feedback from coaches and peers
- Relationship building and networking

## Instructional Leadership

- Refining your instructional vision
- Curriculum and post-secondary readiness
- Effectively implementing your instructional model
- Observing and assessing instruction
- Common Core, assessments, and grading policies

## Community Leadership

- Communicating your mission & vision – setting clear expectations
- Hiring and attracting the ideal teacher
- Student recruitment & enrollment
- Working effectively with students and families
- Determining your PD priorities
- Making space for difficult conversations
- Defining your leadership style
- Establishing partnerships with support organizations
- Operational start up

## Student Support

- Capturing and monitoring school-level data
- Using classroom-level data to improve instruction
- Literacy and reading support and structures
- Supporting students with disabilities, English language learners, and overage students
- Looking at student social and emotional “data”

# Sustained Positive Effects on Graduation Rates Produced by New York City's Small Public High Schools of Choice

Rebecca Unterman

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012



# Why The Findings Are Important

- Scale and nature of the intervention
  - Opening 123 small innovative high schools
- Population served overwhelmingly low income students of color
  - 93% black and Hispanic; 83% low-income; 2/3rds behind in grade level at HS entry
- Rigor of the evaluation
  - lottery based natural experiment with 21,000 students and 105 high schools
- Size and Consistency of effects
  - 9 percentage point increase, mostly Regents Diplomas, closes attainment gap by 43%
  - Every group benefited substantially from attending a small school of choice



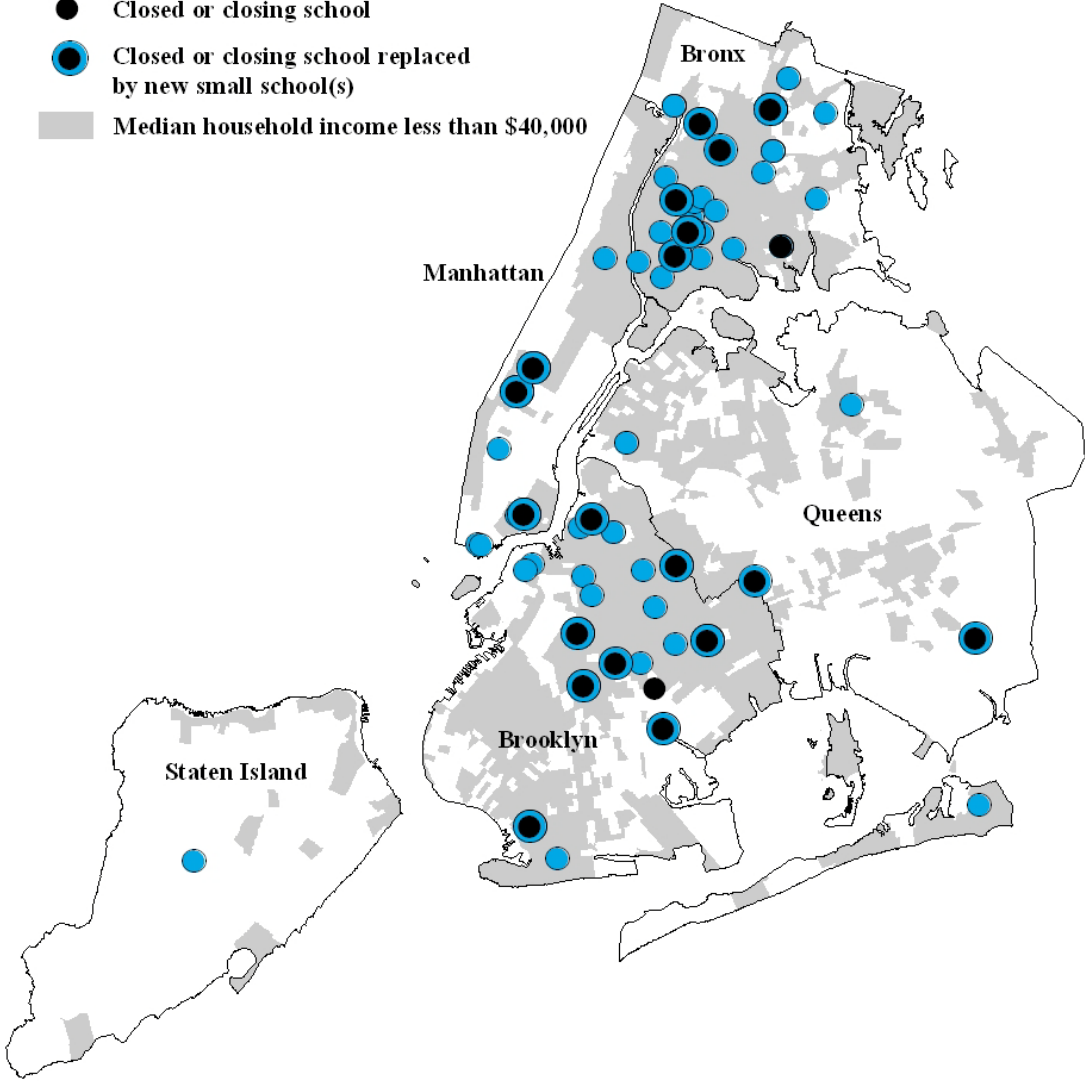
# Overview

As of 2009, there were 123 “small high schools of choice” in operation in the NYC public school district.

These schools:

- Were created between 2002 and 2009 through a competitive proposal process
- Are accessible to students of all academic abilities
- Are small, personalized, and themed
- Benefited from an infusion of outside resources and policy protections during start-up
- Are located predominantly in disadvantaged communities where large, failing neighborhood high schools had been closed

- New small school
- Closed or closing school
- Closed or closing school replaced by new small school(s)
- Median household income less than \$40,000



# Research Design

New York City's High School Application Processing System (HSAPS) uses an algorithm to match students to schools; when an SSC is over-subscribed, a lottery-like process breaks ties.

We used this process to identify:

- 297 lotteries, involving 4 cohorts of incoming ninth graders (2005-2008), affecting 105 schools and 21,085 students

# Current Questions

- (1) Is there an effect of SSC enrollment on students' four-year high school graduation?
- (2) Is the overall four-year graduation effect of SSCs sustained across subgroups of students with different backgrounds?

# Four-Year Graduation Findings (Cohorts 1 & 2)

Outcome (%)	Target SSC Enrollees	Control Group Counterparts	Estimated Effect
<b><u>Graduation</u></b>			
Graduated from high school	67.9	59.3	8.6**
Local diploma granted	19.9	19.6	0.3
Regents diploma granted	41.5	34.9	6.5*
Advanced Regents diploma granted	6.2	4.7	1.6
<b><u>College Readiness</u></b>			
Pass Math Regents at 75 or higher	23.3	22.5	0.8
Pass English Regents at 75 or higher	37.3	29.7	7.6**

# Four-Year Graduation Findings by Student Subgroups (Cohorts 1 & 2)

Student Characteristic	Target SSC Enrollees	Control Group Counterparts	Estimated Effect
<b><u>8th-grade reading proficiency</u></b>			
Did not meet standards (level 1)	37.3	29.6	7.7*
Partially met standards (level 2)	66.7	55.5	11.2**
Fully met standards (level 3)	81.1	69.8	11.3**
Met standards with distinction (level 4)	--		--
<b><u>8th-grade math proficiency</u></b>			
Did not meet standards (level 1)	45.9	34.5	11.4**
Partially met standards (level 2)	65.1	53.8	11.3**
Fully met standards (level 3)	85.9	77.3	8.6**
Met standards with distinction (level 4)	--		--

# Four-Year Graduation Findings by Student Subgroups (Cohorts 1 & 2)

Student Characteristic	Target SSC Enrollees	Control Group Counterparts	Estimated Effect
<b><u>Low-income status</u></b>			
Eligible for free/reduced-price lunch	66.9	55.7	11.2**
Not eligible for free/reduced-price lunch	74.3	67.4	6.9**
<b><u>Race/ethnicity, by gender</u></b>			
Black male	65.2	55.3	9.9*
Black female	69.1	60.8	8.3*
Hispanic male	61.3	53.7	7.7
Hispanic female	68.7	60.0	8.7**
<b><u>Known/unknown status</u></b>			
Known	68.8	61.1	7.6**
Unknown	67.0	56.9	10.1**

# Research Questions for Future Work

- Do SSCs increase students' college readiness and success in post-secondary education?
- How were SSCs created? How do they operate? What obstacles do they face? What factors do they believe are most important to their success?
- How do the effects of SSCs vary across schools and time? What factors predict this variation?
- What role does teacher selection, training and quality play in producing SSC effects on student outcomes?



Q & A

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## Lessons from New York City's Small High Schools

### Required Reading from *Education Week*:

#### [Small Schools Spur Academic Growth, Says MDRC Report](#)

A new report by the New York-based education & social research organization MDRC indicates that students in 105 of New York City's 123 so-called "small schools of choice" grew more academically and were more likely to graduate than students in New York's larger public high schools.

#### [Study Finds Success in NYC's 'Small Schools'](#)

At a time when reformers and philanthropists have largely turned their back on the "small schools" movement, a major study of New York City high schools found that students are more academically successful in smaller, more personal high schools that they choose for themselves than they are in larger, more traditional schools.

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