

# Planning for Failure?

## How the NYC Department of Education's Bronx facilities plan undermines its goals for increased high school graduation rates.

### Overview

In the attached data presentation, we argue that the New York City Department of Education (DOE) is caught between cross purposes, to the detriment of Bronx high school students. One DOE purpose is to project the number of new high school seats needed in the Bronx at a very low number, to hold down the demand for new capacity creation. To fulfill this purpose, the DOE draws on the enrollment estimates prepared by the Grier Partnership, a long-term DOE consultant group. Because the Grier Partnership uses a 36% cohort survival rate for Bronx high schools, held constant through 2014, and also projects a decline in enrollment caused by decreasing demographics, the DOE is able to show a net decrease in the demand for high school seats in the Bronx, and can argue that no (or little) new construction is necessary.

The other DOE purpose, exemplified by the intensive pace of new, small high school formation and the creation of multiple pathways to college, is designed to increase the high school graduation rate significantly, to 70 or 80%. This effort, involving not only the creation of new small high schools but also new transfer schools and Young Adult Borough Academies, would, if successful, result in an enormous increase in demand for new seats. The difference in the Grier Partnership's projection of a 36% survival rate and the DOE's goal of an 80% graduation rate is the difference between high school graduation, college and successful careers, or the school to prison pipeline or dead-end jobs in the low-wage service economy for more than 10,000 Bronx youth.

The figures we present in the attached data presentation illustrate this dilemma. Our numbers are illustrative, not definitive. We are not privy to the enrollment and demographic data that the Grier Partnership employs. But using their figures and their assumptions, what the following charts and tables demonstrate is that there is a huge gap, in the possible trajectories of young lives, between a 36% projected survival rate and an 80% graduation rate. If that gap is not filled by the provision of new high school seats, and real spaces in which to learn, thousands of our Bronx high school students will pay a terrible price.

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