HIGH SCHOOL DISCHARGES REVISITED: TRENDS IN NEW YORK CITY'S DISCHARGE RATES, 2000-2007

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APRIL 30, 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, Advocates for Children and the Public Advocate of New York City published a landmark report revealing the large number of New York City high school students who are "discharged" from the school system without graduating.[3] Discharged students are removed from the city's enrollment rolls entirely; they are not counted as dropouts, nor are they counted in the denominator when graduation rates are calculated. As the number of discharges rises, so too does the graduation rate. Based on evidence that high schools had illegally ejected students entitled to continue attending public schools, Advocates for Children coined these students "push-outs" and subsequently filed three class action complaints against the city.[4]

In summer 2003, Chancellor Joel Klein condemned the practice. "The problem of what's happening to the students is a tragedy," Klein said, "It's not just a few instances, it's a real issue."[5] In a message to principals, Klein made it "unequivocally clear" that he did not support this practice and would take steps to end it, "It is a disservice to our students and ourselves to rely on shortcuts or play numbers games in order to make things look better than they really are."[6] Following the Advocates for Children lawsuits, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) revised its policy on transfers and discharges in January 2004 to bar schools from discharging students without their consent, and required schools to conduct planning interviews before discharging students to non-high school diploma granting programs.[7] In addition, the DOE created an "Office of Multiple Pathways" in order to better serve overage students who had earned few high school credits.

Since the 2002 report, there has been no comprehensive update on high school discharges in New York City. This report analyzes trends in the discharge rate using data from the Classes of 2000-2007 disaggregated by race, gender, and English Language Learner and special education status; school-level discharge data, GED data provided by the New York State Education Department, and data from the United States Census American Community Survey.

Taken together, the findings of this report suggest that the high school discharge system continues to provide a loosely regulated loophole that can be used to inflate graduation rates by pushing at-risk students out of school.

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[3] Advocates for Children and the Public Advocate for the City of New York. "Pushing Out At-Risk Students: An Analysis of High School Discharge Figures." November 21, 2002.

[4] R.V. v. New York City Dept. of Educ., 321 F. Supp. 2d 538 (E.D.N.Y. 2004). These suits were ultimately settled to allow students at the three cited campuses the right to reenroll at their campuses or other schools, as well as priority for summer and night school.

[5] Tamar Lewin and Jennifer Medina, "To Cut Failure, Schools Shed Students," *New York Times,* July 31, 2003; A1.

[6] Jennifer Medina and Tamar Lewin, "High School Under Scrutiny for Giving Up on Its Students," *New York Times*, August 1, 2003; A1.

[7] Elisa Hyman, "School Push-Outs: An Urban Case Study." *Clearinghouse Review Journal of Poverty Law and Policy*. January/February 2005: 684-689.

This report has nine key findings:

1) High school discharge rates have not declined since the 2002 AFC/Public Advocate report was published. In fact, the percentage of all students[8] discharged has *increased* from 17.5 percent for the Class of 2000 to 21.1 percent for the Class of 2007. Between the graduating high school Classes of 2000 through 2007[9], a total of 142,262 New York City students were discharged. None of these students were counted as dropouts, and all were excluded from the denominator – that is, the total cohort – used for graduation rate calculations. Because discharges are reported as only one category and schools' discharge records are not independently audited, it is currently impossible to distinguish legitimate discharges from those who would be better understood as dropouts.

2) The increase in the overall discharge rate has been primarily driven by *a doubling in the discharge rate for students in the first year of high school*. This finding is of serious concern as a central goal of the public school system is to provide all students with the support needed to successfully graduate from high school. It also raises questions as to whether schools are responding to accountability incentives to discharge students earlier in their high school careers. For the general education Class of 2000, the discharge rate for first year high school students was 3.8 percent; by the Class of 2007, that rate was 7.5 percent. For the special education cohort, which includes only self-contained students and students in District 75, the discharge rate for first year students was 2.9 percent for the Class of 2000 and 5.8 percent for the Class of 2007. The explanation for the increase in the first year discharge rate is not clear, as students cannot be discharged from New York City public schools except in limited circumstances before completing the school year in which they turn 17.

3) The special education discharge rate is especially high, and has increased over time for students in self-contained classes. Twenty-three percent of self-contained special education students in the Class of 2007 were discharged; for students in District 75, that rate was 28 percent. The entire increase in the special education discharge rate has been driven by a rising discharge rate for students in self-contained classes. Between the Classes of 2000 and 2007, this rate increased from 17 percent to 23 percent, including a spike to *a startling 39 percent for the Class of 2005*.

4) A close review of Department of Education's longitudinal graduation reports suggests that there are dramatic shifts in reported populations that require further explanation. For example, for the Class of 2005, there is a large increase in the size of the special education cohort, and a contemporaneous decline in the size of the general education cohort. It appears that in that class, more than 1000 students may have been

[8] These figures include what we refer to in this report as the "general education cohort" – students in general education classes as well as special education students in less restrictive settings — and the special education cohort, which includes only students in self-contained classes and District 75 classes.

[9] The DOE calls the Class of 2007 the group of students that entered high school four years earlier and thus should have graduated in 2007.

transferred from the general education cohort to the special education cohort[10] and then discharged at an extremely high rate – 39 percent. Also requiring explanation is why 21 percent of the entire special education Class of 2005 was discharged in their first year of high school.

5) Discharge rates vary widely by race, gender, and language proficiency.[11] More than one in five Hispanic general education students (23 percent) and African-American students (21 percent) in the Class of 2007 were discharged without graduating, compared with 19 percent of white students and 16 percent of Asian students. English Language Learners also have higher discharges rates than students who have never received ELL services. Twenty-nine percent of ELL students in the Class of 2007 were discharged, compared to 22 percent of students who were never classified as ELLs. Boys are also more likely than girls to be discharged; 22.1 percent of boys in the Class of 2007 were discharged, versus 19.6 percent of girls.

6) Graduation rates in New York City would be substantially lower if discharges were included in the calculation. We caution that these discharge-adjusted figures surely represent an *underestimate* of the graduation rate. Nonetheless, they point to the substantial impact that discharges can have on the graduation rate, and thus demonstrate the importance of carefully accounting for discharged students. While the city's reported four-year general education graduation rate was 62 percent for the Class of 2007, the graduation rate would be 57.6 percent if students in the special education cohort were also included, 45.5 percent if all discharges were counted as dropouts, and 43.6 percent if students earning GEDs rather than high school diplomas were excluded. If discharges were counted as dropouts and GEDs were not counted as graduates, the African-American general education graduation rate for the Class of 2007 would fall to 44 percent, the Hispanic graduation rate to 39 percent, the male graduation rate to 42 percent, the ELL graduation rate to 21 percent, and the special education graduation rate to 6 percent.

7) Schools vary considerably in their discharge rates. For approximately 1 in 3 New York City high schools[12] - 87 high schools – Class of 2007 graduation rates would drop by 15 percentage points or more if discharges were counted as dropouts in the graduation calculation. Almost 3 in 4 of these schools (72 percent) received As or Bs on their 2007 School Progress Report.[13] Large comprehensive high schools that are phasing out have much higher discharge rates for their final graduating classes. For example, the last graduating class of Morris High School had a discharge rate of 55 percent, compared to 33 percent the year before.

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[10] As we discuss in Section V, almost all of the increases in the special education cohort for the Class of 2005 were in the self-contained population, not the District 75 population. 39% of self-contained students in the Class of 2005 were discharged.

[11] These figures are all for general education students; we did not have access to special education discharges disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and English Language Learner status.

[12] There are 292 high schools with graduation data reported for the Class of 2007.

[13] 79 of these 87 schools received a Progress Report grade for 2007. We make use of the Progress Report grades for 2007 because they are based on graduation data from the Class of 2007, the most recent class for which graduation data are available.

8) Though the AFC/Public Advocate report drew attention to the large number of students pushed out of high school to GED programs, GED data released by the New York State Department of Education for the 2002-03 through 2007-08 school years demonstrate that the number of New York City school-eligible students under 21 taking the GED exam has not declined over time, and only 59 percent of students taking the GED exam in the 2007-08 school year received a GED. Of particular note is that GED test-taking has increased for Hispanics even as it has remained unchanged, declined, or increased by smaller increments for other racial and ethnic groups. Yet only 39 percent of Hispanic school-eligible test takers received a GED in the 2007-08 school year.

9) According to data from the US Census American Community Survey and enrollment data from New York City parochial schools, recent increases in the discharge rate do not appear to be explained by increased student migration out of the city, increased international out-migration, or increasing parochial school enrollments.

To be sure, many of these discharged students represent legitimate transfers to parochial or private schools or diploma-granting schools outside of the city. But it is impossible to evaluate the legitimacy of these discharges until the Department of Education publicly reports data by the category of discharge, commits to independent audits of schools' discharge records, and makes these audits publicly available.

Based on our findings, we make several recommendations:

1) The Department of Education should publicly release comprehensive discharge code data for both the general education and special education cohorts from 2000-2007 and annually in the future as part of the "Four Year Longitudinal Graduation Report." These data should be disaggregated by discharge code and by race, gender, socioeconomic status, English Language Learner and special education status, and age. In addition to disaggregating graduation rates for the general and special education cohorts, the Four Year Longitudinal Graduation Reports should report an overall graduation rate that includes all high school students served in New York City, including special education students served in self-contained and District 75 classes.

2) The New York State Comptroller and/or the New York City Comptroller should audit the discharge and graduation rate data for New York City high schools. A recent audit by the State Comptroller found significant reporting errors in schools' graduation and dropout data elsewhere in the state, but no comparable audit has performed for New York City high schools in many years.

3) An independent party should produce a report analyzing the discharge data since the AFC/Public Advocate report to make clear who the discharged students are,

why they were discharged, why the discharge rate has increased over time, and why the discharge rate of first year students in particular has doubled.[14]

4) The city's Progress Report school grading system and the state accountability system should be evaluated to determine whether high schools face perverse incentives to discharge students earlier in their high school careers. The DOE should further explore incorporating certain categories of discharges into its Progress Reports to ensure that schools have an incentive to retain at-risk students and provide them with the supports necessary to ensure that they graduate with high school diplomas.

5) The discharge codes should be carefully examined to see if they conform to national standards. Some of the students who are currently defined as "discharges" in New York City should not be excluded from the cohort for the purpose of calculating graduation rates, and should more accurately be redefined as "dropouts."

The following report is divided into eleven sections:

I. Who is counted as a high school discharge in New York City?
II. How has New York City's discharge rate changed between 2000-2007?
III. When in their high school careers are students discharged, and how have these patterns changed over time?
IV. How do discharge rates vary by subgroup, and how have these patterns changed over time?
V. How do discharge rates vary by special education status, and how have these patterns changed over time?
VI. How do discharge rates vary by English Language Learner status, and how have these patterns changed over time?
VII. How would graduation rates change if discharges were counted as dropouts?
VIII. To what extent do high schools vary in their discharge rates?
IX. What are the recent trends in GED test-taking among school-eligible students in New York City?
X. What factors might explain increasing discharge rates over time?
XI. Conclusions and Recommendations

[14] While the "Multiple Pathways Research and Development: Summary Findings and Strategic Solutions for Overage, Under-Credited Youth" report by the Office of Multiple Pathways provide a profile of overage, under-credited students, it did not provide a profile of discharges.

I. WHO IS COUNTED AS A HIGH SCHOOL DISCHARGE IN NEW YORK CITY?

In 2003, the *New York Times* referred to high school discharges as "the black hole of the system's record-keeping."[15] This feature of the city's accounting system creates a troubling loophole that can be used to artificially increase the graduation rate by pushing at-risk students out of school.

When a student leaves a New York City school without graduating, school administrators must assign the student to one of 23 codes.[16] These codes represent actions such as transferring to another New York City Department of Education school (including full-time alternative programs, home schooling, home instruction, or a District 75 school), transferring to a part-time or full time Department of Education-run GED or YABC program, transferring to an educational setting outside of the city's public schools (including parochial/private schools, institutions, or public schools elsewhere), obtaining a full-time employment certificate, enrolling in a full-time GED program outside of the New York City public school system, voluntary withdrawal or discharge after 20 consecutive days of non-attendance, ageing out of the system (turning 21), voluntary withdrawal due to pregnancy, and expulsion.

Among these, a subset of codes is counted as discharges for the purposes of calculating graduation rates.[17] According to New York City's 2007 Longitudinal Graduation Report, "*Graduates* are students who have received a high school diploma, GED, or special education certificate by June or August 2007….*Discharges* are students who left the school system primarily to enroll in another educational program or setting. Students who aged out of the school system, i.e., reached the age of 21, and students who died prior to completing high school, are also counted in this category" (p. 4). The following is a list of codes counted as discharges for the purpose of calculating graduation rates:

- Anyone who leaves school over 21 years of age
- Voluntary withdrawal due to pregnancy
- Enrolled in a full-time high school equivalency (GED) program outside the New York City Public School System
- Expulsion
- Transferred to a New York City parochial or private school
- Transferred to a non-Department of Education institution
- Transferred to a school outside of New York
- Transferred to a College Early Admission Program prior to graduation from high school
- Transferred to Life-Start Program (Pre-LYFE for New Mothers)
- Student deceased

[15] Lewin and Medina 2003, *op cit.*
[16] New York City Department of Education, "Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines: 2007-2008." Available online at: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/AA3CFE45-E55E-4D58-9F47-CB6D7625AA69/29653/transfer_discharge_grad_guidelines_07.pdf
[17] To clarify, transfers between New York City public schools are *not* counted as discharges.

- Satisfactory completion of home schooling

Because the DOE has not disclosed the individual codes under which students were counted as discharges for the purpose of calculating graduation rates, it is impossible to distinguish which students did in fact transfer to degree-granting schools outside the New York City public school system and thus should not be counted as dropouts. Furthermore, because schools' discharge records are not audited on a regular basis, it is possible that even those students reported as legitimate discharges – for example, students transferring to other school systems or private and parochial schools – never enrolled in these schools. In his recent audit of 12 New York state high schools outside of New York City, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli found this to be a serious problem, writing, "The major types of errors we found were that schools were removing students from the calculations because of undocumented transfers, classifying students as transfers to a GED program when there was no evidence the student actually enrolled in such a program and not including otherwise eligible students in the calculations. As a result, the report cards understated the number and percentage of dropouts and overstated the percentage of graduates for some of the schools we reviewed" (p. 2).[18]

In addition, there are many New York City students who are categorized as discharges according to DOE guidelines who according to federal standards would be considered dropouts, as well as some students who are categorized as graduates who are considered dropouts under the No Child Left Behind Act's guidelines, such as those receiving a GED. According to guidelines of the National Center for Educational Statistics[19], students who leave school over 21 years of age, students who voluntarily withdraw due to pregnancy, students who enroll in a full-time GED program outside of the New York City school system, and students who are expelled from school would be considered dropouts rather than discharges. If New York City were to follow these guidelines in calculating graduation rates, the aforementioned categories of students should not be excluded from the city's calculations.

In addition, for the Classes of 2000 through 2007, students who transferred to a full-time GED program inside the New York City public school system and passed the GED exam

[18] Office of the State Comptroller, Thomas P. DiNapoli, 2009. "Accuracy of Graduation and Dropout Data in Annual Report Cards for Selected High Schools, Report 2008-S-45."

[19] "The [Common Core of Data] dropout definition is based on a "snapshot" count of students at the beginning of the school year: A dropout is an individual who: 1. was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year and was not enrolled on October 1 of the current school year; or 2. was not enrolled on October 1 of the previous school year although expected to be in membership (i.e., was not reported as a dropout the year before); and 3. has not graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved education program and 4. does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions: i. transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program; ii. temporary school-recognized absence due to suspension or illness, or iii. death" in Sable, J., and Stillwell, R. (2009). *NCES Common Core of Data Local Education Agency Universe Survey Dropout and Completion Public-Use Data File: School Year 2005–06* (NCES 2009-314). National Center for Education Statistics. Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

through a New York City Department of Education program were counted as graduates, though this practice is not accepted under the No Child Left Behind Act's guidelines.[20]

In sum, the current process for discharging high school students in New York City has three problems. First, many students who should have been categorized as dropouts are instead classified as discharges under the Department of Education's coding system. Second, because of the way that discharges are reported as only one category, it is currently impossible to distinguish students who transfer to other diploma-granting institutions from those who left for other reasons. Finally, because high school discharge and graduation records are not regularly audited by an independent agency, we cannot be confident in the accuracy of the city's accounting for students reported to transfer to schools outside of New York City or to private and parochial schools. In the absence of a regular auditing mechanism, it is difficult to know whether students actually enroll at the schools to which they have been discharged.

[20] For a full-time GED program considered part of the New York City secondary system, the student would be considered still enrolled under NCES guidelines and should not be excluded from graduation calculations. However, for NCLB accountability purposes, upon receiving a GED, a student should be counted as a non-graduate. The No Child Left Behind Act regulations provides the following parameters on the calculation of graduation rates: "§ 200.19 Other academic indicators. (a) Each State must use the following other academic indicators to determine AYP: (1) *High schools.* (i) The graduation rate for public high schools, which means— (A) The percentage of students, measured from the beginning of high school, who graduate from high school with a regular diploma (not including an alternative degree that is not fully aligned with the State's academic standards, such as a certificate or a GED) in the standard number of years; or (B) Another definition, developed by the State and approved by the Secretary in the State plan, that more accurately measures the rate of students who graduate from high school with a regular diploma as defined in paragraph (a)(1)(i)(A) of this section. (ii) In defining graduation rate, the State must avoid counting a dropout as a transfer."

Table 1. Comparison of New York City's Discharge Categories and Federal Dropout Guidelines

Discharge Category	Counted as Dropout Under Federal NCES Guidelines?	Counted as Dropout Under NYC Guidelines?
Anyone who leaves school over 21 years of age[21]	Yes	No
Anyone who voluntary withdraws due to pregnancy[22]	Yes	No
Enrolled in a full-time high school equivalency (GED) program outside the New York City Public School System[23]	Yes	No
Anyone who is expelled from school[24]	Yes	No
Transferred to a New York City parochial or private school	No	No
Transferred to a non-Department of Education institution	No	No
Transferred to a school outside of New York	No	No
Transferred to a College Early Admission Program prior to graduation from high school	No	No
Transferred to Life-Start Program (Pre-LYFE for New Mothers)	No	No
Student deceased	No	No
Satisfactory completion of home schooling	No	No

[21] Students who age-out without receiving a credential are considered dropouts by NCES.
[22] NCES does not have a formal position on pregnancy, but the operative clause in terms of NCES guidelines is "voluntary withdrawal," which would be counted as a dropout.
[23] A student transferring to an adult education or GED program not operated by a school district as a secondary education program is considered a dropout by NCES.
[24] Students expelled with no option to return are considered dropouts by NCES.

II. HOW HAS NEW YORK CITY'S DISCHARGE RATE CHANGED BETWEEN 2000 AND 2007?

Before examining trends in the discharge rate, it is important first to describe the key features of the methodology used by the Department of Education to calculate the four-year graduation rate. Under New York City's reporting system, students are assigned to a class based on the year in which they entered grades 9 through 12. For example, the Class of 2007 includes those students who entered 9th grade during the 2003-04 school year, as well as those students who transferred to New York City schools as 10th graders in the 2004-05, 11th graders in 2005-06, or 12th graders in the 2006-07 school years.

New York City further divides each Class into two groups for reporting purposes, a process that is depicted in Figure 1. The first group includes general education students as well as special education students in less restrictive settings. When the Department of Education provides its official graduation rate, it generally reports only the rate for the first group. When our graphs in this report refer to the "general education" cohort, we reference this group.

The second group includes special education students educated in self-contained classes in regular high schools or in District 75. In 2007, this population constituted 10.2 percent of all New York City first year high school enrollments. For both of these general and special education groups, students who are discharged for the reasons described in Section I are not included in the denominator of graduation rate calculations referred to as the "cohort." The official graduation rates for the general and special education cohorts are produced by dividing the number of graduates by the number of students in each respective cohort.

For the general education cohort, the students included in the denominator for graduation calculations includes the number of students who began high school in New York City four years prior (referred to as the "Base Population" in Table A2) and the number of students who transferred into this class from schools outside the New York City public school system in the subsequent three years (referred to as "Admissions" in Table A2), minus the number of students discharged. For self-contained and District 75 students in the Class of 2007, whose classes are officially ungraded, the cohort includes students who were 14 years old four years prior (in the 2003-04 school year) and were enrolled in a citywide special education school in District 75 or self-contained class in middle school or high school.

We first calculated the discharge rate for each of the Classes 2000 through 2007. The overall discharge rate is calculated as the number of discharges in *both* general and special education divided by the number of students in the general and special education cohorts plus general and special education discharges. These results are displayed in Figure 2, and raw cohort and discharge numbers are available in Table 2. Below, we summarize our central findings.

Figure 1. Flow Chart for Graduation Accounting in New York City

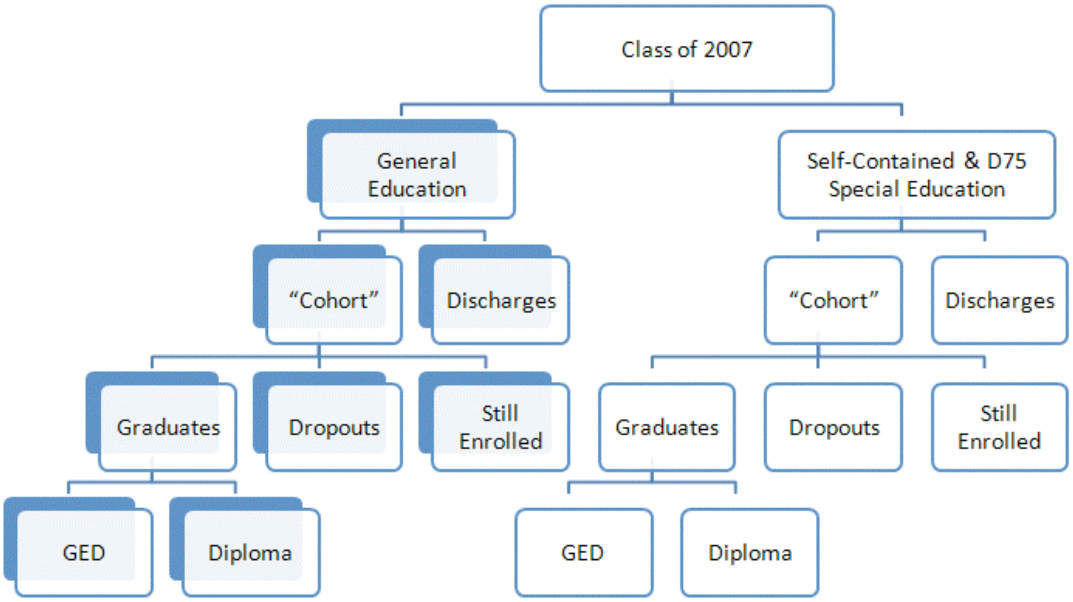
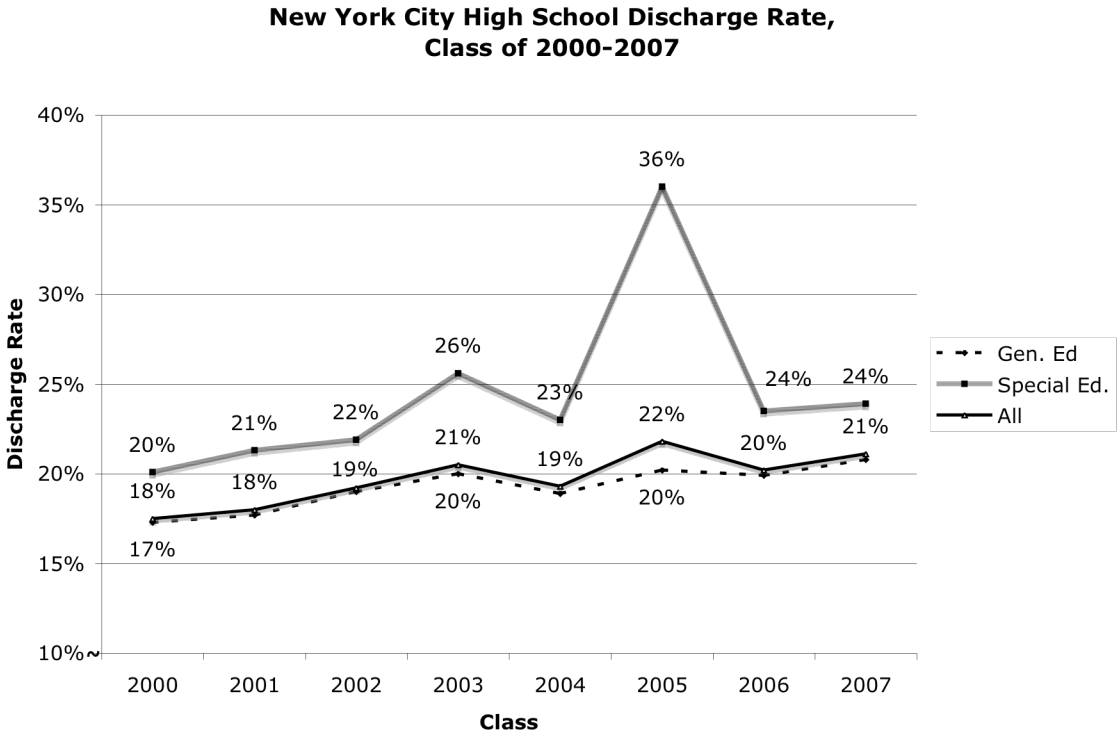


Figure 2



- **Between the graduating Class of 2000 and 2007, the discharge rate increased.**

Twenty-one percent of New York City high school students in the Class of 2007 – approximately 20,500 students – were discharged during their high school careers. As Figure 2 demonstrates, the rate of discharges has not declined in recent years. In fact, it has increased from 17.5 percent for the Class of 2000 to 21.1 percent for the Class of 2007.[25]

- **The discharge rate has increased for both general and special education students.**

Between the Classes of 2000 and 2007, the general education discharge rate has increased 3.5 percentage points (from 17.3 percent to 20.8 percent), and increased to an even greater extent for special education students (from 20 to 24 percent between the Classes of 2000 and 2007).

- **There was a sharp increase in the discharge rate for the Class of 2005.**

Particularly striking is the uptick in the overall discharge rate for the Class of 2005 from 19.3 percent for the Class of 2004 to 21.8 percent for the Class of 2005, which then declines slightly in subsequent years. Figure 2 shows that this increase is driven by both a 1.3 percentage point increase in the general education discharge rate, and a 13 percentage point increase in the special education discharge rate.

Table 2. Number and Percent of Students Discharged in the Classes of 2000-2007

	General Ed. Discharges	Special Ed. Discharges	Total Discharges	General Ed. Discharge Rate	Special Ed. Discharge Rate	Overall Discharge Rate
2000	13990	1460	15450	17.3	20.1	17.5
2001	14101	1546	15647	17.7	21.3	18.0
2002	14891	1571	16462	19.0	21.9	19.2
2003	15918	1999	17917	20.0	25.6	20.5
2004	15626	1749	17375	18.9	23.0	19.3
2005	16647	3264	19911	20.2	36.0	21.8
2006	17021	1991	19012	19.9	23.5	20.2
2007	18524	1964	20488	20.8	23.9	21.1

Source: New York City Department of Education Four-Year Longitudinal Reports. The term "general education" as used in the above table refers to the graduation rate calculated for general

[25] Appendix Table A2 also demonstrates that the fraction of all students served by NYC high schools (base population plus admissions) that is comprised of new admissions has increased over time. The percentage of all students enrolled via admissions was 8.2 percent for the Class of 2003 and 6.8 percent for the Class of 2004, and increases to 10.9 percent for the Class of 2005 and remains higher than its pre-Class of 2005 levels for the Class of 2006 (10 percent) and the Class of 2007 (9.5 percent). This pattern begs the question of whether the increasing discharge rate is driven by increasing "churn" in years two through four of high school. However, as we discuss later, the increased discharge rate is primarily driven by increased rates of discharge in the first year of high school as opposed to the second through fourth years.

education students and special education students in less restrictive settings; the "special education" term refers to those students who are in self-contained or District 75 classrooms.

To provide a sense of the importance of this increase in the discharge rate, had the rate remained at its Class of 2000 level of 17.5 percent, 3481 fewer students in the Class of 2007 would have been discharged.

III. WHEN IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL CAREERS ARE STUDENTS DISCHARGED, AND HOW HAVE THESE PATTERNS CHANGED OVER TIME?

We also determined that students are now more likely to be discharged earlier in their high school careers. In contrast to the discharge rates provided in Table 2, which represent the overall rate of discharge for a given high school class, the discharge rates presented in Tables 3a and 3b allow us to determine at what point in their high school careers students were discharged.

For each of the four years of high school, we calculated the number of students who are enrolled in that school year, and use this as the denominator to establish a year-specific discharge rate.[26] We summarize our key findings below.

- **The increase in the discharge rate has been primarily driven by *a doubling in the discharge rate for students in their first year of high school.***

Students are now more likely to be discharged in their first year of high school than ever before (Figures 3 and 4). The increasing discharge rate of first year students is of particular concern as the goal of the public school system is to provide students with the support needed to successfully graduate from high school, and is also troubling as schools may be responding to accountability incentives to discharge students earlier in their high school careers.

The rate for general education students discharged in their first year of high school nearly doubled between the Class of 2000 (3.8 percent) and the Class of 2007 (7.5 percent).[27] For special education students, the discharge rate in the first year of high school almost doubled between the Class of 2002 and Class of 2003 (from 2.9 percent to 5.4 percent), and rose again for the Class of 2007 to 5.8 percent.

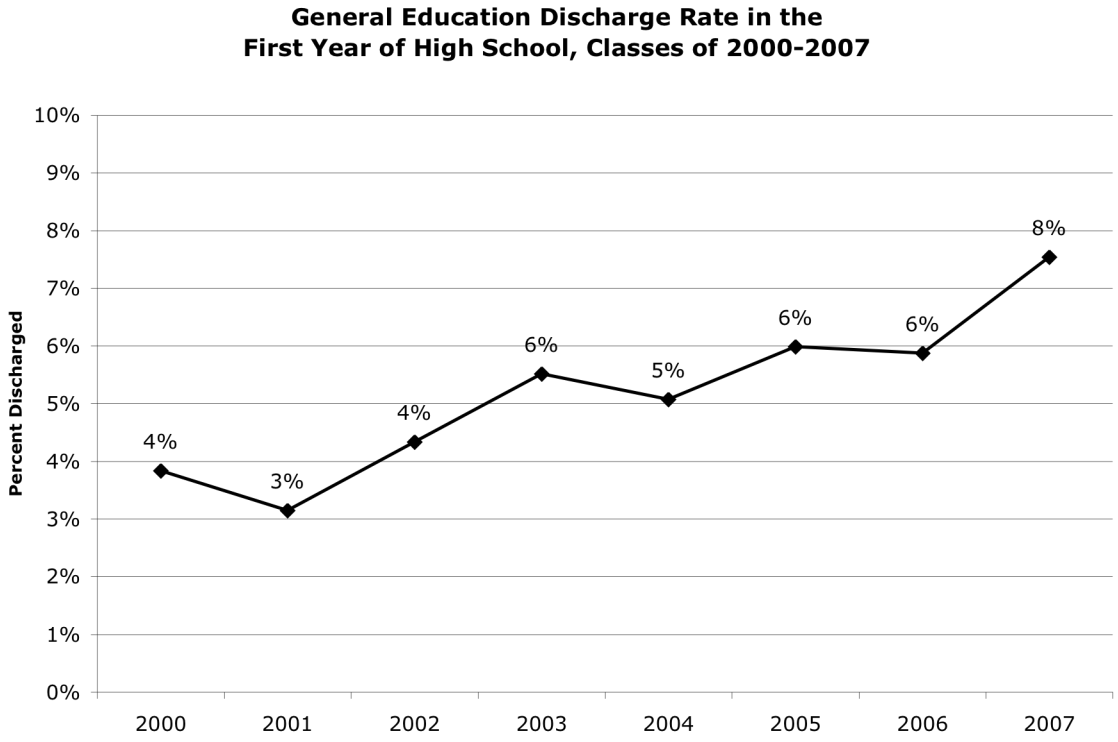
The sharp increase in the discharge rate for students in their first year of high school also raises many questions, including whether all of these discharges are legal. According to Chancellor's regulation A-240, the only valid reason, except in limited circumstances, to discharge a student 16 or 17 years old is if he or she has participated in an exit interview,

[26] For example, the discharge rate for second year students is equal to (2nd year discharges)/(1st year base population – 1st year discharges + 2nd year admissions). The denominator represents the number of students served in the 2nd year of high school.

[27] These students are first-time 9th grade students, as opposed to students who have been retained in 9th grade.

has proof of full-time employment and the consent of a guardian, or has moved outside the city or enrolled in a private or parochial school in the city.[28] For students 17 years old by the end of the school year, all of these conditions must be met, except relating to proof of full-time employment. In addition, students who turn 17 by the end of the school year can also be discharged to a GED program outside of the Department of Education.

Figure 3



- **For general education students, the increase in discharge rates has been driven primarily by a near doubling of the rate of students discharged in their first year of high school, as well as an increase in the rate of students discharged in their second year of high school.**

The discharge rate for the second year of high school increased from 4.7 percent for the Class of 2000 to 5.7 percent for the Class of 2007, and from 5.1 percent to 5.9 percent for students in their third year of high school. Also notable is that the discharge rate for the fourth year of high school has *decreased* over time, which is potentially a function of the fact that students who previously would have been discharged later in their careers are now being discharged much earlier.

[28] See Chancellors Regulation A-240 at http://docs.nycenet.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-15/A-240.pdf: *1.12 Students who are 16 or 17 years old may be discharged for full-time employment upon parental consent, an exit interview and an employment certificate, and* 1.3 Students may be discharged upon verified admission to an approved non-Board of Education school or program, such as parochial or private school, college prior to high school graduation or, after reaching the age of 17, an approved non-Board of Education high school equivalency program (GED).

Figure 4

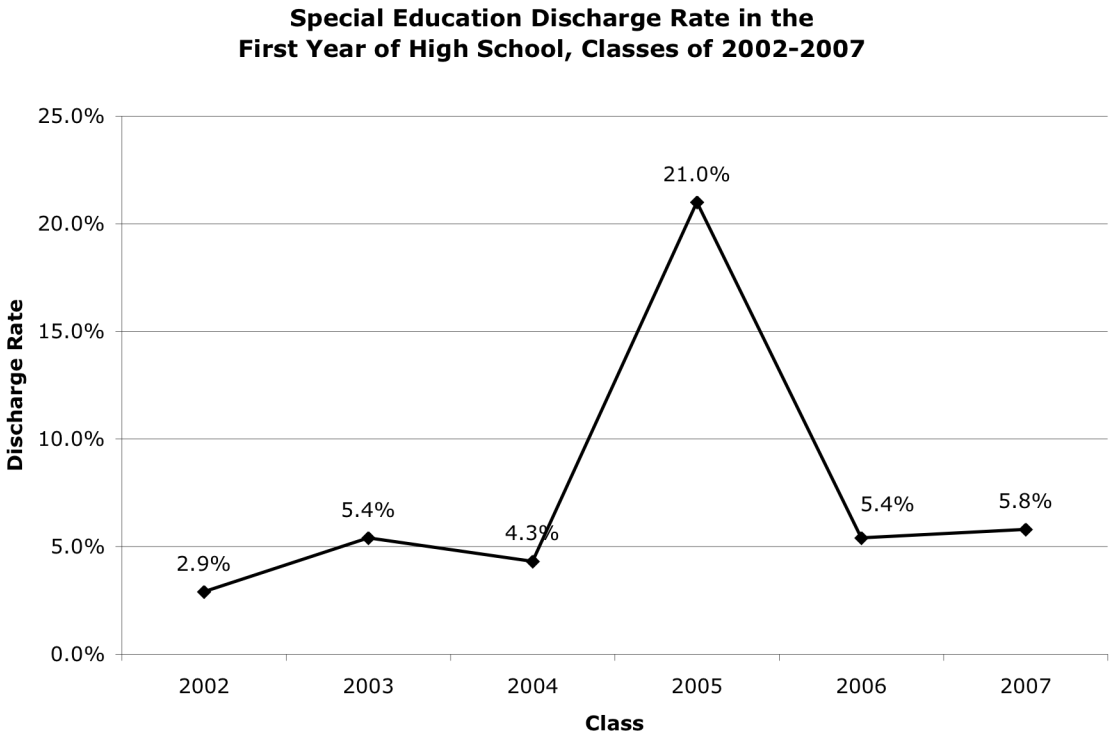


Table 3a. General Education Discharge Rates by Year of High School: Classes of 2000-2007

Class	1st Year of High School	2nd Year of High School	3rd Year of High School	4th Year of High School
2000	3.8	4.7	5.1	5.4
2001	3.2	5.2	5.6	5.3
2002	4.3	5.5	6.0	5.2
2003	5.5	6.0	6.0	5.0
2004	5.1	6.0	5.7	4.3
2005	6.0	6.1	6.0	4.9
2006	5.9	5.9	5.9	4.9
2007	7.5	5.7	5.9	4.5

Source: New York City Department of Education Four-Year Longitudinal Reports, Table 1.

Table 3b. Special Education Discharge Rates by Year of High School: Classes of 2002-2007

Class	1st Year of High School	2nd Year of High School	3rd Year of High School	4th Year of High School
2002	2.9	4.8	7.2	8.9
2003	5.4	6.1	7.4	8.8
2004	4.3	6.0	7.0	8.1
2005	21.0	5.7	6.7	7.8
2006	5.4	5.8	6.5	8.1
2007	5.8	5.6	6.4	8.6

Source: Data provided by the New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group. We provide data for the Classes of 2002-2007 only because we did not have access to the special education data for the Classes of 2000 and 2001.

- **For special education students, the discharge rate for students in their first year of high school has doubled, with an increase in the rate discharged in their second year as well. There was an extremely large increase in the first year discharge rate for the Class of 2005, with 21 percent of the entire class discharged in their first year of high school.**

The discharge rate for special education students in their first year of high school has increased from 2.9 percent for the Class of 2002 to 5.8 percent for the Class of 2007. For students in their second year of high school, the rate has increased from 4.8 percent for the Class of 2002 to 6.1 percent for the Class of 2003, and then declined for every class through the Class of 2007 (5.6 percent). Special education discharge rates in the third year of high school have declined from 7.2 percent for the Class of 2002 to 6.4 percent for the Class of 2007, and from 8.9 to 8.6 percent in the fourth year of high school.

To summarize, students are now more likely to be discharged earlier in their high school careers. More concretely, students in the Class of 2007 were much more likely to be discharged in their first year of high school than they were in the Class of 2000.

IV. HOW DO DISCHARGE RATES VARY BY RACE, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER, AND HOW HAVE THESE PATTERNS CHANGED OVER TIME?

Discharge rates vary by race, gender, and language proficiency. In Table 4, we report the fraction of each racial, ethnic, and gender group that was discharged over the course of their first four years of high school.[29] Because we do not have access to discharge data for special education students disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender, the data reported in this section are only for the general education cohort.

[29] We focus on the Classes of 2002-2007 as these were the data provided by the Department of Education.

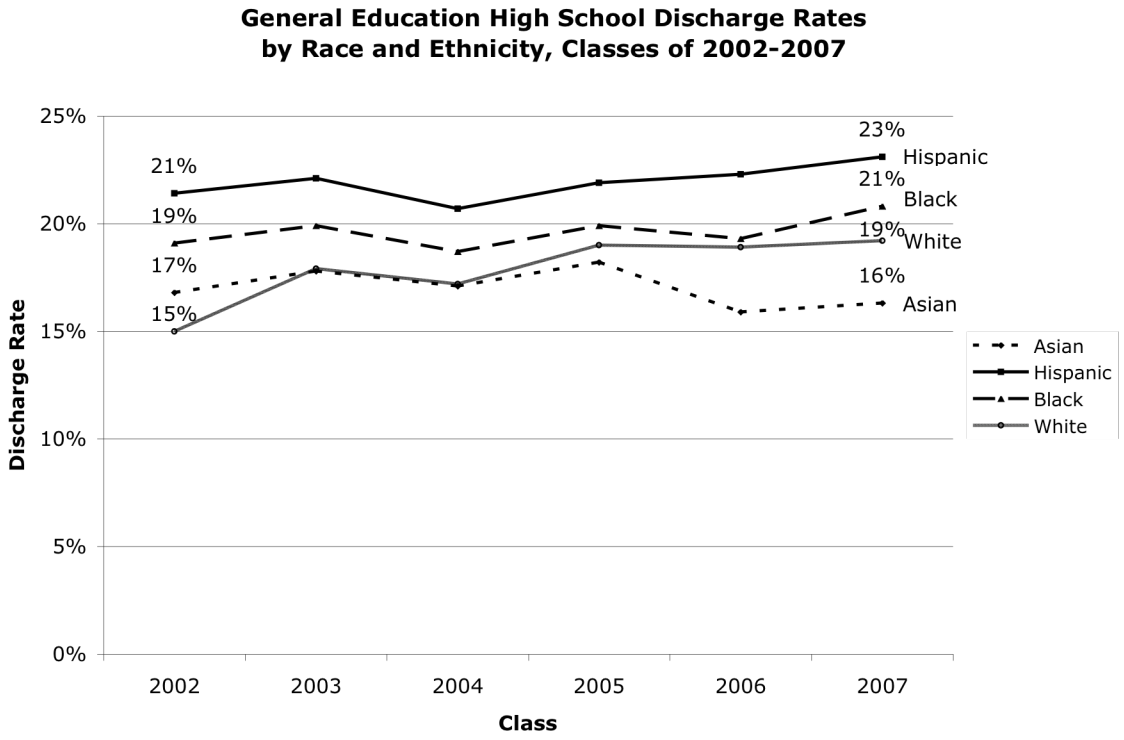
Figure 5 displays trends in discharge rates by race and ethnicity. More than 1 in 5 Hispanic students (23 percent) and African-American students (21 percent) in the Class of 2007 were discharged without graduating, compared with 19 percent of white students and 16 percent of Asian students. Between the Class of 2002 and 2007, the Hispanic rate increased (21.4 to 23.1 percent), the African-American rate increased (19.1 to 20.8 percent), and the white rate increased (15.0 to 19.2 percent). The only group for which discharge rates declined slightly was among Asian students (16.8 to 16.3 percent).

Table 4. General Education Discharge Rates by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender, Classes of 2002 - 2007

	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White	Female	Male
Class of 2002	16.8 (1805)	21.4 (5700)	19.1 (5335)	15.0 (1896)	17.3 (6812)	20.7 (8095)
Class of 2003	17.8 (1998	22.1 (6043)	19.9 (5481)	17.9 (2348)	18.8 (7418)	21.3 (8500)
Class of 2004	17.1 (1991	20.7 (5853)	18.7 (5416)	17.2 (2317)	17.3 (7169)	20.5 (8470)
Class of 2005	18.2 (2107)	21.9 (6256)	19.9 (5594)	19.0 (2593)	18.9 (7816)	21.5 (8831)
Class of 2006	15.9 (1909)	22.3 (6892)	19.3 (5569)	18.9 (2531)	18.8 (8099)	21.0 (8922)
Class of 2007	16.3 (2034)	23.1 (7682)	20.8 (6331)	19.2 (2394)	19.6 (8780)	22.1 (9744)

Source: Data provided by the New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group. Number of discharges in each cell in parentheses.

Figure 5



Boys are also more likely to be discharged than girls. In the Class of 2007, 22.1 percent of boys and 19.6 percent of girls were discharged. For both boys and girls, the discharge rate increased between the Classes of 2002 and 2007. For girls, that rate increased from 17.3 percent to 19.6 percent; for boys, it increased from 20.7 percent to 22.1 percent.

Of particular interest is whether the timing of discharge has shifted more for some subgroups than others. To address this question, we also calculated the fraction of all discharges discharged in each of the four years of high school by race, ethnicity, and gender.[30] These data are reported in Table 5 for the Classes of 2002 through 2007, and displayed in Figures 6 and 7. Across all racial, ethnic, and gender groups, the fraction of all discharges discharged in 9th grade increased. Of these subgroups, the percent of discharged white students exiting in their first year of high school has increased in particular.

[30] We did not have access to the data on the timing of new admissions by race, ethnicity, and gender necessary to calculate the year-by-year discharge rates we provided in Table 2.

Figure 6. Percent of All General Education Discharged Students Discharged in First Year of High School by Race and Ethnicity, Classes of 2002-2007

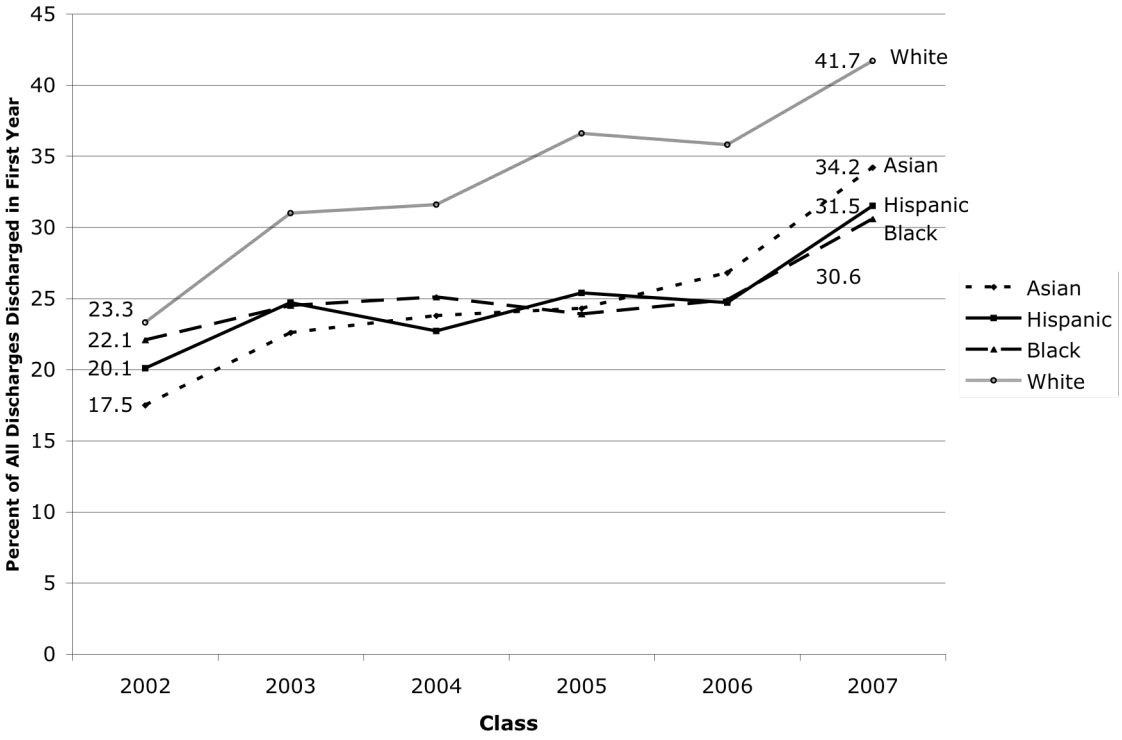


Figure 7. Percent of All General Education Discharged Students Discharged in First Year of High School by Gender, Classes of 2002-2007

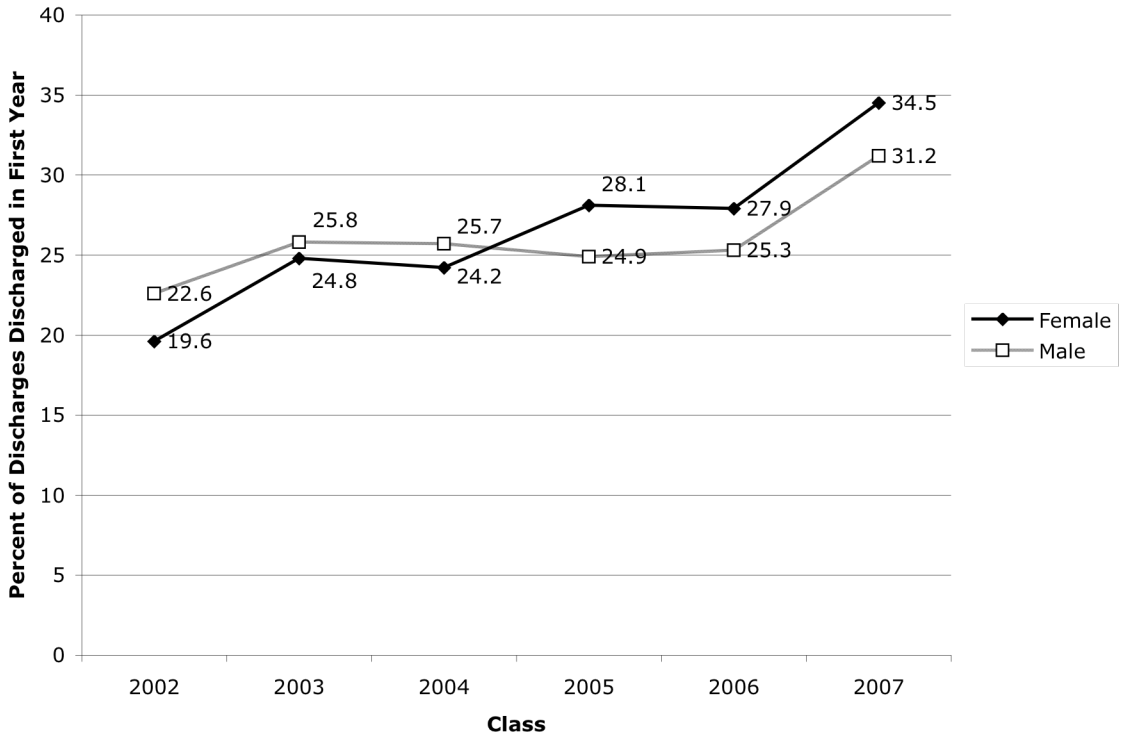


Table 5. Percent of General Education Discharges Discharged in their First Year of High School by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender: Classes of 2002-2007

	Class					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Asian	17.5 (315)	22.6 (452)	23.8 (474)	24.3 (511)	26.8 (511)	34.2 (696)
Hispanic	20.1 (1145)	24.7 (1490)	22.7 (1329)	25.4 (1588)	24.7 (1705)	31.5 (2423)
Black	22.1 (1181)	24.5 (1345)	25.1 (1362)	23.9 (1338)	24.9 (1386)	30.6 (1940)
White	23.3 (442)	31.0 (727)	31.6 (733)	36.6 (949)	35.8 (905)	41.7 (999)
Female	19.6 (1338)	24.8 (1836)	24.2 (1738)	28.1 (2195)	27.9 (2263)	34.5 (3032)
Male	22.6 (1826)	25.8 (2190)	25.7 (2173)	24.9 (2201)	25.3 (2258)	31.2 (3038)

Source: Data provided by the New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group. The number of discharges in each cell is listed in parentheses.

V. HOW DO DISCHARGE RATES VARY BY SPECIAL EDUCATION STATUS, AND HOW HAVE THESE PATTERNS CHANGED OVER TIME?

- **The special education discharge rate has increased over time, especially for students in self-contained classes.**

Almost one in four self-contained, non-District 75 special education students in the Class of 2007 was discharged (23 percent); for students in District 75, that rate was 28 percent. The discharge rate for the overall special education cohort has increased over time from 20 percent for the Class of 2000 to 24 percent for the Class of 2007.

- **The entire increase in the special education discharge rate has been driven by a rising discharge rate for students in self-contained classes.**

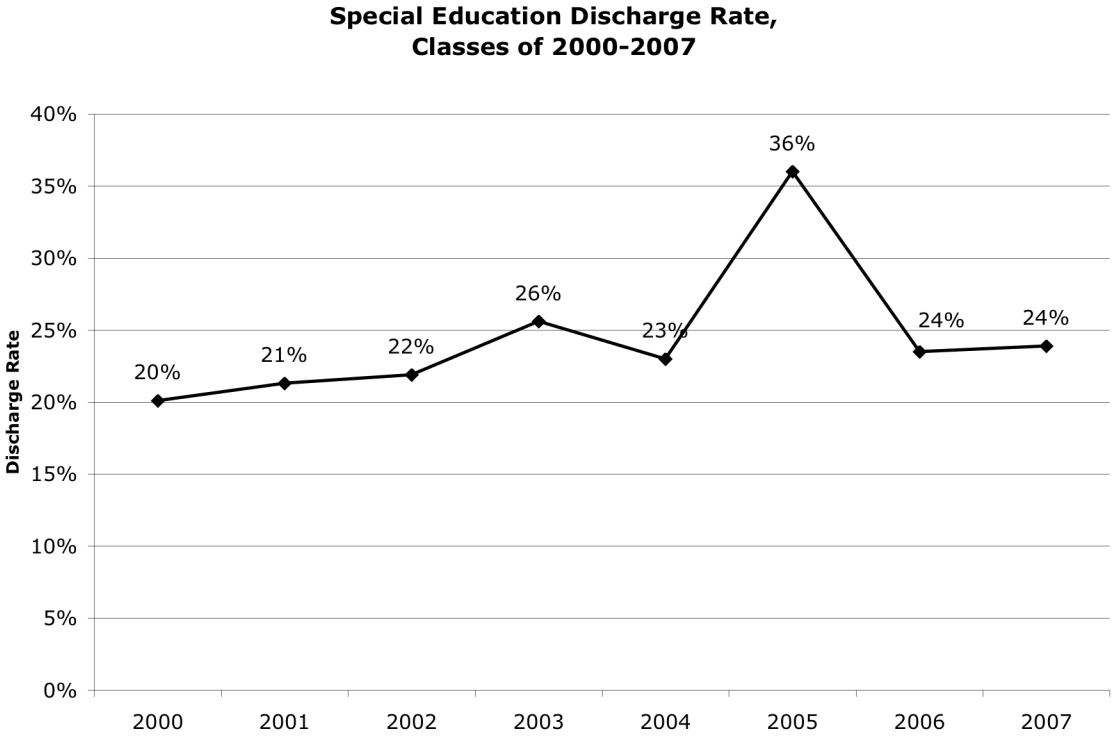
Between the Classes of 2000 and 2007, this rate increased from 17 percent to 23 percent, including a spike to 39 percent for the Class of 2005.

Concerns with the Class of 2005

A close review of the longitudinal graduation reports suggests that there are sharp shifts in student populations that require further explanation. For example, for the Class of 2005, there is a large increase in the size of the special education cohort compared to the preceding or following classes, and a contemporaneous decline in the size of the general education cohort. It appears that more than one thousand students may have been transferred from the general education cohort to the special education cohort for reporting purposes and then discharged at an extremely high rate – 39 percent. Also requiring explanation is why 21 percent of all special education students in the same class were

discharged in their first year of high school. Below, we detail our outstanding questions regarding the Class of 2005 data.

Figure 8.

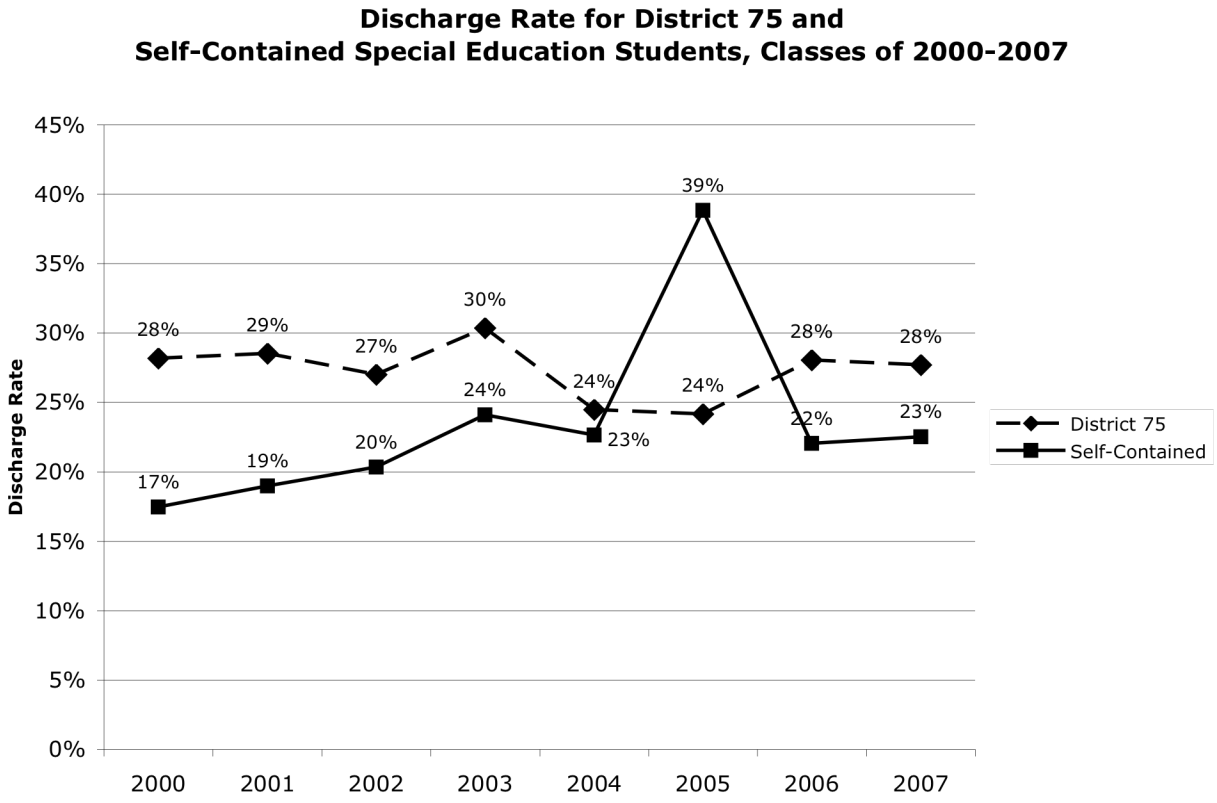


- **A spike in special education classification for the Class of 2005**

The first issue of concern is a spike in the percentage of entering high school students classified in the special education categories of self-contained or District 75 for the Class of 2005 (Figure 10). The percentage of students classified in these categories increases 2.5 percentage points from 9.9 percent for the Class of 2004 to 12.4 percent for the Class of 2005. This rate then decreases back towards its pre-Class of 2005 level for the subsequent two classes to 11 percent for the Class of 2006 and 10.2 percent for the Class of 2007.

In terms of raw numbers, the number of students classified in self-contained and District 75 categories increases from 7591 to 9077 students (Figure 11). The increase in full-time and District 75 classification for the Class of 2005 is driven by a very large increase in self-contained special education classification from 5920 students for the Class of 2004 to 7298 students for the Class of 2005. As we show in Figure 11 below, the number of students classified as self-contained then declines for the subsequent two classes.

Figure 9.



- **A decline in the size of the general education base population for the Class of 2005**

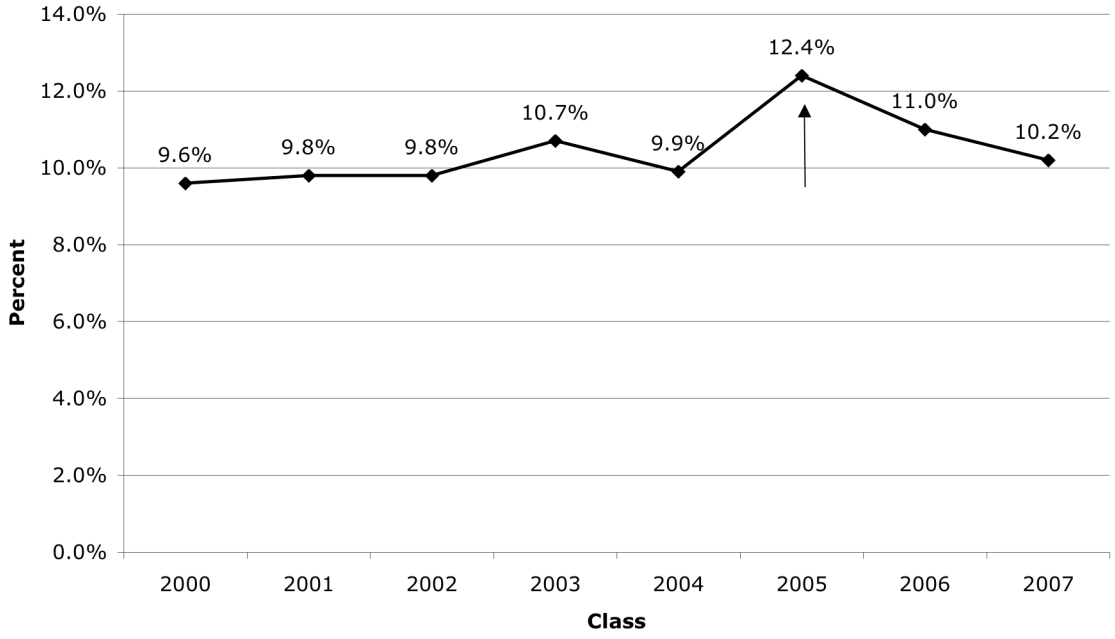
A second issue of concern is that the increase in special education enrollment is accompanied by a decrease in the general education enrollment of entering 9th graders for the Class of 2005. (See Appendix Table A2.) One potential explanation for this change is that students who previously would have been counted in the general education cohort were then shifted to the self-contained special education category.

- **A sharp increase in the percentage of special education students in the Class of 2005 that were discharged, especially in their first year of high school**

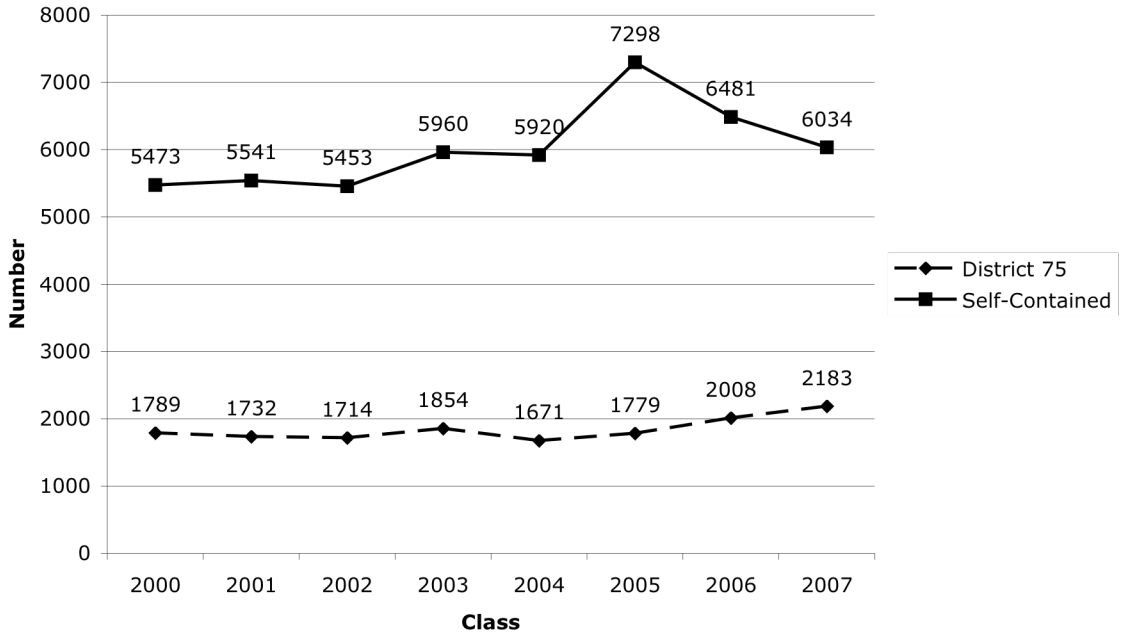
A third issue of concern is that special education students in the Class of 2005 were then discharged at an extremely high rate, increasing from 23 percent for the Class of 2004 to 39 percent for the Class of 2005, before decreasing to 22 percent for the Class of 2006. A stunning 21 percent of the entire special education Class of 2005 was discharged in their first year of high school (see Table 3b).

Figures 10 and 11.

Percent Full-Time and District 75 Special Education Students, Class of 2000-2007



Number of Self-Contained and District 75 Special Education Students, Classes of 2000-2007



Also requiring explanation is how these patterns relate to the re-release of Class of 2005 graduation rates after the February 2006 Mayor's Preliminary Management Report initially reported a drop in the graduation rate.[31] Yet to date it is not clear what errors led to the re-release and how they relate to the anomalous patterns described above.

Taken together, these three highly irregular patterns raise questions about the accounting of students in the Class of 2005, and highlight the need for an independent audit of New York City's discharge and graduation data.

VI. HOW DO DISCHARGE RATES VARY BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STATUS, AND HOW HAVE THESE PATTERNS CHANGED OVER TIME?

Below, we describe patterns in the discharge rates and timing of discharge for current general education English Language Learners, former ELLs, and students who have never been ELLs.

- **English Language Learners in the general education cohort have higher discharge rates than students who have never received ELL services and former ELL students.**

28.5 percent of ELL students in the Class of 2007 were discharged, compared to 21.9 percent of students who were never classified as ELLs (see Figure 12) and 14.5 percent of students who are former ELLs.

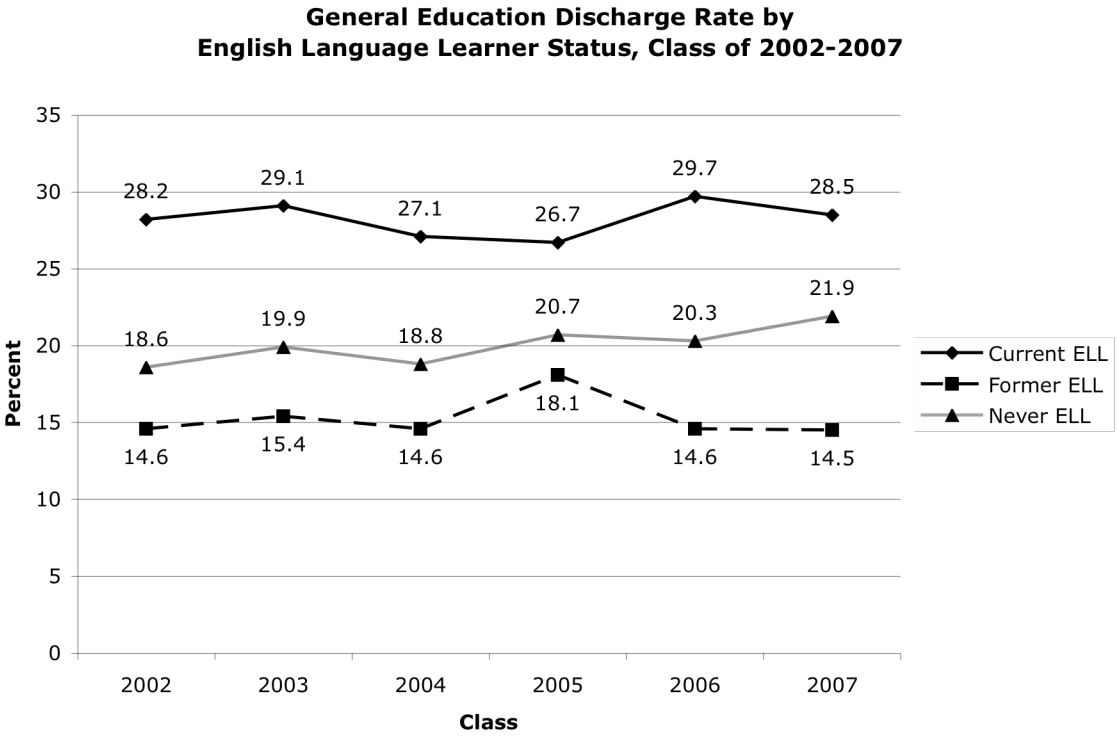
- **The increase in the general education discharge rate over the Classes of 2002-2007 has been driven primarily by an increasing discharge rate for students who have never been classified as English Language Learners.**

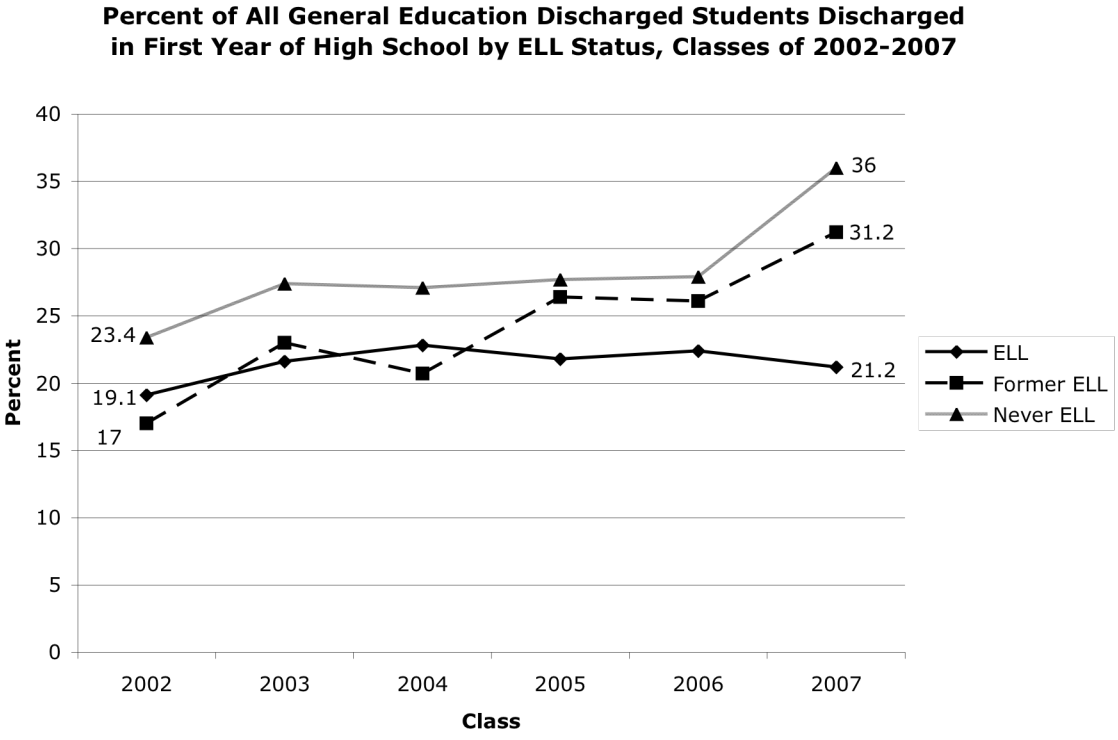
Figure 12 shows that the ELL discharge rate has ranged between 26.7 and 29.7 percent over this time period, with a high of 29.7 percent for the Class of 2006 (See Appendix Table A6).

The discharge rate of former ELLs was 14.6 percent for the Class of 2002 and 14.5 percent for the Class of 2007. For the Class of 2005, there was a one-year increase in this discharge rate to 18.1 percent, which then dropped in subsequent years. For students who had never been classified as ELLs, the discharge rate increased from 18.6 to 21.9 percent.

[31] David Herszenhorn, "Graduation Rate Improving, Schools Chancellor Says," *New York Times,* June 30, 2006. In June of 2006, the DOE reported that the Class of 2005 had actually graduated at a rate of 58.2, five percentage points higher than reported a few months before.

Figure 12 and 13.





- **General education students who have never been ELLs and students who are former ELLs are now much more likely to be discharged in their first year of high school.**

For the Class of 2002, 23 percent of all discharges for students who had never been classified as ELLs and 17 percent of all discharges for students who were former ELLs were discharged in their first year of high school. By the Class of 2007, these figures had increased to 36 and 31 percent, respectively. For students who had never been classified as ELLs, the sharp increase in the percent of all discharges that were discharged in the first year of high school occurred between the Classes of 2006 and 2007. For current ELL students, the timing of discharge has not changed dramatically over time. For the Class of 2002, 19 percent of all current ELL discharges occurred in the first year of high school; this figure increased to 21 percent for the Class of 2005 (See Appendix Table A7).

VII. HOW WOULD GRADUATION RATES CHANGE IF DISCHARGES WERE COUNTED AS DROPOUTS?

Through the Class of 2007, New York City calculated the graduation rate for the general education cohort, which is reported as the city's "official" rate, by summing the number of graduates and GED recipients, and then dividing by the number of students who began as 9th graders ("base population") in a given year plus students who enroll in 10th grade or thereafter ("admissions") less "discharges," or:

$$\frac{\text{(Graduates + GED recipients)}}{\text{((Base Population + Admissions) – Discharges)]}}$$

Special education cohort graduation rates were calculated in the same way but excluded admissions occurring after the students' first year of high school (i.e. in the DOE's accounting system for this cohort, the year in which the student turned 14); thus, the calculation for special education students for the Class of 2007 was:

$$\frac{\text{(Graduates + GED recipients)}}{\text{((Base Population – Discharges)]}}$$

As a result, graduation rates in both cases appear to have improved more than they would if discharges were not eliminated from the graduation calculation.

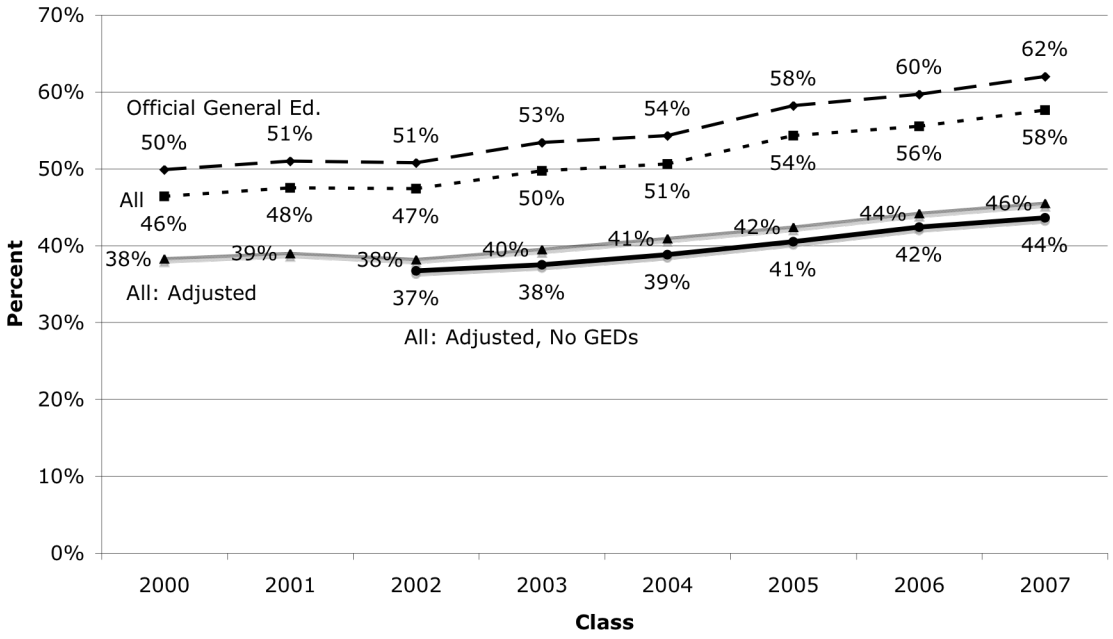
To determine what impact the inclusion of discharges in the graduation rate calculation would have, we re-estimated the graduation rate counting discharges as non-graduates. *We caution that these discharge-adjusted figures surely represent an underestimate of the actual graduation rate*, as an unknown fraction of these discharges are students who moved to degree-granting non-DOE schools and thus should be excluded from graduation rate calculations.

- **Official and Discharge-Adjusted Graduation Rates (General and Special Education Students)**

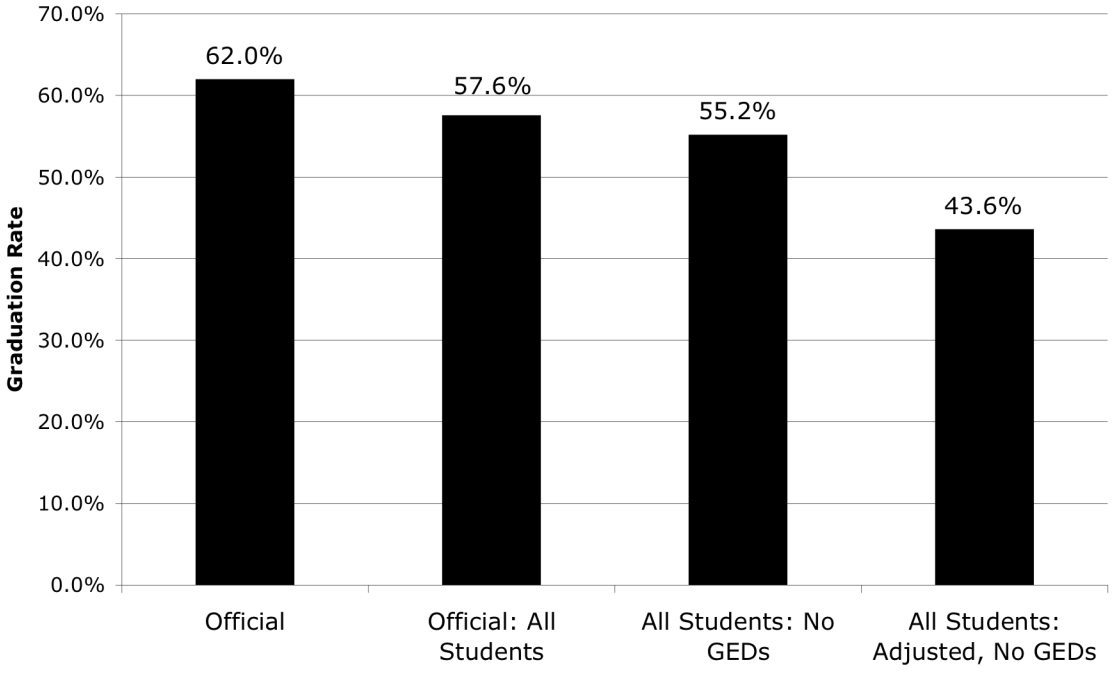
We first calculated the overall graduation rate including both general and special education students. (See Appendix Table A14 for data.) While the city's reported four-year general education graduation rate was 62 percent for the Class of 2007, the graduation rate would fall to 57.6 percent if special education students were also included, 45.5 percent if all discharges were included in the cohort and also counted as dropouts, and 43.6 percent if students earning GEDs rather than high school diplomas were counted as dropouts rather than graduates.

Figures 14 and 15.

Official and Discharge Adjusted Graduation Rates, All Students: Class of 2000-2007



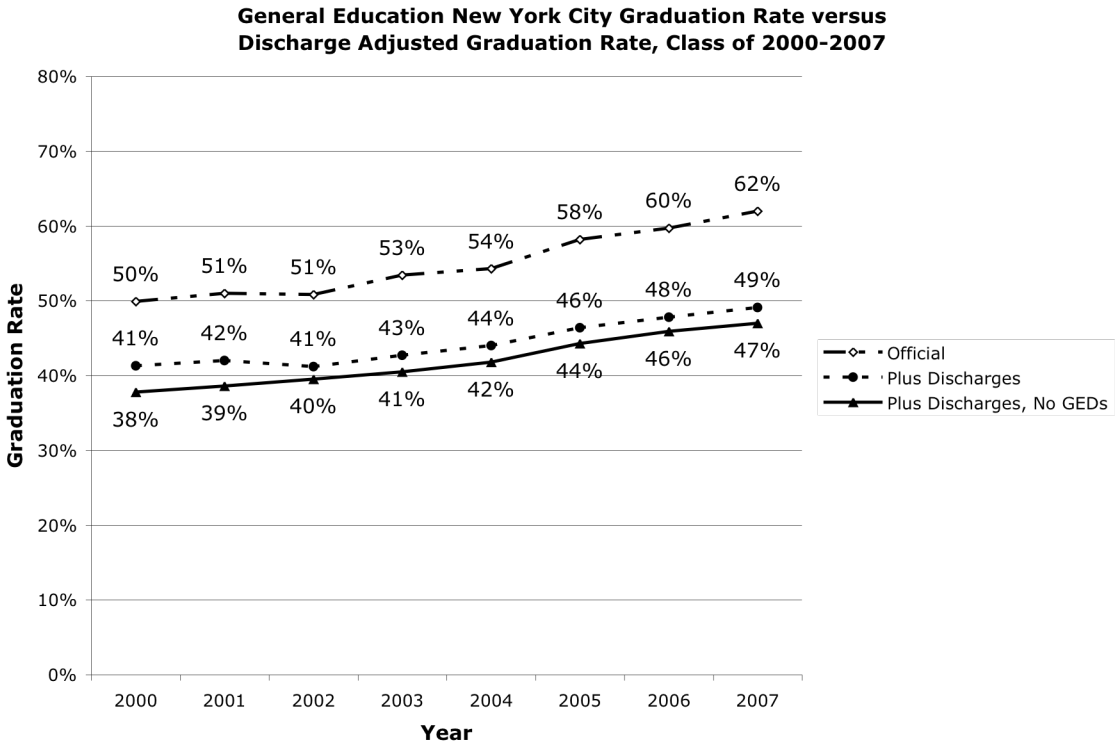
New York City Class of 2007 Graduation Rate



- **Official and Discharge-Adjusted Graduation Rates: General Education Students**

Official and adjusted general education graduation rates for each of the Classes 2000 through 2007 are reported in Appendix Table A1, and displayed in the graph below. When the graduation rate is calculated to include discharges, the rate drops from the official rate for the Class of 2007 from 62 percent to 49 percent. When students receiving GEDs are not counted as graduates, the graduation rate drops further to 47 percent.

Figure 16.



Appendix Table A10 displays New York City's official graduation rate for each racial, ethnic, and gender group, as well as the discharge-adjusted graduation rate when discharges are counted as dropouts. The top panel includes GEDs as graduates, while the bottom panel does not.

If discharges were counted as dropouts and GEDs were not counted as graduates, the outcomes of the Class of 2007 for students in the general education cohort would look markedly different:

- The Asian graduation rate would fall from 75.4 to 63.1 percent.
- The Hispanic graduation rate would fall from 50.8 to 39.1 percent.
- The African-American graduation rate would fall from 55.2 to 43.7 percent.

- The white graduation rate would fall from 75 to 60.5 percent.
- The female graduation rate would fall from 64.9 to 52.2 percent.
- The male graduation rate would fall from 53.6 to 41.8 percent.
- The ELL graduation rate would fall from 30.8 to 21.2 percent.

- **Official and Discharge-Adjusted Graduation Rates: Special Education Students**

If discharges were counted as dropouts, the special education graduation rate would fall from 8.6 to 6.5 percent for the Class of 2007. The difference is especially striking for self-contained students, particularly for the Class of 2005.

Figure 17.

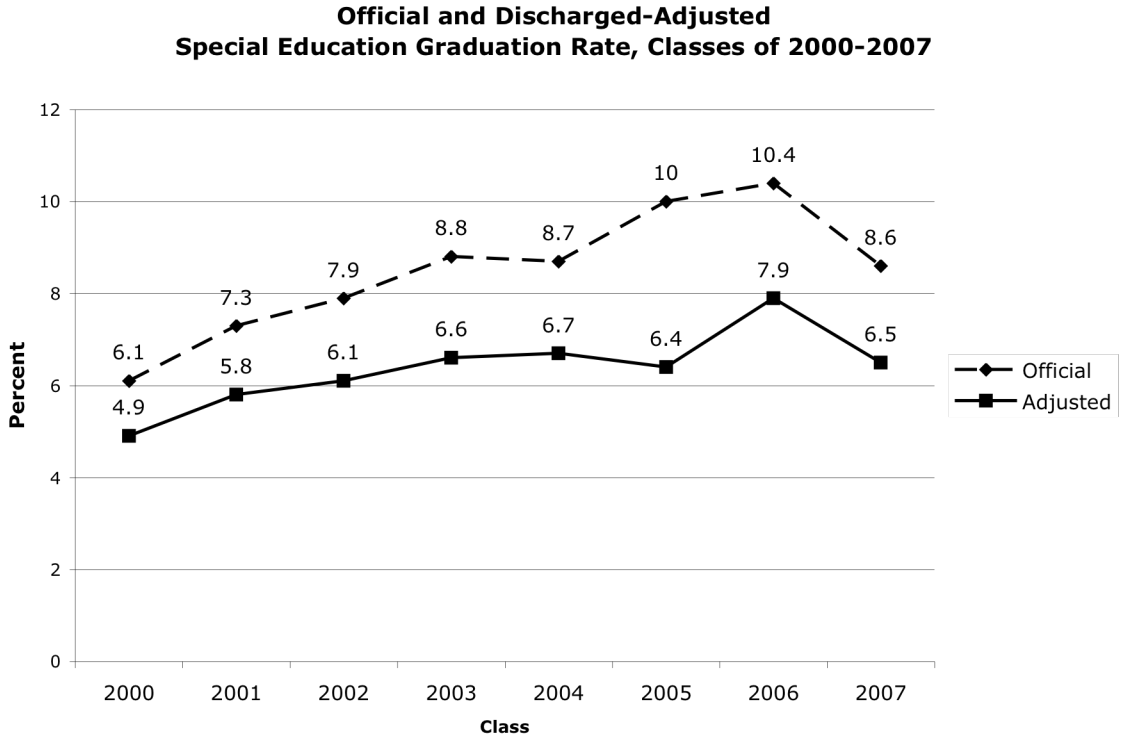
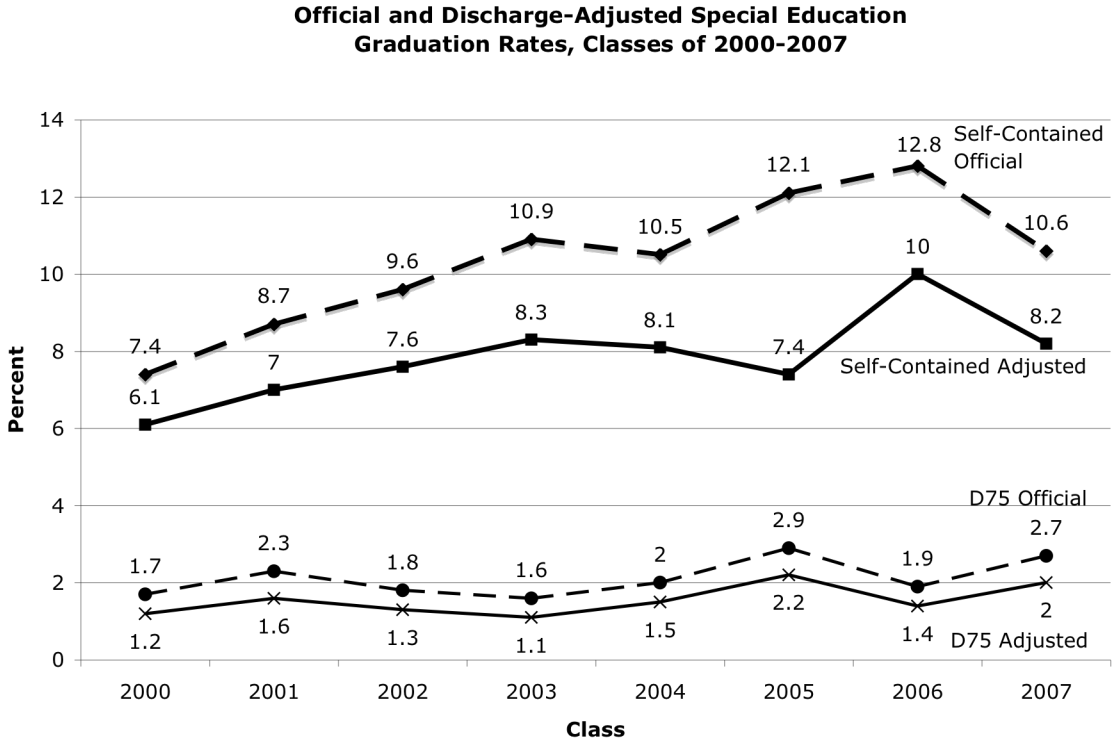


Figure 18.



VIII. TO WHAT EXTENT DO SCHOOLS VARY IN THEIR DISCHARGE RATES?

To determine to what extent discharge rates vary across schools, we analyzed school-level discharge data released publicly by the Department of Education for the Classes of 2005-2007. Below, we detail our findings:

- **New York City high schools vary considerably in their discharge rates.**

For approximately one in three New York City high schools in the Class of 2007[32] - 87 high schools - graduation rates would drop by 15 percentage points or more if discharges were counted as dropouts in the graduation calculation.

- **The overwhelming majority of schools with high discrepancies between their official graduation rate and their discharge-adjusted graduation rate received As or Bs on their 2007 School Progress Report.**

Three in four of the schools (72 percent) above whose graduation rates would drop by 15 percentage points or more schools received As or Bs on their 2007 School Progress Report.[33]

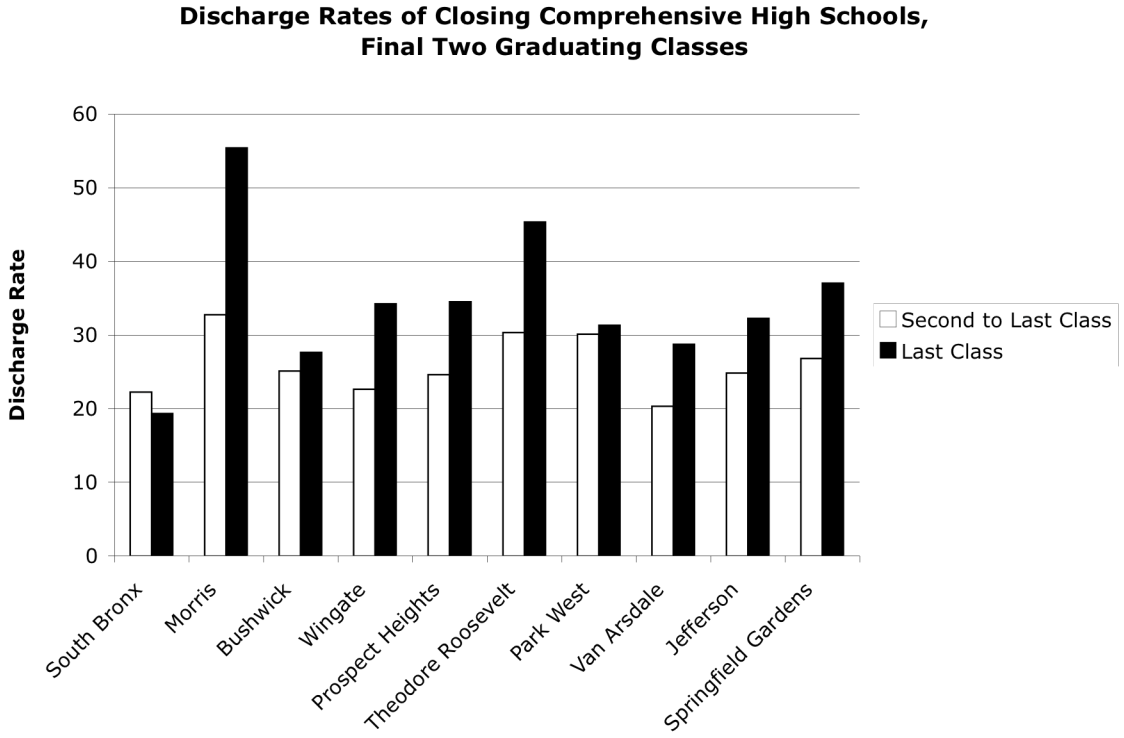
[32] There are 292 high schools with valid graduation data reported for the Class of 2007.

- **Large comprehensive high schools that are phasing out have especially high discharge rates.**

In Table 7 below, we show the discharge rates for the ultimate and penultimate entering classes for comprehensive schools that have closed. With the sole exception of South Bronx High School, which was one of the first school closings (the last freshman class entered in 2000-2001), we observe a sharp increase in the discharge rate for the final graduating class.

These differences are sometimes quite large. The last graduating class of Morris High School had a discharge rate of 55 percent; the prior class had a discharge rate of 33 percent. The last graduating class of Wingate High School had a discharge rate of 34 percent; the prior class had a rate of 23 percent. It may be the case that these schools no longer have incentives to retain students and thus discharge at higher rates. Alternatively, it may be that high fractions of students less likely to be discharged transfer to other NYC high schools when they are informed that their school will be closed, increasing the rate for remaining students.

Figure 19.



[33] 79 of these 87 schools received a Progress Report grade for 2007. We make use of the Progress Report grades for 2007 because they are based on graduation data from the Class of 2007, the most recent class for which data are available.

Table 7. Discharge Rate for Final Two Classes of Closing Large Comprehensive High Schools

	Penultimate Class	Last Class
South Bronx HS (2004)	22.2	19.3
Morris HS (2005)	32.7	55.4
Bushwick HS (2006)	25.1	27.6
Wingate HS (2006)	22.6	34.2
Prospect Heights HS (2006)	24.6	34.5
Theodore Roosevelt HS (2006)	30.3	45.3
Park West HS (2006)	30.1	31.3
Van Arsdale HS (2007)	20.3	28.7
Jefferson HS (2007)	24.8	32.2
Springfield Gardens HS (2007)	26.8	37.0

Source: New York City Department of Education Four-Year Longitudinal Reports. Last graduating class in parentheses.

IX. WHAT ARE THE RECENT TRENDS IN GED TEST-TAKING AMONG SCHOOL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS IN NEW YORK CITY?

It is well-known that students earning GEDs have much lower lifetime earnings than students who earn high school diplomas. In 2002, the AFC/Public Advocate report drew attention to the large number of school-eligible high school students channeled to GED programs. Here, we provide an update on the number of New York City students age twenty and below that sat for the GED test between the 2002-03 and 2007-08 school years.

To track trends in New York City students' GED test-taking, we obtained annual reports produced by the New York State Education Department for each school year[34] in order to examine the number, age distribution, and race and ethnicity of school-eligible GED test-takers.

- **The number of school-eligible GED test takers has not declined between the 2002-03 and 2007-08 school years. In the 2007-08 school year, the overall passing rate for school-eligible GED test takers was 59 percent.**

The data displayed in Tables 8-10 demonstrate that the number of New York City school-eligible students under 21 taking the GED has not declined over time. We note that the data provided by NYSED may underestimate the total number of school-eligible New

[34] These data from from July 1 of a given year through June 30 of the following year.

York City residents preparing for and also taking the GED. According to a recent report produced for the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, the availability of GED testing seats in New York City is far lower than the demand, with long waiting lists and great frustration in finding seats. GED teachers in New York City rarely can locate enough slots for their students to take the exams, and often have to refer them to sites far away.[35] Because of the shortage of seats within the city, New York City GED preparation programs have had to hire buses to take their students to exam centers in Westchester or Long Island.

We also note that interpreting these trends is complicated by growing age cohorts over this time period. In the absence of counts of New York City age cohorts for each age, we cannot provide a precise estimate of the fraction of students by age that are taking the GED test.

Table 8a. Number of New York City School-Eligible GED Test Takers, 2002-03 and 2007-08 School Years

Age	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
16	185	170	115	107	141	99
17	2419	2247	2178	2117	2112	2020
18	2855	3160	2949	2731	3117	3467
19	3164	3392	3382	3211	3199	3743
20	2330	2588	2607	2403	2417	2832
Total 16-20	10953	11557	11231	10569	10986	12161

Source: New York State Education Department.

Table 8b. Percent of New York City School-Eligible Test Takers Receiving GED by Age, 2002-2008 School Years

Age	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
16	75	74	64	64	68	68
17	73	72	74	72	74	74
18	61	61	64	60	62	65
19	49	49	50	47	52	55
20	44	42	45	43	46	48
Total 16-20	56.8	55.6	57.3	54.6	58.2	59.2

Source: New York State Education Department.

[35] Jacqueline Cook, "Our Chance for Change: A Four-year Reform Initiative for GED Testing in New York City," June 2008; available at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/GED_testing_report_our_chanceforchange.pdf. See also Ethan Rouen, "For many, HS diploma test is hard to GED." *New York Daily News*, February 14, 2007.

- **GED test-taking has increased for Hispanics even as it has remained unchanged, declined, or increased by smaller increments for other racial and ethnic groups.[36]**

Figure 20 shows that for every students of every age, the number of Hispanic students taking the GED has increased even as the number of students of other groups taking the GED has declined for some ages. Yet only 39 percent of Hispanic school-eligible test takers passed the GED exam in the 2007-08 school year.

Table 9. Number and Age Distribution of New York City GED School-Eligible Test Takers by Race and Ethnicity, 2002-2008

	2002-03				2007-08			
	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian
16	75	44	37	4	35	14	53	3
17	1026	639	945	192	709	477	996	155
18	1695	748	1296	219	1984	704	2134	325
19	2469	770	1625	394	2542	678	2661	416
20	2062	443	1303	281	2389	450	2298	321
Total	7327	2644	5206	1090	7659	2323	8142	1220

Source: New York State Education Department.

[36] We note that the NYSED data allow for multiple racial classifications; that is, a student can be classified as both white and Hispanic. While this feature of the data presents an inflated overall number of test-takers, as evidence by the greater number of test-takers reported in Table 9 than Table 8, these data are not problematic for tracking rates of change by race and ethnicity over time since the racial classification system was constant over this time period. It is possible that over time, however, students are more likely to designate multiple racial classifications, though we believe that it is unlikely to solely produce the Hispanic pattern we observe above.

Figure 20.

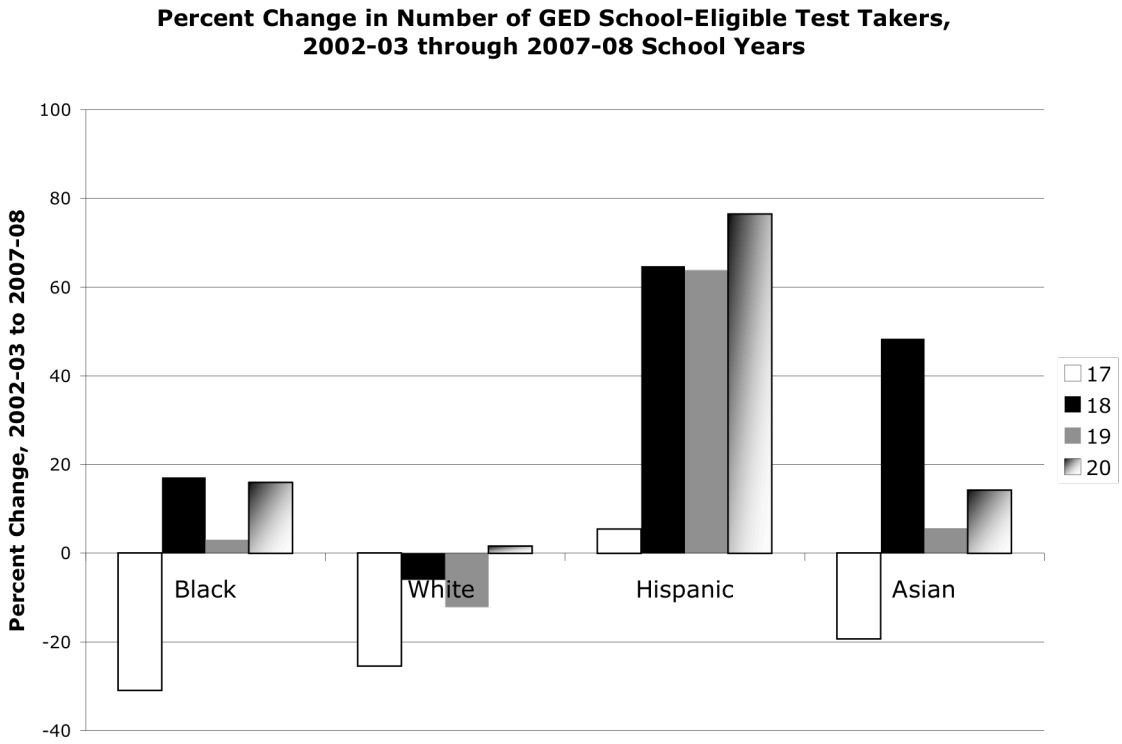


Table 10. Percent Increase in Number of New York City GED School-Eligible Test Takers by Age, Race, and Ethnicity, 2002-03 to 2007-08 School Years

Percent Change 2003-2008	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Age Total
17	-30.9	-25.4	5.4	-19.3	-16.6
18	17.1	-5.9	64.7	48.4	30.0
19	3.0	-12.0	63.8	5.6	19.8
20	15.9	1.6	76.4	14.2	33.5

Source: New York State Education Department. Because of the small numbers for 16 year olds, we do not report percent changes for 16 year olds in this table.

X. WHAT FACTORS MIGHT EXPLAIN INCREASING DISCHARGE RATES OVER TIME?

What factors might lead to an increase in the discharge rate over time, and in particular, the increasing rate of discharges in the first year of high school? One response was provided by Chancellor Joel Klein in a recent State Assembly Committee on Education hearing. When asked about the increasing number of discharges, Klein explained:

> It's increasing for one simple reason, the number of students in the cohort is increasing. In fact, if you look at the percentage of students, the numbers have been virtually constant on discharges. What I mean by the number from 15 to 18,000, if the overall cohort goes up to about 80, 85,000, that will happen… Unlike you have in most cities, you have a huge infusion of students who come here in 10th grade and 11th grade and that number has grown. Some of those students come here for a year and then they go back to their home country. So the percentage of discharges has remained essentially within a few tenths of a point the same.[37]

As we demonstrated above, it is not simply that the *numbers* of discharges have increased, but that 1) the *rate* of discharges has increased for both general and special education students, and 2) the increase in the overall discharge rate has been primarily driven by *a doubling in the discharge rate for students in their first year of high school*, as opposed to students who enroll in New York City schools in subsequent years. In what follows, we consider five explanations for increasing discharge rates over time: 1) increased student mobility out of New York City to other locations in the United States, 2) increased circular migration between New York City and other countries, 3) increased transfers to private and parochial schools, 4) increased fractions of extremely overage students entering high school, and 5) the changing accountability climate. We emphasize that the following analysis and discussion can neither fully confirm nor discount any one of these explanations, but rather raise questions that require further examination.

To summarize our findings, recent increases in the discharge rate, particularly for first year high school students, do not appear to be explained by increased student migration out of the city, increased international out-migration, or increasing parochial school transfers according to data from the US Census American Community Survey and enrollment data from parochial schools.

- **Increasing student mobility out of New York City**

One potential reason for a higher discharge rate is increasing student mobility out of New York City to other locations in the United States. The New York City Four-Year Longitudinal Report reports that discharges "are students who left the school system

[37] New York State Assembly Public Hearing on Governance of the New York City School District, Assembly Standing Committee on Education, Monday, February 6, 2009, p. 41- 42

primarily to enroll in another educational program or setting." It is thus of interest to know whether student mobility out of New York City has been increasing over time.

In recent months, the *New York Times* has reported that according to Census data, mobility out of New York City has *declined* over time.[38] We asked the demographer who analyzes the Census data for the *New York Times*, Andrew A. Beveridge, professor of Sociology at Queens College, CUNY, to provide mobility data for the high school aged population. Analyzing a question in the US Census American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples from 2005, 2006, and 2007, Beveridge provided the numbers of 14-20 year old students who had not graduated from high school when surveyed and who were living in New York City one year prior to the survey. Because these data represent a one percent sample of the population, these estimates have large standard errors. Nonetheless, if there were dramatic population migrations driving an increase in the discharge rate, this change would likely be visible in the American Community Survey data.

Following the trend demonstrated for the entire population, estimates of non-high school graduates ages 14-20 not living in New York City at the time of the survey who had lived in New York City one year prior has *declined* from 2005-2007, the period during which high school discharges early in high school are increasing. 17,398 students had been living in New York City one year prior in 2005, 14,389 in 2006, and 16,770 in 2007. These data suggest that the non-high school graduate 14-20 year old population leaving New York City is either largely unchanged or declining. Thus, it does not appear that an increase in New York City students who are not high school graduates moving to locations outside of the city but within the United States can explain the higher discharge rate.

- **Increasing immigration in and out of New York City**

We also investigated whether increased student migration from New York City to international locations could explain the rise in discharges; as recounted above, Chancellor Joel Klein maintained in a recent hearing that many discharges "come here for a year and then they go back to their home country."[39] For increased circular migration to explain the higher discharge rate, it would have to be the case that high school aged students are more likely to both *come* to New York City and also *leave* New York City.

Again, we asked Dr. Beveridge to provide data from the US Census' American Community Survey to determine whether the fraction of foreign-born school-aged

[38] Sam Roberts, "New York City Sees Fewer Residents Leave for Other States," *New York Times*, March 18, 2009. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/19/nyregion/19census.html; "New York City lost less population to other states in the 12 months ending July 1, 2008, than during any year in decades, according to census figures released Thursday." See also Sam Roberts, "As Economy Stalls, Fewer New Yorkers Moving Out of the State," *New York Times,* January 18, 2009; Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/19/nyregion/19migrate.html

[39] New York State Assembly Public Hearing on Governance of the New York City School District, Assembly Standing Committee on Education, Monday, February 6, 2009, p. 41- 42

students not enrolled in school is declining. If the increasing discharge rates are explained by international migration, then a *declining* fraction of foreign born students should be in the category "not enrolled" in school. Because there is some evidence that older teenagers come to the United States to work and remit money to their home countries without ever enrolling in school, we report estimates for 14-18 year olds, who are squarely of high school age, rather than also including 19 and 20 year olds in this estimate. Between 2005 and 2007, the fraction of foreign born students who were not enrolled in school increased. In 2005, 9.1 percent of foreign-born New York City students were not enrolled in school (9,948 students). For 2006, 11.8 percent of these students (11,907) were not enrolled in school, and for 2007, 10.7 percent of these students (11,644) were not enrolled in school.[40] Again, we caution against over-interpreting these point estimates, but nonetheless these data suggest that the foreign-born population not enrolled in school in New York City has either remained stable over time or is increasing.

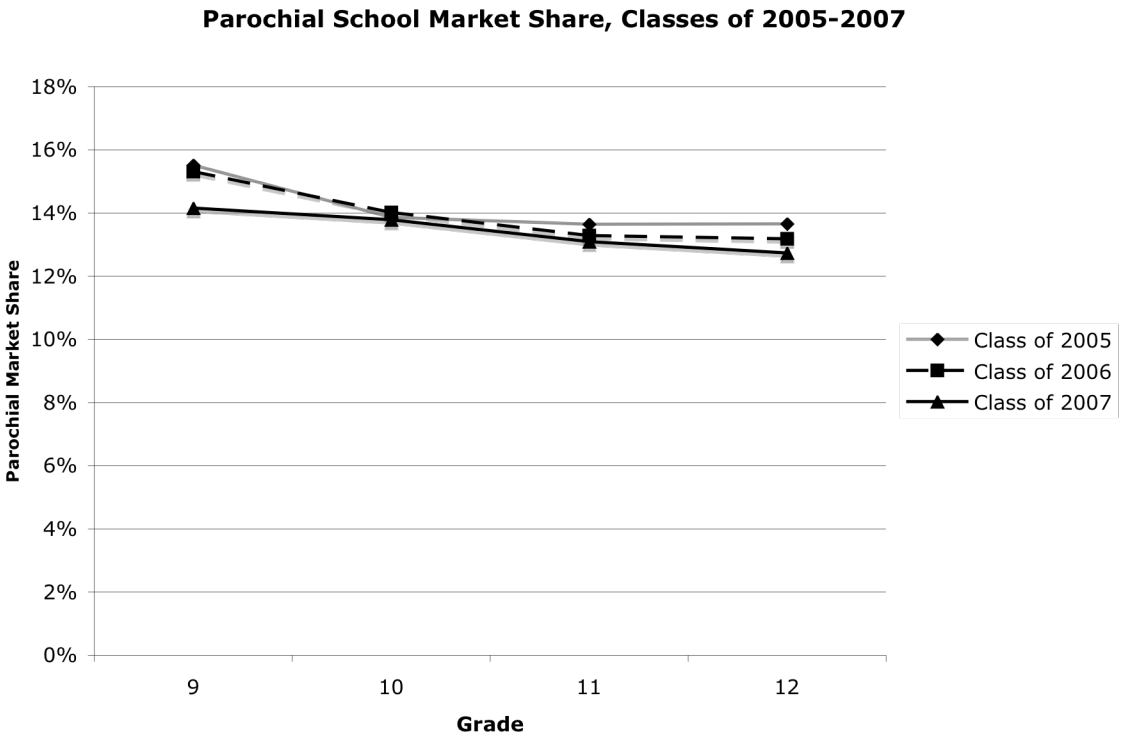
- **Increasing transfers to private and parochial schools**

A third plausible explanation for an increasing discharge rate is increasing numbers of transfers from New York City high schools to local private and parochial schools. If this was the case, we would expect to see shifts in the market share that these schools have across grades – that is, the percentage of total enrollment in private or parochial schools – because students have had to enroll first in New York City public high schools before they could be discharged to these schools.

We were not able to obtain detailed grade-by-grade enrollment data for New York City independent schools, but did obtain parochial school enrollment by grade for the Classes of 2005 – 2007 from New York State Education Department. Figure 21 below shows the market share of parochial schools for each grade level. These patterns appear to be the same across all three classes; despite a rising discharge rate in the first year of high school for the Class of 2007, this pattern is not clearly reflected in these data.

[40] US Census American Community Survey Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples (1% sample) from 2005, 2006, and 2007, provided by Andrew A. Beveridge. Students living in households, not group quarters.

Figure 21.



- **Increasing concentrations of extremely overage students**

Another explanation for the increase in first year discharge rates is that a growing fraction of students are extremely overage when they begin school. Using data from the Annual School Reports produced by New York City for the Classes of 2003-2007, Table 11 below shows that high fractions of entering New York City students are overage for grade when they begin high school. In 2007, 39 percent of students in the Bronx, 32 percent of students in Manhattan, 29 percent of students in Brooklyn, 24 percent of students in Queens, and 17 percent of students in Staten Island were overage for their grade.[41]

While these data do not suggest that the overall fraction of overage students is increasing over time, other evidence such as the recent Advocates for Children report "Stuck in the Middle" demonstrated that there are increasing numbers of students who are *extremely overage* for middle school.[42] As the report explained, "In recent years, community-based providers and school officials that serve students in the public school system have been noticing a disturbing number of sixteen-year-old seventh graders or seventeen-year-old eighth graders who are appearing (or staying) in middle schools across the city." If students entering high school are much older than before, this trend may help explain an

[41] These figures represent weighted averages for each of these boroughs; that is, we used school-level overage data and weighted by enrollment to produce a population average for each borough.
[42] Advocates for Children. 2008. "Stuck in the Middle: The Problem of Overage Middle School Students in New York City."

increasing discharge rate for first year high school students, who only in rare circumstances can be discharged before they have reached the age of seventeen.

Table 11. Percent of Entering Students that were Overage for Grade, Classes of 2003-2007

	Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Staten Island
Class of 2003	34.6	40.9	28.4	26.8	16.7
Class of 2004	28.3	35.8	28.0	26.6	16.4
Class of 2005	28.9	34.6	25.0	23.5	14.3
Class of 2006	28.9	37.8	26.6	23.5	14.8
Class of 2007	31.9	39.4	29.2	24.1	16.9

- **A more stringent accountability climate**

The Department of Education has placed increased accountability pressures on all schools in recent years. Even before the "School Progress Report" system was unveiled in the fall of 2007, many regional superintendents and intermediary organizations had begun closely tracking data to reveal which schools were more successful in moving their students through high school and graduating them in four years. The School Progress Reports ultimately incorporated many of these elements, including the attendance rates and achievement results of students who are enrolled an entire year, four-year graduation rates, and credit accumulation. In these Progress Reports, however, the discharge rate is not counted against schools.

The rise in the discharge rate may be related to the design of city and state accountability systems, which perversely reward high schools that discharge low-performing students as quickly as possible. The discharge rate is not counted anywhere in the DOE's evaluation system. Thus, high schools may be encouraged to discharge low-performing students as quickly as possible in order to raise their student attendance, achievement, and graduation rates. For example, one of the specific measurements used in the school progress reports is the percentage of students at a school who accumulated 10 or more academic credits in their first year of high school.[43] If there are students who appear unlikely to accumulate these credits in the ninth grade, the accountability system as structured may encourage schools to discharge them in ninth grade.

Another possible explanation relates to the New York state system for tracking graduation rates under the No Child Left Behind Act, which excludes from graduation

[43] New York City Department of Education, "Educator Guide: The New York City Progress Report High School Updated: November 6, 2008, posted at: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/30FA5AB5-F479-4B09-81BC-8711BF4AE8ED/0/Educator_Guide_HS_110708.pdf

calculations students who attend a given school for less than five months. As a result, schools have an incentive to discharge students before they have been enrolled in their school for five full months so that they do not count towards their graduation rate.

Though the data we report are not sufficient to establish a causal link between these accountability measures and the rising 9th grade discharge rate, we believe this issue warrants further investigation.[44]

XI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a November 2003 *New York Times* article, Chancellor Klein argued for more transparency regarding high school discharges, saying, "The information should be out there, and it should be clear. You're never going to change the system unless you're brutally candid."[45]

More than five years later, much of the information needed to evaluate the validity of New York City's high school discharges remains hidden. The public still does not have access to transparent information about who the discharged students are, why they were discharged, why the discharge rate has increased over time, and why the discharge rate for students in their first year of high school in particular has doubled. Furthermore, in the absence of a regular and independent auditing mechanism, the public cannot have confidence that students who are discharged to educational settings outside of the New York City public schools are actually enrolling at these schools. As state and the city accountability systems continue to raise the stakes for schools around graduation rates, an independent auditing mechanism is more critical than ever before.

Based on our findings, we make several recommendations:

1) The Department of Education should publicly release comprehensive discharge code data for both the general education and special education cohorts from 2000-2007 and annually in the future as part of the "Four Year Longitudinal Graduation Report." These data should be disaggregated by discharge code and by race, gender, socioeconomic status, English Language Learner and special education status, and age. In addition to disaggregating graduation rates for the general and special education cohorts, the Four Year Longitudinal Graduation Reports should report an overall graduation rate that includes all high school students served in New York City, including special education students served in self-contained and District 75 classes.

2) The New York State Comptroller and/or the New York City Comptroller should audit the discharge and graduation rate data for New York City high schools. A recent audit by the State Comptroller found significant reporting errors in schools'

[44] Graduation data for the Class of 2008, which may reflect strategic responses to the Progress Reports, has not yet been released.
[45] Tamar Lewin and Jennifer Medina, NY Times, op.cit., July 31, 2003.

graduation and dropout data elsewhere in the state, but no comparable audit has performed for New York City high schools in many years.

3) An independent party should produce a report analyzing the discharge data since the AFC/Public Advocate report to make clear who the discharged students are, why they were discharged, why the discharge rate has increased over time, and why the discharge rate of first year students in particular has doubled.[46]

4) The city's Progress Report school grading system and the state accountability system should be evaluated to determine whether high schools face perverse incentives to discharge students earlier in their high school careers. The DOE should further explore incorporating certain categories of discharges into its Progress Reports to ensure that schools have an incentive to retain at-risk students and provide them with the supports necessary to ensure that they graduate with high school diplomas.

5) The discharge codes should be carefully examined to see if they conform to national standards. Some of the students who are currently defined as "discharges" in New York City should not be excluded from the cohort for the purpose of calculating graduation rates, and should more accurately be redefined as "dropouts."

[46] While the "Multiple Pathways Research and Development: Summary Findings and Strategic Solutions for Overage, Under-Credited Youth" report by the Office of Multiple Pathways provide a profile of overage, under-credited students, it did not provide a profile of discharges.

Table A1. Number and Percent of Classes of 2000-2007 Discharged from New York City High Schools

	General Ed. Cohort	General Ed. Discharges	Total General Ed.	Special Ed. Cohort	Special Ed. Discharges	Total Special Ed.	Total Cohort	Total Discharges	Overall Discharge Rate	General Ed. Discharge Rate	Special Ed. Discharge Rate
2000	67072	13990	81062	5802	1460	7262	72874	15450	17.5	17.3	20.1
2001	65727	14101	79828	5727	1546	7273	71454	15647	18.0	17.7	21.3
2002	63460	14891	78351	5596	1571	7167	69056	16462	19.2	19.0	21.9
2003	63505	15918	79423	5815	1999	7814	69320	17917	20.5	20.0	25.6
2004	66967[47]	15626	82593	5842	1749	7591	72809	17375	19.3	18.9	23.0
2005	65705	16647	82352	5813	3264	9077	71518	19911	21.8	20.2	36.0
2006	68478	17021	85499	6498	1991	8489	74976	19012	20.2	19.9	23.5
2007	70439	18524	88963	6253	1964	8217	76692	20488	21.1	20.8	23.9

[47] There is an addition mistake in the Class of 2004 Longitudinal Report. The base population is reported as 76995, the number of admissions as 5598, and the number of discharges as 15626. Accordingly, the cohort size is 66967 rather than the 66947 reported in the published report.

Table A2. New York City General Education Graduation and Discharge Data, 2000-2007

	Base Population	Admissions	Total Population	Discharges	Cohort	Graduates	GED	Total Graduates+ GED	Official Graduation Rate	Discharge Rate	Graduation Rate Including Discharges	Graduation Rate Including Discharges, No GEDs
2000	75283	5779	81062	13990	67072	30633	2854	33487	49.9	17.3	41.3	37.8
2001	74285	5543	79828	14101	65727	30815	2705	33520	51.0	17.7	42.0	38.6
2002	72822	5529	78351	14891	63460	30947	1314	32261	50.8	19.0	41.2	39.5
2003	72937	6486	79423	15918	63505	32188	1736	33924	53.4	20.0	42.7	40.5
2004	76995	5598	82593	15626	66967[48]	34527	1812	36339	54.3	18.9	44.0	41.8
2005	73413	8939	82352	16647	65705	36522	1701	38223	58.2	20.2	46.4	44.3
2006	76929	8570	85499	17021	68478	39214	1691	40905	59.7	19.9	47.8	45.9
2007	80482	8481	88963	18524	70439	41843	1808	43651	62.0	20.8	49.1	47.0

Source: New York City Department of Education Four-Year Longitudinal Reports. The data reported in this table are for the general education cohort, which also includes special education students served in less restrictive settings. The discharge rate is calculated as the number of discharges divided by the sum of the number of students who began high school in New York City four years prior (referred to as the "Base Population") and the number of students who enrolled in city schools in the subsequent three years (referred to as "Admissions"). Admissions include students who transfer into city high schools from private and parochial schools, or students who transfer to city schools from another school district or educational setting.

[48] There is an addition mistake in the Class of 2004 Longitudinal Report. The base population is reported as 76995, the number of admissions as 5598, and the number of discharges as 15626. Accordingly, the cohort size is 66967 rather than the 66947 reported in the paper report.

Table A3. Number of General Education Students Admitted and Discharged by Year of High School

Class	1st Year Base Population	1st Year Discharge	2nd Year Admissions	2nd Year Population	2nd Year Discharge	3rd Year Admissions	3rd Year Population	3rd Year Discharge	4th Year Admissions	4th Year Population	4th Year Discharge
2000	75283	2886	3566	75963	3543	1382	73802	3763	831	70870	3798
2001	74285	2340	3915	75860	3912	1291	73239	4135	337	69441	3714
2002	72822	3159	3826	73489	4015	1306	70780	4242	397	66935	3475
2003	72937	4026	4060	72971	4363	1196	69804	4197	1230	66837	3332
2004	76995	3905	3001	76091	4553	1564	73102	4145	1033	69990	3023
2005	73413	4397	6083	75099	4553	2041	72587	4343	815	69059	3354
2006	76929	4521	5288	77696	4548	2243	75391	4424	1039	72006	3528
2007	80482	6070	5383	79795	4551	2401	77645	4550	697	73792	3353

Source: New York City Department of Education Four-Year Longitudinal Reports.

Table A4. Timing of Discharge: General Education Classes of 2000-2007

Class of:	1st Year of High School	2nd Year of High School	3rd Year of High School	4th Year of High School	Total Discharges
2000	20.6 (2886)	25.3 (3543)	26.9 (3763)	27.1 (3798)	13990
2001	16.6 (2340)	27.7 (3912)	29.3 (4135)	26.3 (3714)	14101
2002	21.2 (3159)	27.0 (4015)	28.5 (4242)	23.3 (3475)	14891
2003	25.3 (4026)	27.4 (4363)	26.4 (4197)	20.9 (3332)	15918
2004	25.0 (3905)	29.1 (4553)	26.5 (4145)	19.3 (3023)	15626
2005	26.4 (4397)	27.4 (4553)	26.1 (4343)	20.1 (3354)	16647
2006	26.6 (4521)	26.7 (4548)	26.0 (4424)	20.7 (3528)	17021
2007	32.8 (6070)	24.6 (4551)	24.6 (4550)	18.1 (3353)	18524

Source: New York City Department of Education Four-Year Longitudinal Reports. The number of discharges in each cell is listed in parentheses.

Table A5. Timing of Discharge by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender: Classes of 2005 and 2007

	Class of 2005				Class of 2006				Class of 2007			
	2001-02 (1st year)	2002-03 (2nd year)	2003-04 (3rd year)	2004-05 (4th year)	2004-05 (1st year)	2005-06 (2nd year)	2006-07 (3rd year)	2007-08 (4th year)	2003-04 (1st year)	2004-05 (2nd year)	2005-06 (3rd year)	2006-07 (4th year)
Asian	24.3 (511)	32.1 (676)	27.6 (582)	16.0 (338)	26.8 (511)	30.3 (578)	25.7 (490)	17.3 (330)	34.2 (696)	26.6 (540)	23.6 (479)	15.7 (319)
Hispanic	25.4 (1588)	27.0 (1687)	26.5 (1655)	21.2 (1326)	24.7 (1705)	25.9 (1783)	26.5 (1826)	22.9 (1578)	31.5 (2423)	24.9 (1909)	25.5 (1961)	18.1 (1389)
Black	23.9 (1338)	26.7 (1492)	26.9 (1506)	22.5 (1258)	24.9 (1386)	26.0 (1447)	28.0 (1557)	21.2 (1179)	30.6 (1940)	24.1 (1524)	24.5 (1553)	20.8 (1314)
White	36.6 (949)	26.0 (674)	22.6 (586)	14.8 (384)	35.8 (905)	28.6 (725)	20.7 (525)	14.9 (376)	41.7 (999)	22.3 (534)	22.7 (543)	13.3 (318)
Female	28.1 (2195)	26.8 (2098)	25.9 (2026)	19.1 (1496)	27.9 (2263)	26.2 (2122)	25.6 (2075)	20.2 (1639)	34.5 (3032)	24.7 (2172)	23.6 (2073)	17.1 (1503)
Male	24.9 (2201)	27.8 (2455)	26.2 (2317)	21.0 (1858)	25.3 (2258)	27.2 (2426)	26.3 (2349)	21.2 (1889)	31.2 (3038)	24.4 (2379)	25.4 (2477)	19.0 (1850)

Source: Data provided by the New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group. The number of discharges in each cell is listed in parentheses.

Table A6. Class of 2002 - 2007 Discharge Rates by English Language Learner Status

	Current ELL	Former ELL	Never ELL
Class of 2002	28.2 (3288)	14.6 (2900)	18.6 (8719)
Class of 2003	29.1 (3333)	15.4 (3180)	19.9 (9405)
Class of 2004	27.1 (3168)	14.6 (3012)	18.8 (9459)
Class of 2005	26.7 (3016)	18.1 (3061)	20.7 (10570)
Class of 2006	29.7 (2991)	14.6 (3289)	20.3 (10741)
Class of 2007	28.5 (3019)	14.5 (3190)	21.9 (12315)

Table A7. Percent of General Education Discharges Discharged in their 1st Year of High School by English Language Learner Status: Classes of 2002-2007

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
ELL	19.1 (628)	21.6 (719)	22.8 (722)	21.8 (656)	22.4 (669)	21.2 (640)
Former ELL	17.0 (493)	23.0 (731)	20.7 (623)	26.4 (808)	26.1 (857)	31.2 (996)
Never ELL	23.4 (2043)	27.4 (2576)	27.1 (2566)	27.7 (2933)	27.9 (2995)	36.0 (4434)

Source: Data provided by the New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group. The number of discharges in each cell is listed in parentheses.

Table A8. Timing of Discharge by ELL and Special Education Status: Classes of 2005 and 2007

	Class of 2005				Class of 2006				Class of 2007			
	2001-02 (1st year of HS)	2002-03 (2nd year of HS)	2003-04 (3rd year of HS)	2004-05 (4th year of HS)	2002-03 (1st year of HS)	2003-04 (2nd year of HS)	2004-05 (3rd year of HS)	2005-06 (4th year of HS)	2003-04 (1st year of HS)	2004-05 (2nd year of HS)	2005-06 (3rd year of HS)	2006-07 (4th year of HS)
ELL	21.8 (656)	29.0 (874)	27.6 (831)	21.7 (655)	22.4 (669)	28.3 (845)	24.6 (737)	24.7 (740)	21.2 (640)	28.3 (853)	29.7 (897)	20.8 (629)
Former ELL	26.4 (808)	25.8 (790)	26.4 (808)	21.4 (655)	26.1 (857)	23.8 (784)	27.5 (906)	22.6 (742)	31.2 (996)	22.7 (724)	25.5 (815)	20.5 (655)
Never ELL	27.7 (2933)	27.3 (2889)	25.6 (2704)	19.3 (2044)	27.9 (2995)	27.2 (2919)	25.9 (2781)	19.0 (2046)	36.0 (4434)	24.1 (2974)	23.0 (2838)	16.8 (2069)

Source: Data provided by the New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group. The number of discharges in each cell is listed in parentheses.

Table A9. Discharge Rate for District 75 and Self-Contained Special Education Students, Classes of 2000-2007

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
District 75	28.2	28.5	27.0	30.4	24.5	24.2	28.0	27.7
Self-Contained	17.5	19.0	20.3	24.1	22.6	38.8	22.0	22.5
Overall (District 75 & Self-Contained)	20.1	21.3	21.9	25.6	23.0	36.0	23.5	23.9

Note: Data from NYC DOE Longitudinal Graduation Reports.

Table A10. Official New York City Graduation Rate Versus Discharge-Adjusted Graduation Rate by Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and ELL Status Class of 2007

	Asian		Hispanic		Black		White		Female		Male		ELL	
	Official	Adjusted	Official	Adjusted	Official	Adjusted	Official	Adjusted	Official	Adjusted	Official	Adjusted	Official	Adjusted
Including GEDs as Graduates	77	64.4	53.4	41.1	57.5	45.6	79.1	63.8	66.9	53.8	56.8	44.3	30.8	22.1
Excluding GEDs As Graduates	75.4	63.1	50.8	39.1	55.2	43.7	75	60.5	64.9	52.2	53.6	41.8	29.7	21.2

Table A11. Class of 2005 - 2007 High School Outcomes by Race and Ethnicity

	Class of 2005				Class of 2006				Class of 2007			
	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian	Hispanic	Black	White
Dropouts	9.7 (920)	19.1 (4279)	15.2 (3423)	9.7 (1077)	8.8 (886)	19.1 (4598)	15.0 (3496)	9.3 (1007)	8.1 (845)	18.2 (4657)	13.9 (3352)	8.6 (868)
GED Recipients	1.6 (152)	2.5 (557)	2.7 (602)	3.5 (386)	1.6 (161)	2.3 (564)	2.4 (552)	3.8 (409)	1.6 (169)	2.6 (659)	2.3 (566)	4.1 (412)
Graduates	71.5 (6795)	47.0 (10492)	49.4 (11152)	72.0 (7981)	72.9 (7362)	48.5 (11664)	52.2 (12155)	73.1 (7931)	75.4 (7851)	50.8 (13036)	55.2 (13328)	75 (7535)
Graduates + GED	73.1 (6947)	49.4 (11049)	52.1 (11754)	75.5 (8367)	74.5 (7523)	50.8 (12228)	54.6 (12707)	76.9 (8340)	77 (8020)	53.4 (13695)	57.5 (13894)	79.1 (7947)
Students Still Enrolled	17.2 (1630)	31.4 (7019)	32.8 (7403)	14.8 (1636)	16.8 (1692)	30 (7224)	30.4 (7072)	13.8 (1499)	14.9 (1549)	28.4 (7294)	28.6 (6898)	12.3 (1238)
Discharges	18.2 (2107)	21.9 (6256)	19.9 (5594)	19.0 (2593)	15.9 (1909)	22.3 (6892)	19.3 (5569)	18.9 (2531)	16.3 (2034)	23.1 (7682)	20.8 (6331)	19.2 (2394)
Cohort Size	9497	22347	22580	11080	10101	24050	23275	10846	10414	25646	24144	10053

Source: Data provided by the New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group.

Table A12. Class of 2005 - 2007 High School Outcomes by Gender

	Class of 2005		Class of 2006		Class of 2007	
2005	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Dropouts	12.7 (4265)	17.0 (5469)	12.7 (4461)	16.6 (5562)	11.9 (4287)	15.9 (5466)
GED Recipients	2.0 (685)	3.2 (1016)	1.8 (643)	3.1 (1048)	1.9 (697)	3.2 (1111)
Graduates	61.1 (20447)	49.9 (16075)	62.6 (21892)	51.7 (17322)	64.9 (23377)	53.6 (18466)
Graduates + GED	63.1 (21132)	53.0 (17091)	64.4 (22535)	54.9 (18370)	66.9 (24074)	56.8 (19577)
Students Still Enrolled	24.1 (8079)	30.0 (9669)	22.9 (7998)	28.5 (9552)	21.2 (7639)	27.3 (9396)
Discharges	18.9 (7816)	21.5 (8831)	18.8 (8099)	21.0 (8922)	19.6 (8780)	22.1 (9744)
Cohort Size	33476	32229	34994	33484	36000	34439

Source: Data provided by the New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group.

Table A13. Number of Discharges and Cohort Members for District 75 and Self-Contained Special Education Students, Classes of 2000-2007

	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
	D	C	D	C	D	C	D	C	D	C	D	C	D	C	D	C
District 75	504	1285	494	1238	463	1251	563	1291	409	1262	430	1349	563	1445	605	1578
Self-Contained	956	4517	1052	4489	1108	4345	1436	4524	1340	4580	2834	4464	1428	5053	1359	4675
District 75 & Self-Contained	1460	5802	1546	5727	1571	5596	1999	5815	1749	5842	3264	5813	1991	6498	1964	6253

Note: Data from NYC DOE Longitudinal Graduation Reports. D=Discharge. C=Cohort, or the number of remaining students in the population after students have been discharged.

Table A14. Class of 2000 - 2007 High School Outcomes, All Students

	GE Discharges	GE Cohort	SE Discharges	SE Cohort	Total Discharges	Total Cohort
2000	13990	67072	1460	5802	15450	72874
2001	14101	65727	1546	5727	15647	71454
2002	14891	63460	1571	5596	16462	69056
2003	15918	63505	1999	5815	17917	69320
2004	15626	66947	1749	5842	17375	72789
2005	16647	65705	3264	5813	19911	71518
2006	17021	68478	1991	6498	19012	74976
2007	18524	70439	1964	6253	20488	76692

	GE Grads	GE GEDs	GE Total Grads	SE All Graduates	SE Grads	SE GEDs	Official GE Grad Rate	Official GE + SE Grad Rate	Official GE+SE Grad Rate (No GED)	Adjusted GE + SE Grad Rate	Adjusted GE+SE Grad Rate (No GED)
2000	30633	2854	33487	356	.	.	49.9	46.4		38.3	
2001	30815	2705	33520	419	.	.	51.0	47.5		39.0	
2002	30947	1314	32261	440	417	23	50.8	47.4	45.4	38.2	36.7
2003	32188	1736	33924	514	489	25	53.4	49.7	47.1	39.5	37.5
2004	34527	1812	36339	506	488	18	54.3	50.6	48.1	40.9	38.8
2005	36522	1701	38223	579	551	28	58.2	54.3	51.8	42.4	40.5
2006	39214	1691	40905	674	634	40	59.7	55.5	53.1	44.2	42.4
2007	41843	1808	43651	538	512	26	62.0	57.6	55.2	45.5	43.6

Source: New York City Department of Education Four-Year Longitudinal Reports and New York City Department of Education Research and Policy Support Group.

Table A15. Official Graduation Rates and Discharge-Adjusted Graduation Rates for the Class of 2007

	Graduation Rate	Discharge-Adjusted Graduation Rate	Difference
District 11	63.5	44.5	19.0
District 29	63.4	45.6	17.8
District 26	82.9	65.9	17.1
District 6	74.4	58.0	16.4
District 20	64.6	48.3	16.4
District 28	74.8	58.8	16.0
District 14	66.0	50.1	15.9
District 5	78.1	62.2	15.9
District 8	54.4	38.9	15.5
District 12	58.5	43.5	15.0
District 25	63.9	48.9	15.0
District 10	62.5	48.1	14.4
District 7	67.6	53.8	13.8
District 21	63.5	49.8	13.7
District 9	66.8	53.2	13.5
District 27	52.3	38.7	13.5
District 30	63.5	50.3	13.3
District 3	67.0	54.1	12.9
District 24	58.4	45.4	12.9
District 4	74.7	62.0	12.7
District 18	41.5	29.1	12.5
District 22	75.2	62.8	12.4
District 2	65.4	53.3	12.1
District 15	57.5	45.4	12.1
District 31	76.2	64.4	11.9
District 19	49.0	37.1	11.8
District 13	86.6	75.0	11.6
District 17	65.3	53.9	11.4
District 23	59.6	48.9	10.7
District 16	48.7	39.3	9.4
District 1	65.6	56.4	9.2
District 32	58.8	50.0	8.8
Citywide	**62.0**	**49.1**	**12.9**

Source: New York City Department of Education Four-Year Longitudinal Reports.