

The **Research Alliance** for
New York City Schools



High School Choice in New York City: A Report on the School Choices and Placements of Low-Achieving Students



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APPENDIX A: THE SHRINKING POOL OF LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2 STUDENTS

As is well known, scores on the New York State assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics experienced considerable growth during our study period, which may in part reflect test inflation (for example, see Koretz, 2008). This is evident in Figures A-1 and A-2, which show the distribution of 7th grade scaled scores by year for the 2007-2010 rising 9th grade cohorts. The vertical lines in these figures show the cut scores required for Level 2, 3, or 4 designations during this period. These distributions moved steadily to the right, with a smaller and smaller share of students falling in the Level 1 and 2 categories. Table A-1 shows the actual counts of students whose highest score in ELA and mathematics was a Level 1 or 2 over this period.

Table A-1 indicates that the fraction of rising 9th graders who scored at Level 1 or 2 in one or both subjects—but no higher than Level 2 in either—declined precipitously from 2005 to 2010. In 2005, roughly half of all students met this criteria; this dropped to between 33 and 39 percent in the 2006-2008 period and then to a low of 12.7 percent in 2010. Note that *only 150 students* (out of 69,000) scored at Level 1 in both ELA and math in 2010 (the 2009 test cycle). After the state raised the cut scores in 2010, the percent rose again to 39 percent.

This shift has important implications for our analysis. Were we to define “low-achieving” students as those scoring at Level 1 or 2, our core sample of students would become increasingly disadvantaged as the relatively advantaged move out of the Level 1/2 designations over time. This change in the composition of students is confirmed when looking at other descriptive risk factors for these students, such as poverty rates, percent who were ELL, and percent who were special education. To maintain continuity in our study population, we instead defined low-achieving students using percentiles, as explained in the body of the report.

Figure A-1: Shift in the Distribution of ELA Scaled Scores Between 2007 and 2010

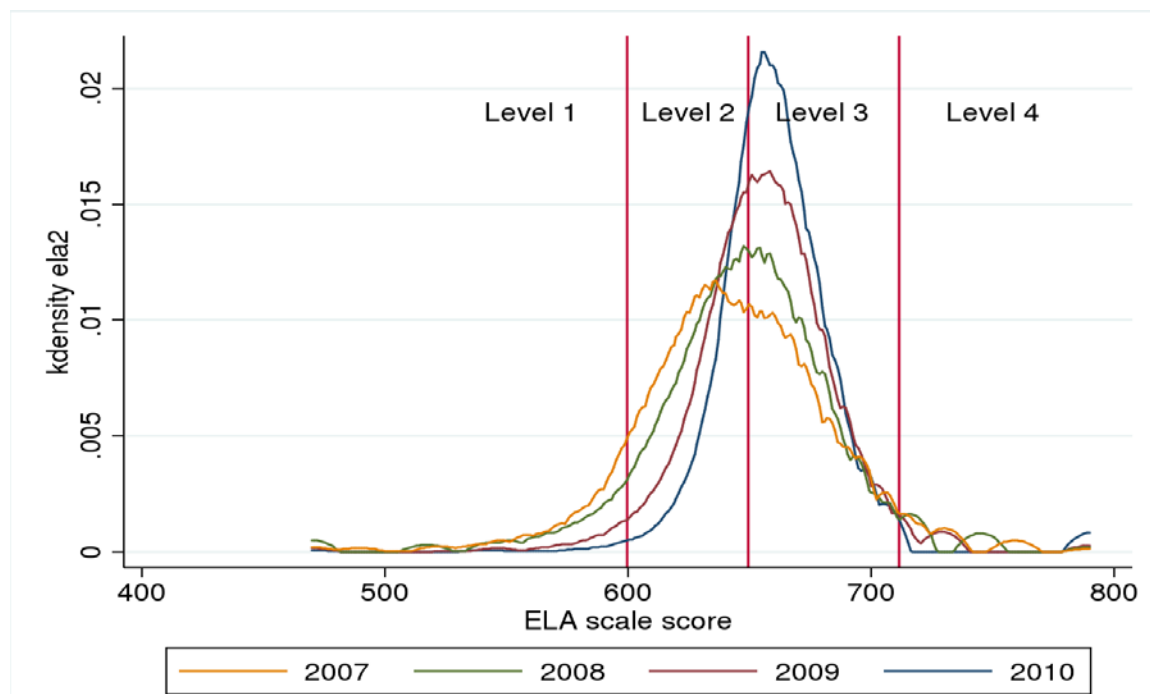
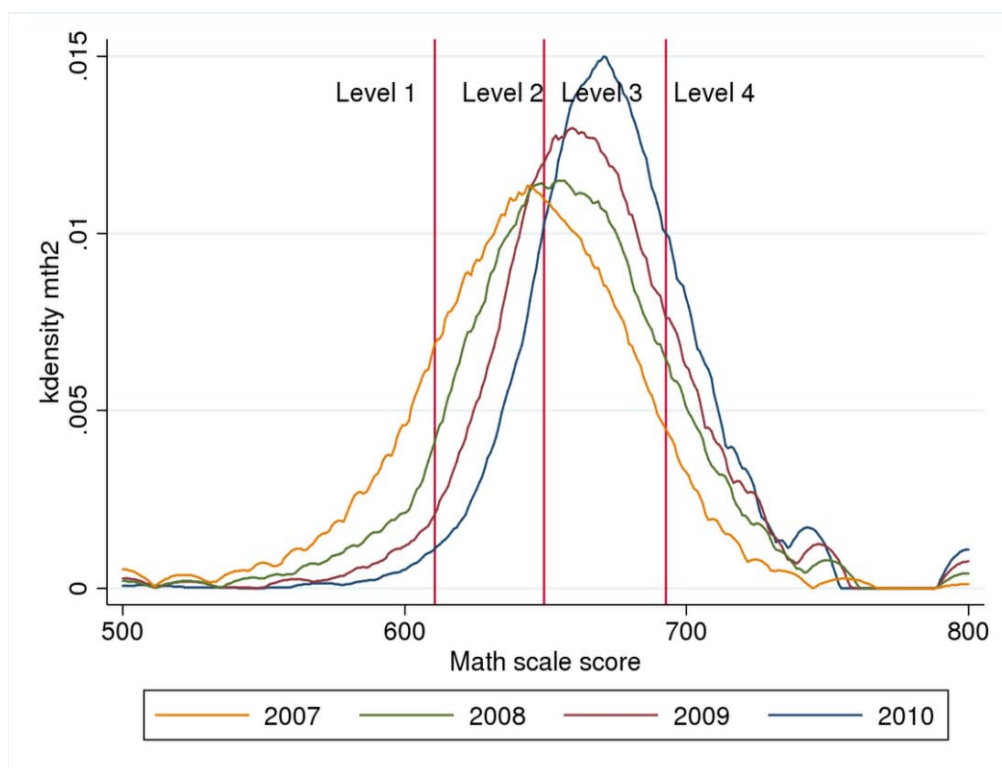


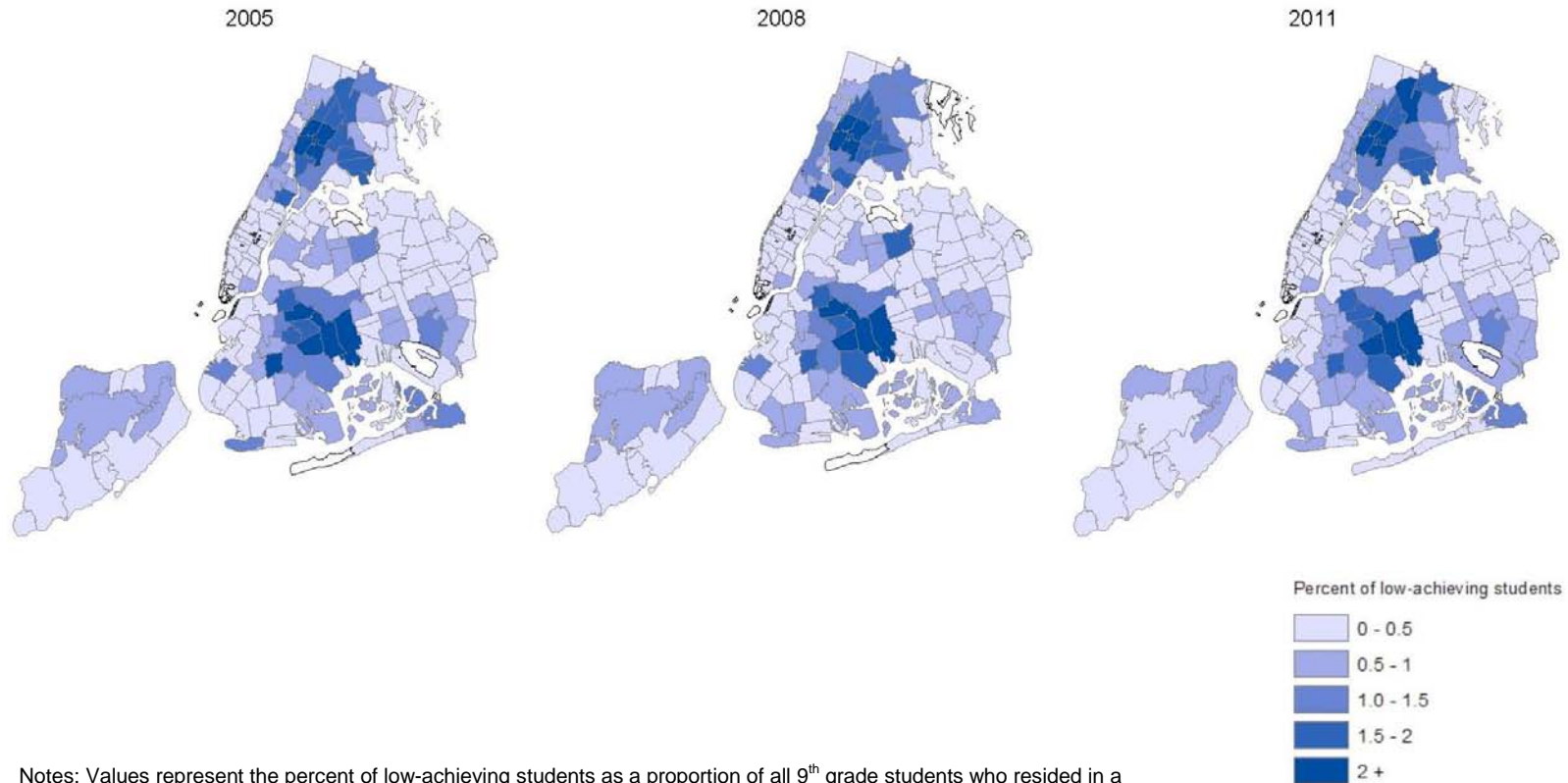
Figure A-2: Shift in the Distribution of Math Scaled Scores Between 2007 and 2010**Table A-1: Counts of Students in Level 1 / Level 2 Combinations**

	ELA L1 and math L1	ELA L1 and math L2	ELA L2 and math L1	ELA L2 and math L2	Total students with L1 or L2 on one or both tests	Total 7th grade cohort	Percent of 7th grade cohort with L1 or L2 score
2005	14,034	4,787	7,891	11,788	38,500	76,579	50
2006	8,259	2,736	7,580	11,282	29,857	76,581	39
2007	4,201	2,041	6,050	16,388	28,680	73,159	39
2008	2,737	2,070	2,780	16,182	23,769	71,502	33
2009	793	564	1,891	11,157	14,405	69,407	21
2010	142	209	866	6,600	7,817	66,948	12
2011	5,136	4,518	2,333	15,574	27,561	69,929	39
Total	35,302	16,925	29,391	88,971	170,589	504,105	34

Notes: Figures are based on 7th grade scaled scores. For example, the scores for students in the 2006 8th grade cohort are from the 7th grade test administration in Spring 2005. The total 7th grade cohort includes all students with at least one test score (math or ELA) reported. As described in Chapter 1, the analytic sample used in this report represents a subset of the full cohort.

APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES AND FIGURES

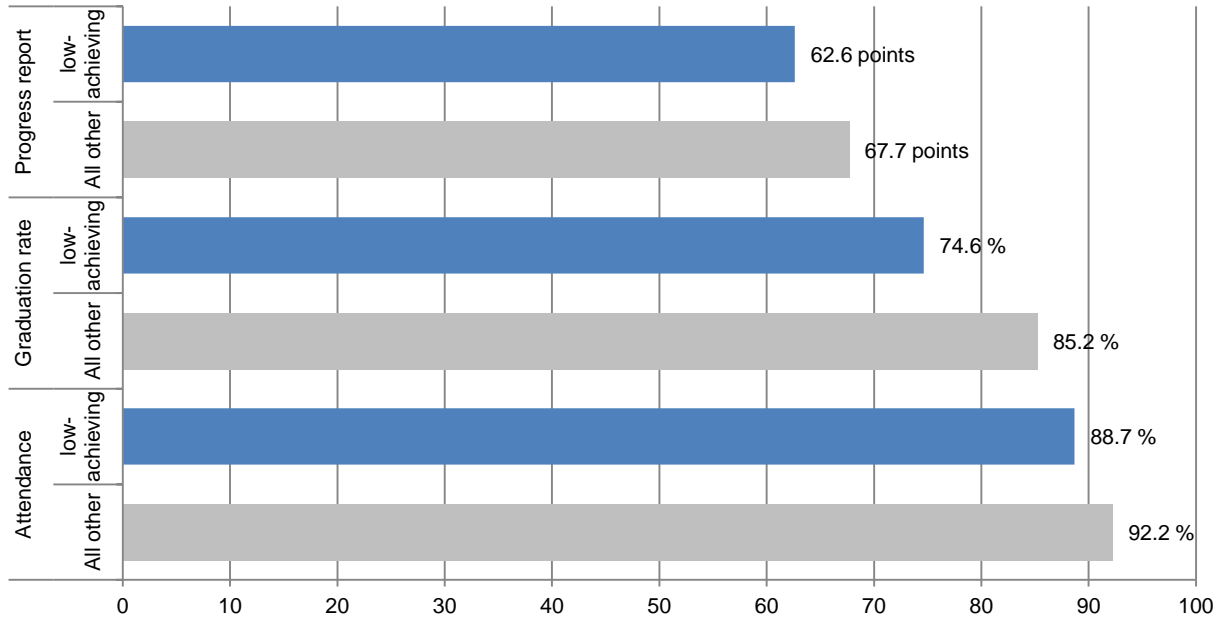
Figure B-1: Geographic Distribution of Low-Achieving Students by Residential Zip Code: 2005, 2008, and 2011



Notes: Values represent the percent of low-achieving students as a proportion of all 9th grade students who resided in a given zip code. The low-achieving population included all students who scored below the 20th percentile in either ELA or math (or both), and no higher than the 50th percentile on either test.

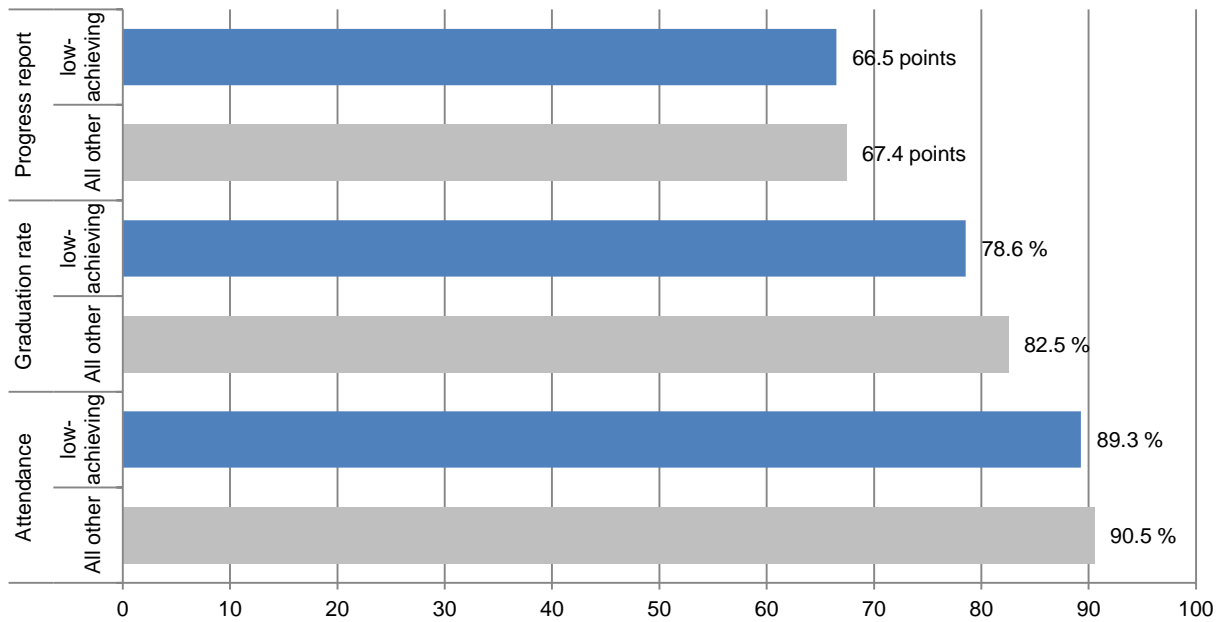
We compared the performance of low-achieving and all other students' first-choice schools with the *same admissions method*. Figures B-2 to B-9 show that among first choices with the same admissions method, low-achieving students tended to choose schools with lower four-year graduation rates, Progress Report results, and attendance rates. Put another way, among students who ranked screened schools first (or educational option, or limited unscreened), low-achieving students tended to choose schools that fared worse on each academic performance measure. Because there are so few zoned schools, we do not include them in the following set of figures.

Figure B-2: Average Academic Performance of First-Choice *Screened* Schools, 2007-2011



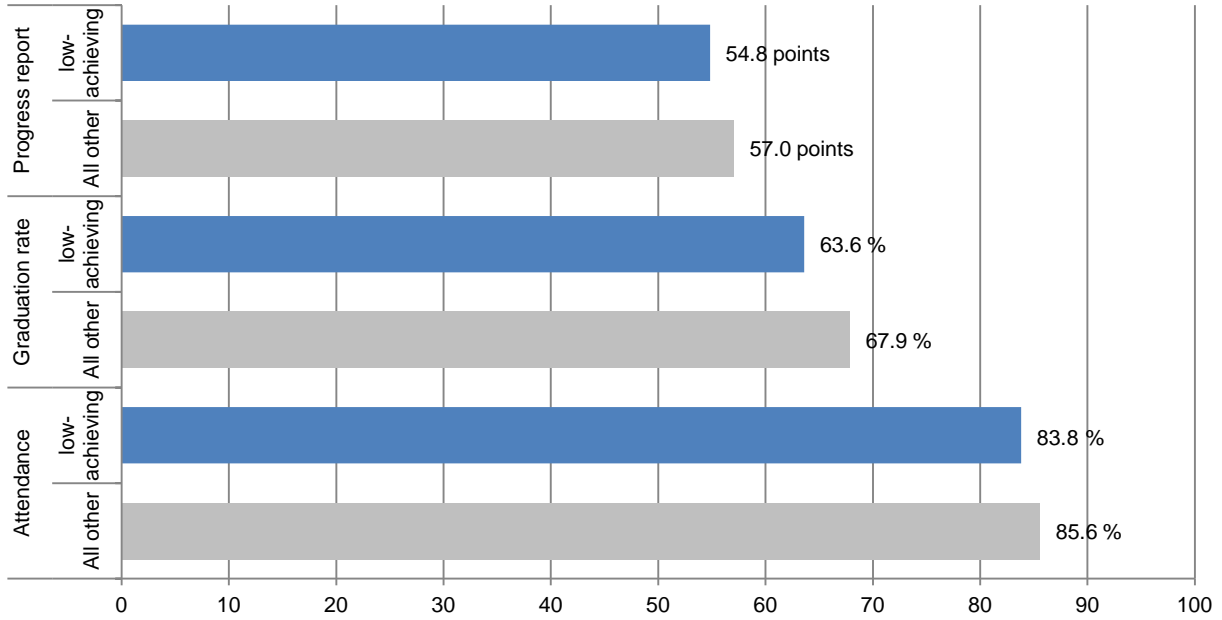
Note: From 2007-2011, a total of 16,858 low-achieving and 106,137 "other" students selected a screened program as their first choice.

Figure B-3: Average Academic Performance of First-Choice *Audition* Schools, 2007-2011



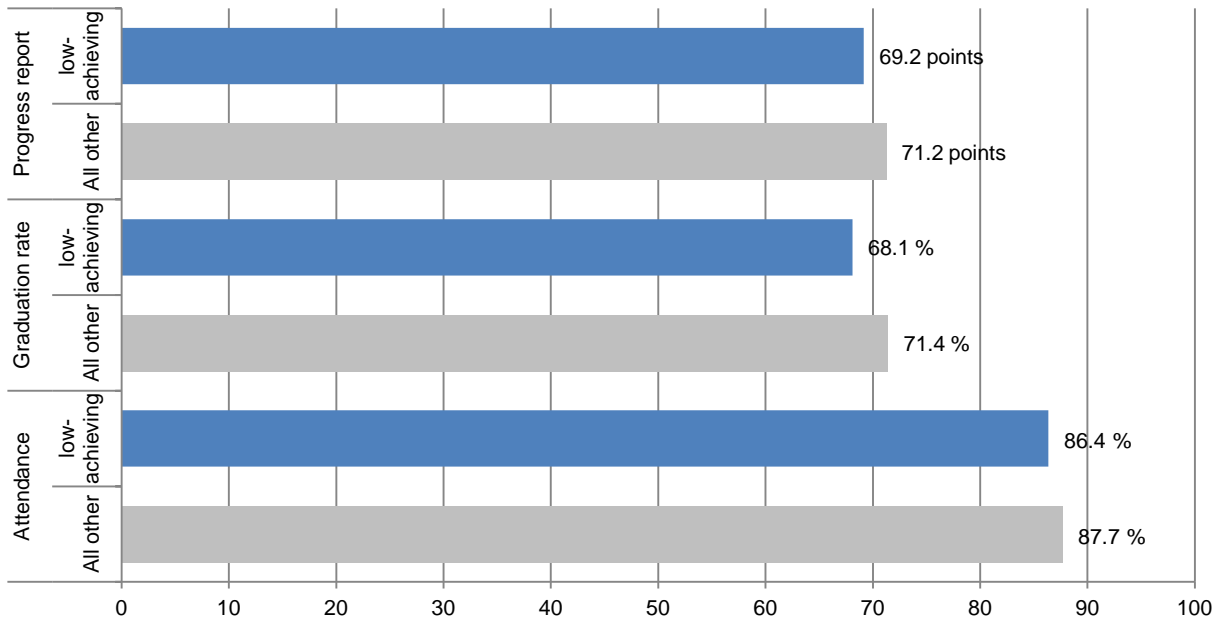
Note: From 2007-2011, a total of 4,931 low-achieving and 18,462 "other" students selected an audition program as their first choice.

Figure B-4: Average Academic Performance of First-Choice *Education Option* Schools, 2007-2011



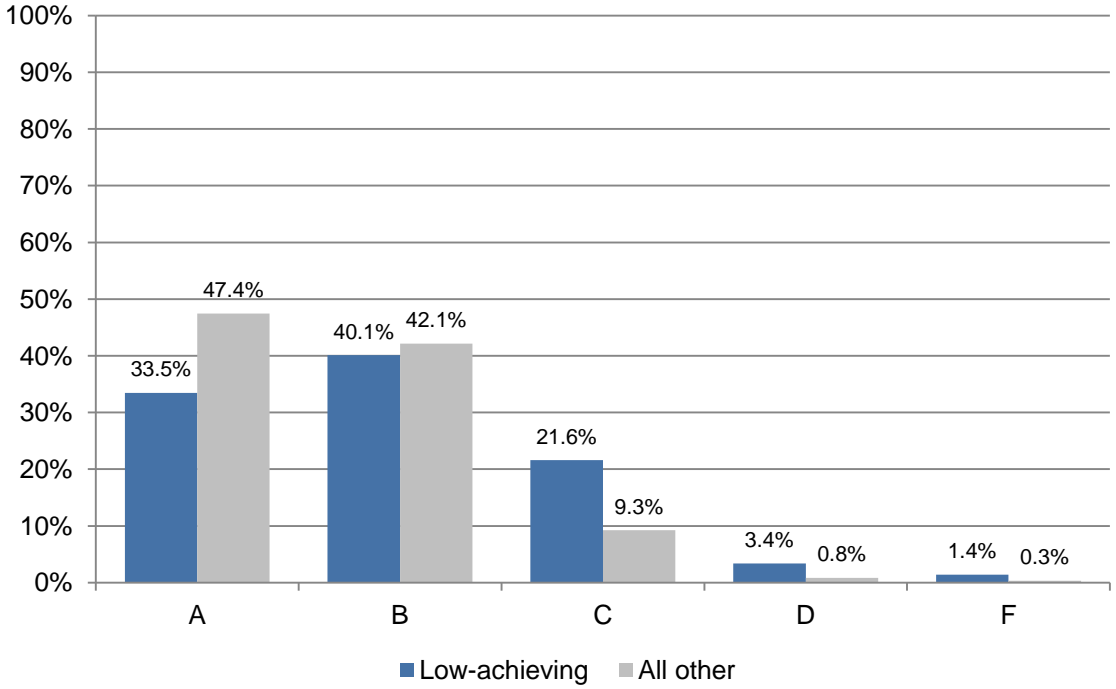
Note: From 2007-2011, a total of 27,720 low-achieving and 59,476 “other” students selected an education option program as their first choice.

Figure B-5: Average Academic Performance of First-Choice *Limited Unscreened* Schools, 2007-2011



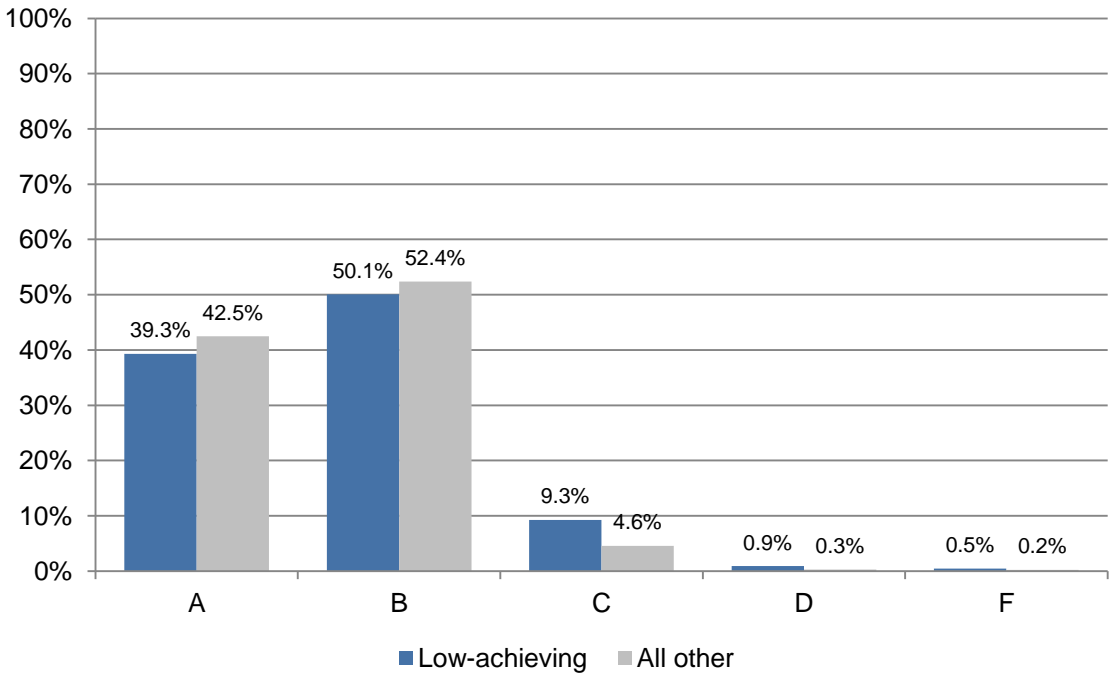
Note: From 2007-2011, a total of 18,524 low-achieving and 39,912 “other” students selected a limited unscreened program as their first choice.

Figure B-6: Progress Report Grades of First-Choice Screened Schools, 2007-2011



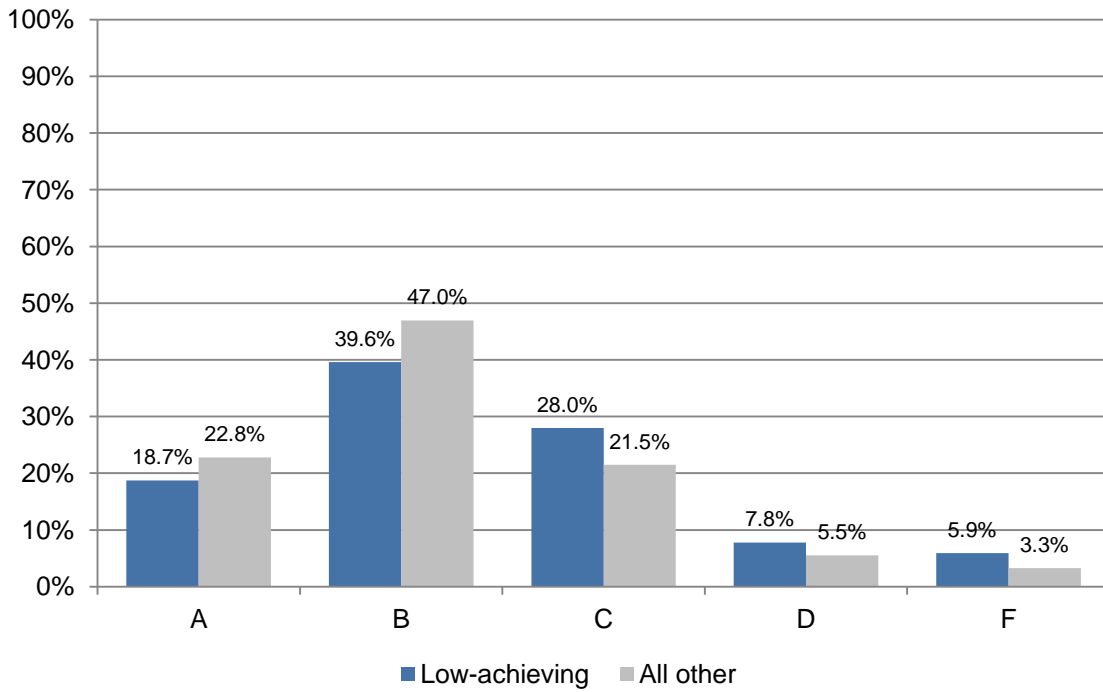
Note: From 2007-2011, a total of 16,858 low-achieving and 106,137 “other” students selected a screened program as their first choice.

Figure B-7: Progress Report Grades of First-Choice Audition Schools, 2007-2011



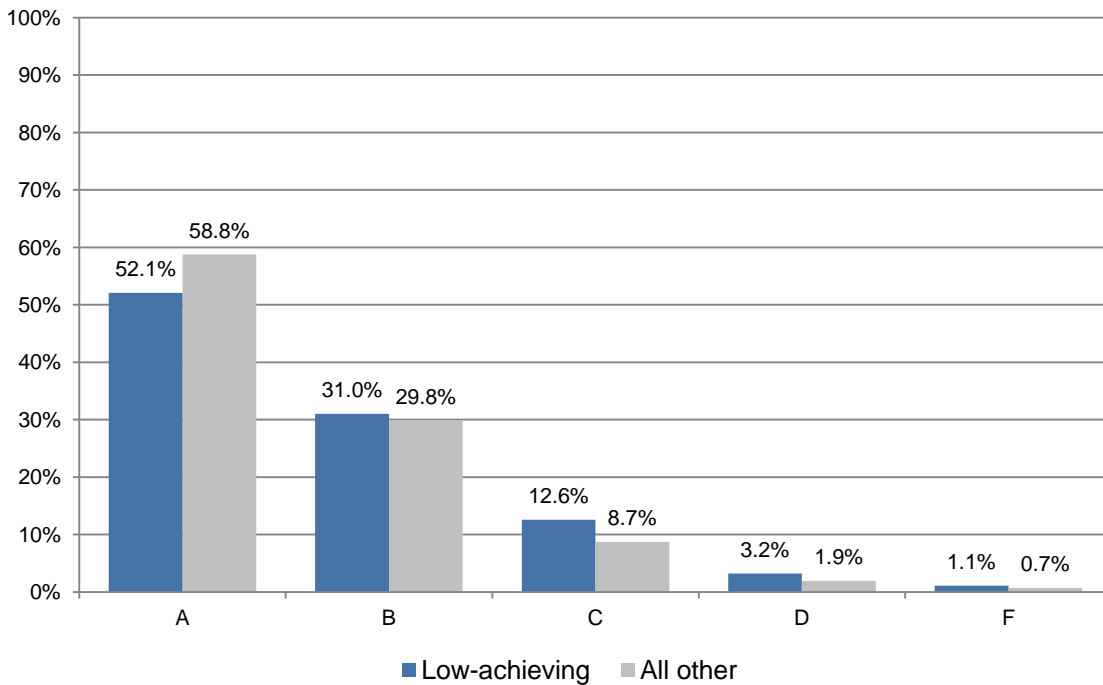
Note: From 2007-2011, a total of 4,931 low-achieving and 18,462 “other” students selected an audition program as their first choice.

Figure B-8: Progress Report Grades of First-Choice *Education Option* Schools, 2007-2011



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Figure B-9: Progress Report Grades of First-Choice *Limited Unscreened* Schools, 2007-2011



Note: From 2007-2011, a total of 18,524 low-achieving and 39,912 “other” students selected a limited unscreened program as their first choice.

Table B-1: Characteristics of First-Choice and Matched Schools for Low-Achieving ELL and Special Education Students

	Low-Achieving ELL		Low-Achieving Special Ed	
	First Choice	Matched	First Choice	Matched
Academic performance				
Progress Report score (out of 100 points)	61.9	58.4	59.4	56.3
Four-year graduation rate	68.4	63.4	66.8	62.4
Average daily attendance	86.6	84.6	85.6	84.0
Peer composition and context				
Average 8 th grade proficiency (based on 4 levels)	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7
Economically disadvantaged	75.1	76.2	71.9	73.1
ELL	12.5	12.9	6.7	6.7
Special education	11.5	12.7	12.9	13.6
Black	25.8	28.5	34.6	37.1
Hispanic	51.8	52.3	43.2	42.8
Asian	11.7	10.4	10.1	9.5
White	9.7	7.9	10.8	9.3
Small school (<500)	31.8	34.1	29.2	32.8
Large school (>2000)	33.2	36.7	33.9	38.5

Note: All numbers are percentages unless otherwise noted. Economically disadvantaged includes students eligible for free or reduced price meals, and those attending universal free meals schools.

Appendix References

Koretz, D. M. (2008). *Measuring Up: What Educational Testing Really Tells Us*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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The Research Alliance for
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We strive to advance equity and
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