

# Co-Location: How Public Schools Share Space in New York City

2016  
2017

## What is school co-location?

New York City's public schools are mostly small, but its public school buildings are mostly large. As a result, a majority of public schools – including charter schools – are “co-located” with at least one other school in a shared building. Each school is assigned a segment of classrooms and hallways to use as its own space, while major amenities such as gyms and libraries are shared.

## Is co-location a “charter school thing”?

No, it's a New York City thing. Over 1,100 NYC public schools, district and charter, are co-located (66% of all schools). Of these, only 10% are charter schools. Records show that co-locating schools in NYC dates back to the nineteenth century.

## Why do charter schools need co-location?

Charter schools are public schools that are not provided with sufficient public funding for facilities in New York City's expensive real estate market. Historically, the Department of Education has allowed charter schools to use space in otherwise under-utilized buildings. (As of 2014, new and expanding charter schools may be eligible for rental assistance if the Department of Education has not offered co-located or free private space.)

## Does co-location cause overcrowding in the school system?

No. City data show that school buildings with co-locations tend to be less crowded and better utilized than buildings housing single schools. Overcrowding is an important issue, but co-location is not its primary cause.

## Are there rules for charter school co-locations?

Yes. When a charter school is considered for co-location, additional plans and public hearings are required. Once a charter school moves in, a “Shared Space Committee” is formed with a principal, teacher and parent from each school in the building.

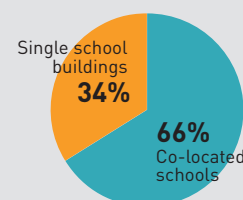
## Does co-location cause unfair disparities to district schools?

No. City data show that charter schools tend to be located in the more crowded portions of a co-located building. In addition, if a co-located charter school makes building improvements of at least \$5,000 in value, a matching amount must be provided to every other school in the same building.

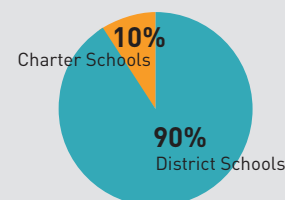
## Does co-location work?

Co-location works every day in buildings across New York City, sometimes even leading to cross-school collaborations. Although schools may prefer to have more room, they still find ways to share, compromise and stay focused on student learning.

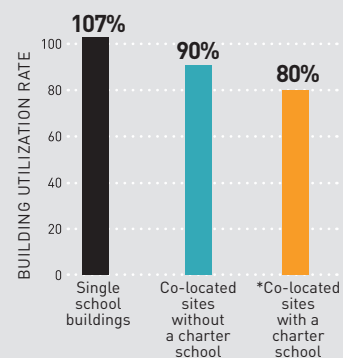
Nearly two-thirds of all public schools located in city-owned buildings are co-located



Most co-located schools are District schools



Charter schools are co-located in under-utilized buildings



Source: 2015-16 Enrollment, Capacity & Utilization Report, NYC Department of Education

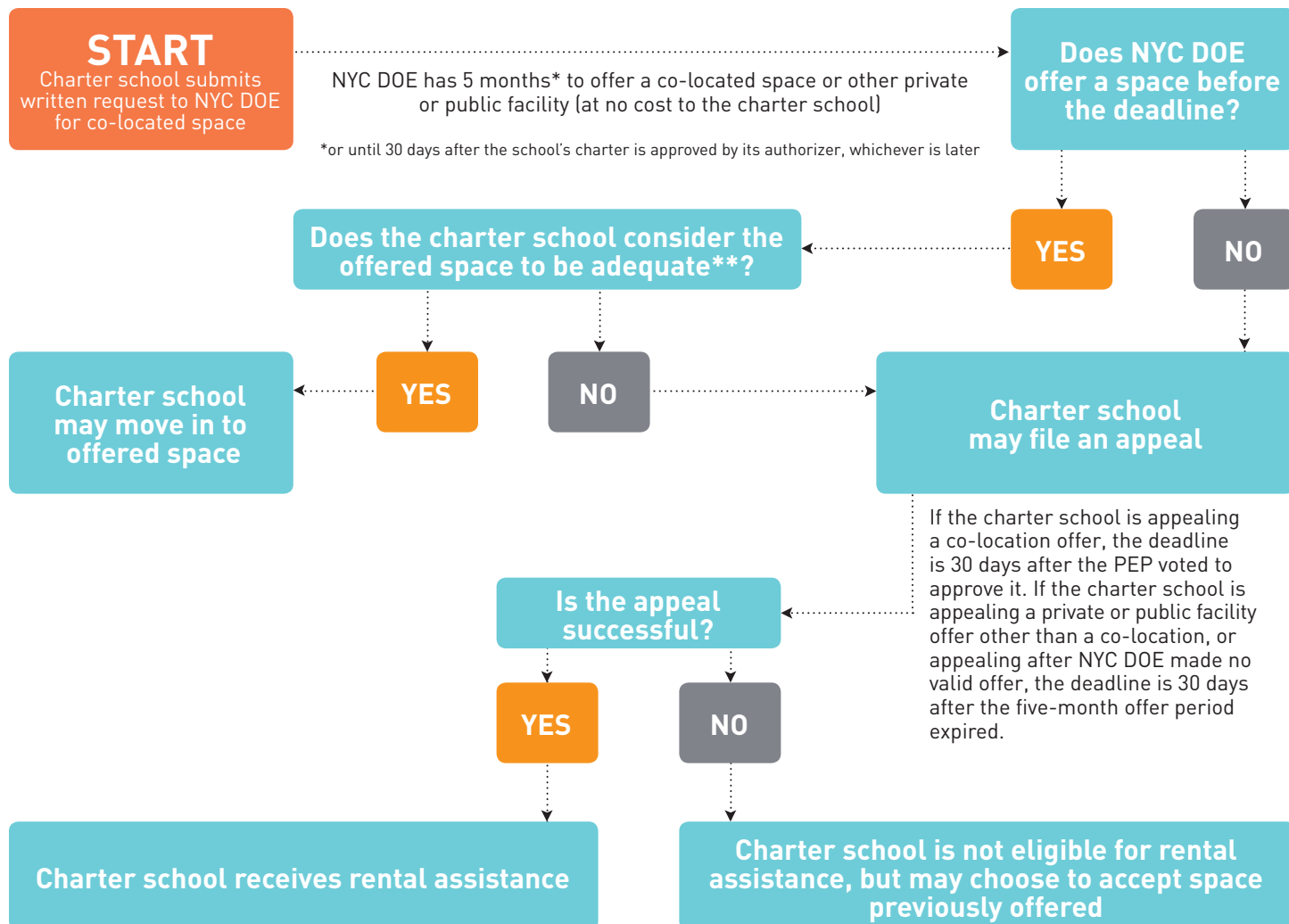
# Facility Access Process for New York City Charter Schools

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State law now grants a subset of NYC charter schools a statutory right to facilities assistance. Charter schools that are new, or adding grade levels, can go through a legally defined process that begins with a formal request to the NYC Department of Education (DOE). The process can result in the charter school receiving a co-location in a school district building; or a private building provided at no cost; or funding to cover rental expenses (up to \$2,805.40 per pupil in 2016-17).

Unfortunately, the new process does not cover existing NYC charter schools that are in private space at their own expense and are not adding grade levels—leaving these schools among the most underfunded public schools in the city.

For more information on the facilities access process, see the summary charter below or download a detailed guide at [www.nyccharterschools.org/newlaw](http://www.nyccharterschools.org/newlaw).



\*\*Adequate = "reasonable, appropriate, and comparable"; in the charter school's community school district; and "otherwise in reasonable proximity."