

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Potential Elementary School Zone and Admissions Changes in District 15

INTRODUCTION

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) is engaging the District 15 community about potential rezoning and admissions changes at seven schools: P.S. 38, P.S. 261, P.S. 32, P.S. 15, P.S. 29, P.S. 58 and Red Hook Neighborhood School. The DOE has presented two potential approaches aimed at reducing overcrowding, increasing integration, and planning for a new building addition at P.S. 32 that is opening in 2020-2021 school year and includes space for 436 new students:

- **Approach 1:** Rezone and maintain individual zones
- **Approach 2:** Create a shared zone for the seven currently zoned schools in the area

Both approaches would include an admissions priority of 25–35% of seats for Students Living in Temporary Housing (STH), Multilingual Learners (MLLs), and students income-eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL).

The District 15 Community Education Council (CEC) is responsible for voting on and approving any proposed changes to the zones in District 15. Should the DOE ultimately submit a specific proposal to the CEC, the CEC would have 45 days to vote on the proposal. The zoning approval process is outlined in Chancellor’s Regulation A-185, which can be viewed at:

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/a-185-english>.

More information on CEC 15 can be viewed at: <https://cecd15.org/>.

Community input is critical to this process. Below are frequently asked questions received throughout the engagement process. For information about the potential proposals, including copies of past presentations, a data packet, and other resources, please visit

<http://bit.ly/2mwceFn>.

ADMISSIONS

Who would an approved rezoning proposal impact?

An approved rezoning would impact **incoming** kindergarten and pre-kindergarten students or students who are new to NYC schools in the year of implementation. An approved rezoning would not **impact currently enrolled** K–5 students at any of the seven schools; those students may remain in their current school even if a rezoning is approved by the CEC. To find out what your current zoned school is, use the Find a School tool: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/find-a-school>.

What is sibling grandfathering, and would it apply if a rezoning proposal is approved?

Typically, the CEC adopts a sibling grandfathering clause as part of a rezoning, which would apply in Approach 1. This means that children whose zoned school is changing as a result of a rezoning can keep zoned sibling priority for elementary school, if they have a sibling attending that school in grades K–5 at the time of enrollment. Under Approach 2, there would no longer be individual zones, and siblings would have priority in the choice admissions process so a grandfathering clause would not be applicable.

How would admissions change under each approach?

Under either approach, families would apply to kindergarten the same way they do now and rank up to 12 choices.

Under Approach 1, each school would maintain an individual zone, and students would be admitted following standard zoned admissions priorities. Out-of-zone STH, MLL, and students income-eligible for FRL would have an admissions priority for up to 25-35% of kindergarten offers after all zoned students are accommodated. Zoned students who fall in one of the priority groups would count towards the overall 25-35% goal.

Under Approach 2, there would no longer be zoned priority to an individual school, and students would be admitted through a choice admissions process. STH, MLL, and students income-eligible for FRL would have an admissions priority for 25-35% of kindergarten offers at each of the impacted schools. Students residing in the shared zone area who do not fall into any of these three sub-groups would get priority for the remaining offers and would have an entitlement to a seat at a school within the shared zone.

Why is the DOE planning to include a priority for 25–35% of seats for STH, MLL, and students income-eligible for FRL?

The anticipated 25–35% range is correlated to the overall percentage of STH, MLL, and students income-eligible for FRL in the impacted area, and is intended to increase integration across impacted schools. These admissions priorities are similar to what has been implemented in District 15 middle schools, as well as in District 1 elementary schools.

Under Approach 1, some schools may have a higher percentage of STH, MLL, and students income-eligible for FRL within their zones. Other schools would need to enroll STH, MLL, and students income-eligible for FRL from outside their zone in order to meet the admissions goal, and those zones would be sized to allow for that out-of-zone enrollment. It is possible that in the years immediately following the rezoning, there may not be enough available out-of-zone seats to meet the 25–35% goal as a result of sibling enrollment at these schools (should the CEC adopt a sibling grandfathering clause). As the rezoning phases-in, there would be fewer grandfathered siblings and more available seats for out-of-zone STH, MLL, and students income-eligible for FRL.

The appendix of the presentation delivered on September 24, 2019 at the CEC meeting has further data and information about the projected demographics under both approaches and is available online at: <http://bit.ly/2mwceFn>.

In districts that are not zoned at the elementary school level, are families receiving offers to schools ranked highly on their application?

Yes. Districts 1, 7, and 23 do not have zones at the elementary school level and a vast majority of families in these districts received an offer to one of their top three choices. The percentage of students in these choice districts that received an offer to their top-choice school is higher than the percentage citywide.

District	For Fall 2019	
	Percent Received First Choice	Percent Received Top 3 Choices
1	70%	86%
7	84%	91%
23	75%	85%
Citywide	69%	83%

Where can I go for more information on zoning and admissions?

- Visit the Office of Student Enrollment website at:
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enroll-grade-by-grade/kindergarten>.
- View Chancellor Regulation A-101, which governs admissions
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/a101-admissions-readmissions-transfers-english>

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROPOSED PLANS

Why aren't other District 15 schools included in this proposal?

The zoned schools potentially impacted by this plan were identified due to their proximity to P.S. 32, the density of where students live in the area, and other geographic considerations. Brooklyn New School (15K146) and the Children's School (75K372) have choice admissions aimed at enrolling diverse students from across the district and borough, which contributes to why they are not included in this proposal. The DOE is committed to working collaboratively with CEC 15 and the broader community to develop additional plans as needed to support other schools across the district.

Why is the zone size of Red Hook Neighborhood School remaining the same in Approach 1?

The DOE is committed to supporting Red Hook Neighborhood School to ensure students' needs are being met and to increase demand for the school. Currently, the school struggles with low demand, with 86% of all students zoned for kindergarten attending a different school in the 2018–2019 school year. The DOE has concerns around whether this low demand can be addressed by rezoning at this time. The DOE and District 15 community are excited for the

future of Red Hook Neighborhood School under the leadership of Principal Figueroa, who has a strong vision for the school. The DOE is partnering closely with Principal Figueroa and the Red Hook Neighborhood School community to provide support for this work, including a dedicated design coach with school leadership and instructional expertise.

Has the DOE considered other approaches in this process?

Throughout this process, the DOE has gathered extensive feedback from community members on a variety of potential approaches to rezoning and admissions changes and has carefully evaluated each option. The DOE is recommending two viable approaches based on a variety of considerations and feedback from the District 15 community, including which existing admissions structures work well across the city, different perspectives on school choice, the potential impact to student travel, and the goals of the rezoning.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Would this rezoning affect Title I Funding at schools that are currently eligible?

School-wide Title I funding is based on the socioeconomic status of the students who attend that school, and the county-based Title I eligibility threshold which is established annually. In 2019-2020, in order for a school in Brooklyn to receive Title I funds, 60% or more of the students enrolled at that school must qualify for free lunch. Currently P.S. 15 and P.S. 676 are eligible for Title I funding. Like any school, there is a possibility that P.S. 15 or P.S. 676 would no longer be eligible for Title I funding if less than 60% of its students are eligible for free lunch.

What resources would be provided as part of the implementation of the proposed plans?

New York City schools work diligently to support a diverse set of learners through differentiated instruction and a wide variety of supports, as is the expectation and practice across all schools and in line with the Chancellor's priorities to accelerate learning and instruction and advance equity. Every school's staff under consideration has received professional development in social-emotional learning, culturally responsive curriculum, and implicit bias. The DOE and District 15 Superintendent are fully committed to supporting schools through any changes using existing staff, resources and support from a variety of offices.

While there is no additional funding associated specifically with potential rezoning and admissions changes, schools do receive increased funding for increased student enrollment, and additional funding for MLLs, students with disabilities, and students with academic needs based on the per pupil Fair Student Funding (FSF). More information on FSF is available at: <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports-and-policies/financial-reports/financial-data-and-reports>.

TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

Would all students under these proposals receive yellow busing?

In the implementation of any plan the NYCDOE would work to support schools and families with transportation services, including bus service, in accordance with Chancellor’s Regulation A-801. General education (GE) transportation eligibility is based on a student’s grade level and the distance between home and school as shown in the chart below:

Grade Level	Less than 0.5 mile	0.5 mile or more, but less than 1 mile	1 mile or more
K–2	Half-fare MetroCard	School bus or full-fare MetroCard	School bus or full-fare MetroCard
3–5	Not eligible	Half-fare MetroCard	School bus or full-fare MetroCard

Whether a student receives bus service or a full-fare MetroCard is determined based on whether the school offers busing and if there are sufficient students to create a new bus stop if a suitable one is not yet in place. Currently, P.S. 58, P.S. 29 and Red Hook Neighborhood School do not offer bus service. Any public school may request and receive bus service as long as the request is made by July 1 before school starts and there are enough students to meet the eligibility for a route.

Please see Appendix B of this FAQ for eligibility maps for each potentially impacted school.

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) requiring “door-to-door” or “SE busing” are exempt from the grade/distance eligibility requirements that apply to GE students. For additional details visit: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/special-education/supports-and-services/specialized-transportation>.

How would the DOE ensure that students who cross the Brooklyn Queens Expressway (BQE) to attend school can do so safely, particularly given the potential BQE construction?

Safety is our top priority, and the DOE’s Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) will work with the NYC Department of Transportation and the NYC Police Department to ensure students are able to safely travel to and from school.

Specific decisions about the BQE construction are still forthcoming. More information about the BQE Cantilever Reconstruction Project can be found at: <https://www.bqe-i278.com/en/about>. When there is further clarity on a potential construction plan, OPT would coordinate with city agencies.

How can I get further information about student transportation?

- View Chancellor’s Regulation A-801, which governs transportation: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/a-801-english>
- Visit the OPT website: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/transportation>
- Email or call OPT: (718)-392-8855, pupiltransportationteam@schools.nyc.gov

CHANGING ZONE LINES

What factors does the DOE consider when proposing new zone lines?

Each proposed zone line change is the result of extensive community input and careful consideration of multiple factors, including but not limited to:

- The capacity of each building;
- The ideal number of kindergarteners living within the zone for each school;
- Demographics;
- How far students would have to travel to their zoned school; and
- The proximity of the school to its zone boundaries.

How does the DOE make decisions about re-drawing zone lines? Do zone lines include only one or both sides of any given street?

The DOE works with the CEC and school communities to draw zone lines that best meet the community's needs. Zone lines are drawn to achieve an ideal number of kindergarten students living in a zone, based on the target number of students that a school would enroll from its zone. To increase or decrease the number of students within a zone, lines are drawn to include or exclude certain blocks and certain sides of the street based on the number of students who typically live there and attend DOE schools. Zone lines usually run down the center of the street, unless otherwise specified.

What data is used to create each school's proposed zone size, and is it publicly accessible?

The DOE analyzes historical student residential data, enrollment patterns, school demand, demographics, residential construction data, and each school's building capacity in order to derive ideal kindergarten zone sizes.

Data related to this specific rezoning proposal was provided to CEC 15 and is available for the public to view at <http://bit.ly/2mwceFn>. Certain data points may not be shared, such as student residential data, to protect the privacy of students and families, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). You can find additional information about a school's enrollment, demographics, performance, and more on the DOE's school data page: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/NYCDOE-data-at-a-glance>.

The most recent information on school buildings' capacity is detailed in the 2017–2018 Enrollment, Capacity, and Utilization Report (also known as "Blue Book"): <http://bit.ly/2lrABUB>.

The DOE also relies on extensive qualitative data to inform our planning. In this case, before scenario development began, DOE officials visited all potentially involved schools, met with each school leader to discuss the process and overall goals, and collected critical feedback about each school's enrollment, zone, and neighborhood. Each school's specific needs were then discussed with the CEC, elected officials, and other community stakeholders in order to collect additional feedback.

How does the DOE account for population growth in a school's zone?

The DOE projects the number of potential students expected from known residential construction based on historical data for the area, and accounts for this number in redrawing zone lines. The DOE also analyzes the trend of kindergarten residents over several years to assess population growth. Further details about the projections methodology are available in the appendix of the presentation delivered at the September 24, 2019 CEC meeting at: <http://bit.ly/2mwceFn>.

How is the DOE considering the impact of the Gowanus Neighborhood Plan?

The Gowanus Neighborhood Plan is a comprehensive plan developed by the Department of City Planning with community stakeholders and elected officials, in coordination with other City and public agencies. The goal of this plan is to support a shared long-term vision of a sustainable, inclusive, and mixed-use Gowanus. The plan does envision new housing and potential additional school seats. Currently, it is still in the planning stages and the environmental review is ongoing. As soon as the full review is complete, its conclusions will be published in a Draft Environmental Impact Study (DEIS) posted on the Department of City Planning website. The DOE is working closely with City Planning through the process.

As the Gowanus Neighborhood Plan currently stands, it would take many years for the projected development to be built out. Given that this project is still in the planning stages, that development would occur over time, and that there is a possibility for additional school seats as part of the process, the DOE is not including housing projections as part of this neighborhood plan in the school rezoning projections.

More information about the Gowanus Neighborhood Plan can be found at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/gowanus/gowanus-framework.page>.

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

When would the CEC need to vote for 2020–2021 implementation?

The DOE is committed to working with the CEC and District 15 community to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to fully consider and discuss the proposal. For 2020–2021 implementation, the DOE would aim to share a final rezoning proposal for a CEC vote by the end of November 2019, before the kindergarten admissions cycle begins. This timeline allows for families of incoming pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students to make informed choices for 2020–2021 school admissions.

Could the timeline be extended?

The DOE has received suggestions to consider delaying a proposal and vote in order to provide more time for community dialogue, increase efforts to empower historically underserved families in the process, more fully consider other approaches, and provide more time and resources to prepare for the changes. The DOE, in collaboration with CEC 15, will continue engaging the community before making a determination on the timeline. However, a delay

would result in a CEC vote *after* the kindergarten admissions process and any approved changes would be implemented for the 2021–2022 school year.

What happens if a proposal is delayed until the 2021-2022 school year?

If the proposal is delayed, there would be no changes in zoning or admissions in this area for the 2020-2021 school year, and students would continue to enroll in schools as they have in the past. This means that:

- Some schools, such as P.S. 58 and P.S. 29, would remain overcrowded;
- Disparities in demographics across potentially impacted schools would likely persist; and
- The new addition at P.S. 32 would open as planned, but the school would have a zone that is under-sized to meet its new and increased enrollment targets.

COMMUNITY INPUT

How can the public continue to provide input?

Community input is central to this process, and there are a variety of ways by which community members can provide feedback, including attending public meetings, submitting written comments to the DOE’s Office of District Planning, or by calling the CEC or Superintendent’s office. Contact information is as follows:

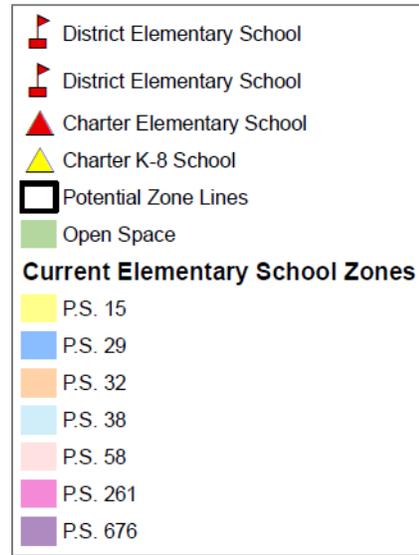
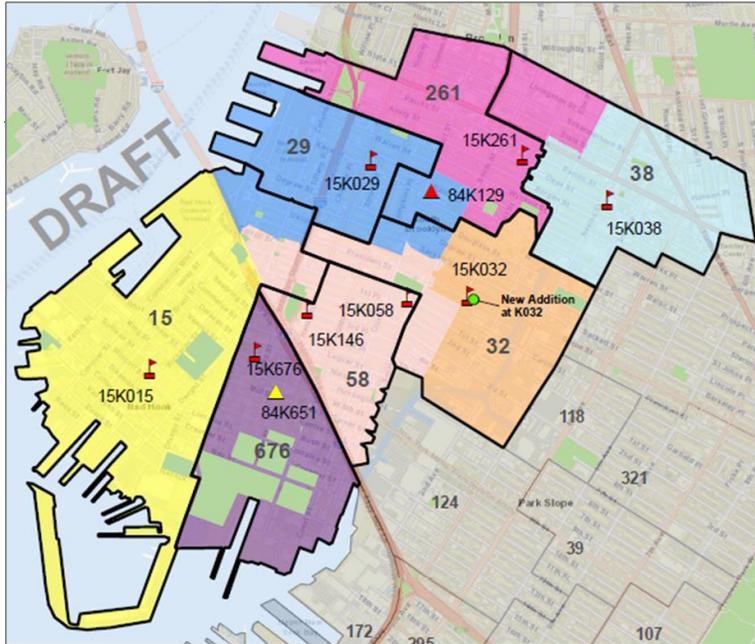
- NYCDOE Office of District Planning: BrooklynZoning@schools.nyc.gov
- CEC 15: <https://cecd15.org/> or CEC15@schools.nyc.gov
- Community Superintendent, Anita Skop: ASkop@schools.nyc.gov or (718) 935-4317

Additional public meetings are currently being scheduled. Once finalized, details can be found on the CEC’s website: cec15.org.

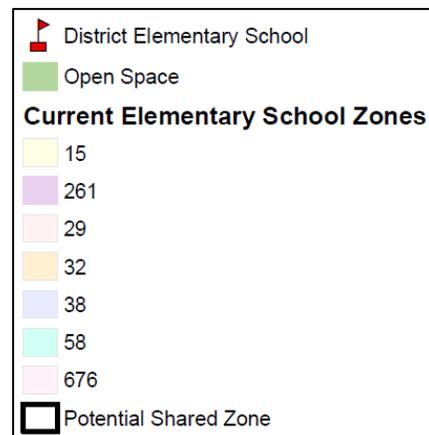
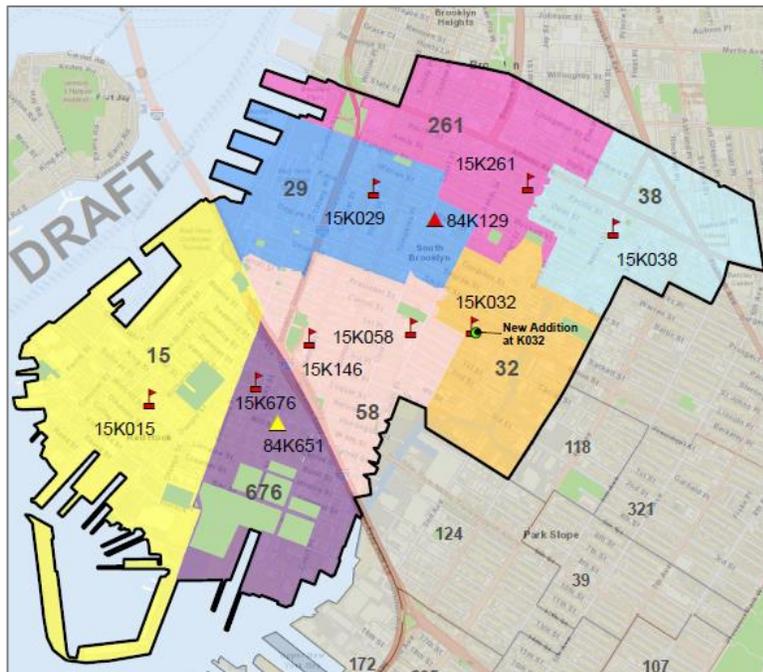
APPENDIX A: MAPS OF PROPOSED CHANGES

The following pages contain draft maps of each potential scenario. In each scenario, the colored areas represent the current zones and the black outline represents the proposed new zone boundaries. All zone lines run down the center of the street.

Approach 1: Maintain Individual Zones



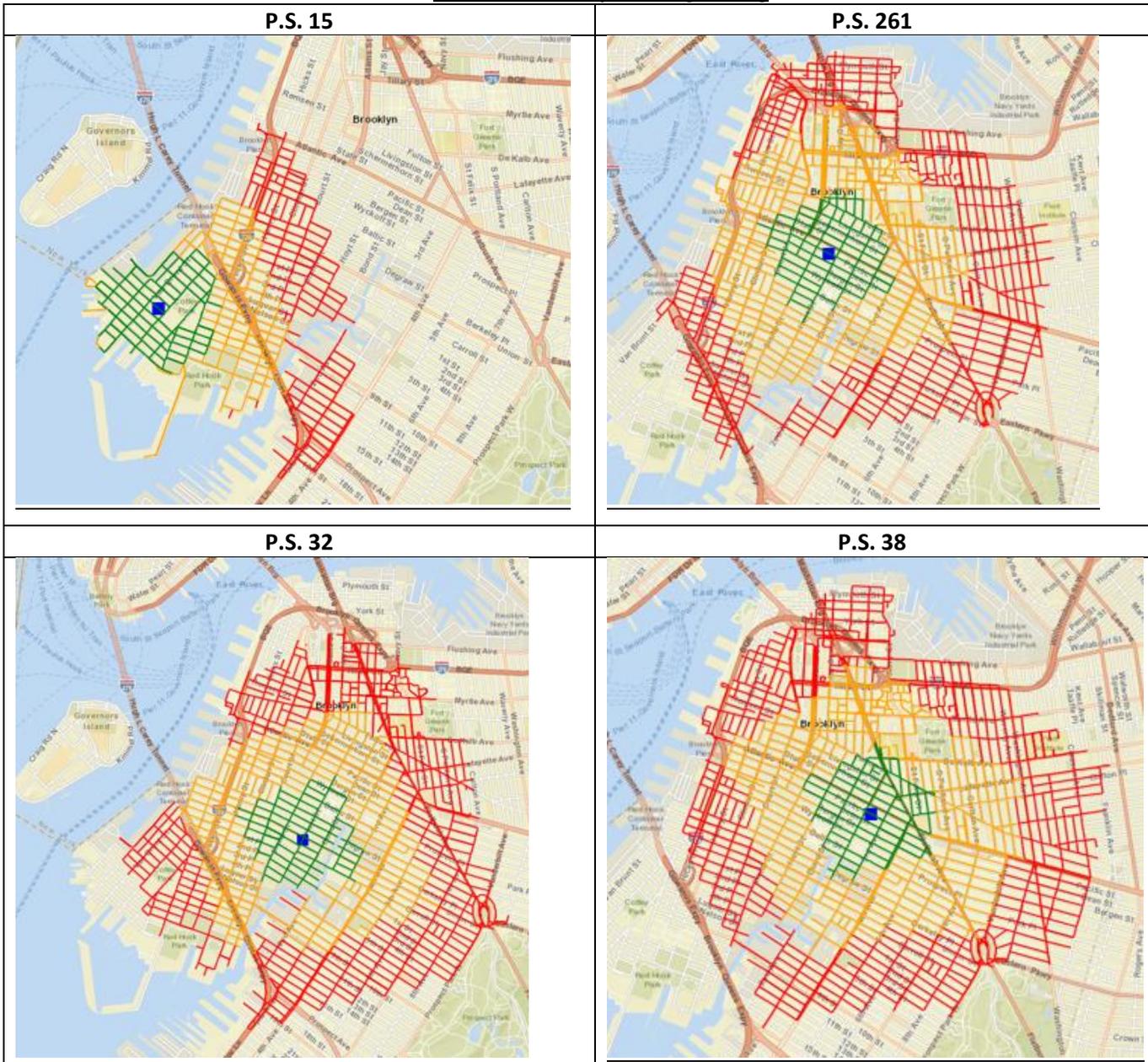
Approach 2: Create Shared Zone



APPENDIX B: MAPS TRANSPORTATION ELIGIBILITY

Grade Level	Less than 0.5 mile	0.5 mile or more, but less than 1 mile	1 mile or more
K-2	Half-fare MetroCard	School bus or full-fare MetroCard	School bus or full-fare MetroCard
3-5	Not eligible	Half-fare MetroCard	School bus or full-fare MetroCard

Schools currently offering busing



Schools not currently offering busing

