

DC Office of the **Ombudsman** for Public Education



Quarter 1 Report

August 15, 2018 – October 31, 2018



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om-buds-man

/ˈämbədzmən/

noun

An “entrusted person” or “grievance representative”

The DC Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education is an impartial, independent, and neutral office that uses mediation and conflict resolution to resolve complaints and concerns for parents and families regarding public education in the District of Columbia. The Office uses an “Activist Ombudsman” approach. We believe it is our responsibility to speak out against the systemic inequities that hurt our city’s children.



Role of the Education Ombudsman

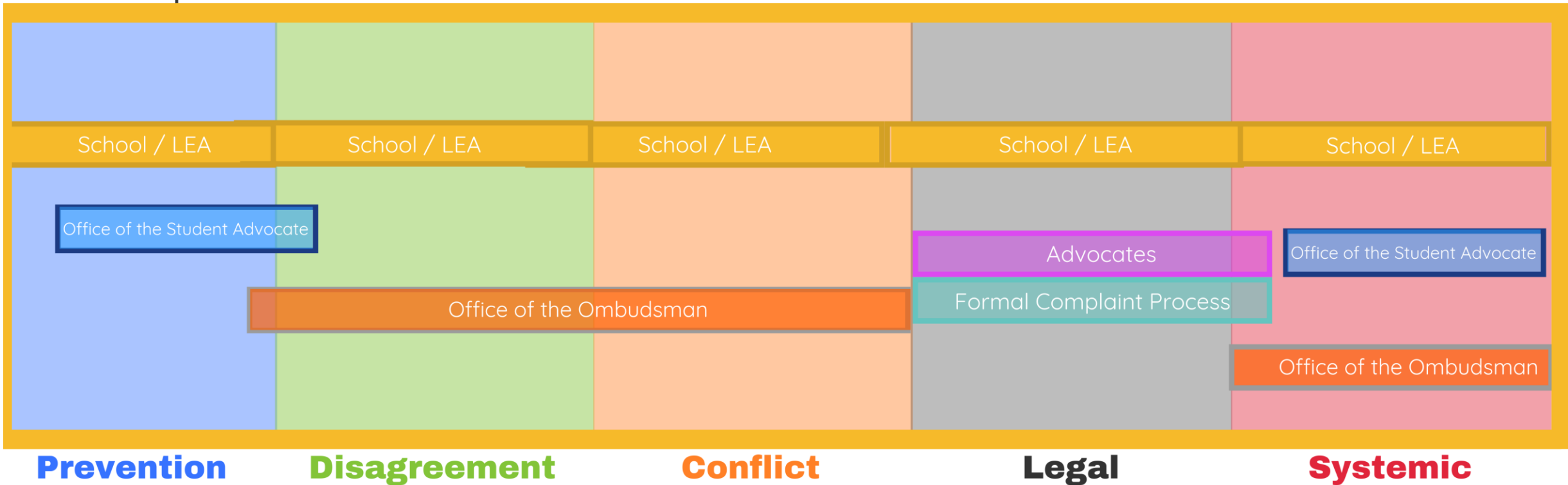
- **Respond to complaints and concerns**, and serve as an informational resource to families and students.
- **De-escalate and repair relationships** through creative problem-solving and conflict resolution techniques.
- **Provide technical assistance** to community organizations, LEAs, and education stakeholders on public education issues.
- **Act as an early warning system** of new, emerging issues and trends to school leaders, education stakeholders, and elected/appointed officials.
- **Leverage case trends to contribute to city-wide conversations** regarding cross-sector education systems to effect systemic change.



Complaint Avenues

Parent has an Issue, Complaint, or Concern

DC Dispute Resolution Continuum*



This shows how the Office of the Ombudsman primarily works with disputes during the disagreement and conflict stages of the DC Dispute Resolution Continuum*. It is in these stages where we complete our one-on-one case management. We use the data from those cases to form recommendations to create systemic change in hopes of preventing similar disputes in the future.

*Based on the CADRE Continuum Framework

Our Core Values

Ensure Access

- Our office aims to ensure access to equitable public education for all students, regardless of race, class, income, disability status or ward of residence.

Address Issues

- We address issues that are brought to our attention by providing direct intervention for students and families;
- We also address these same issues on the systemic level through our engagement with local, state, and national education leaders.

Amplify Student and Family Voice

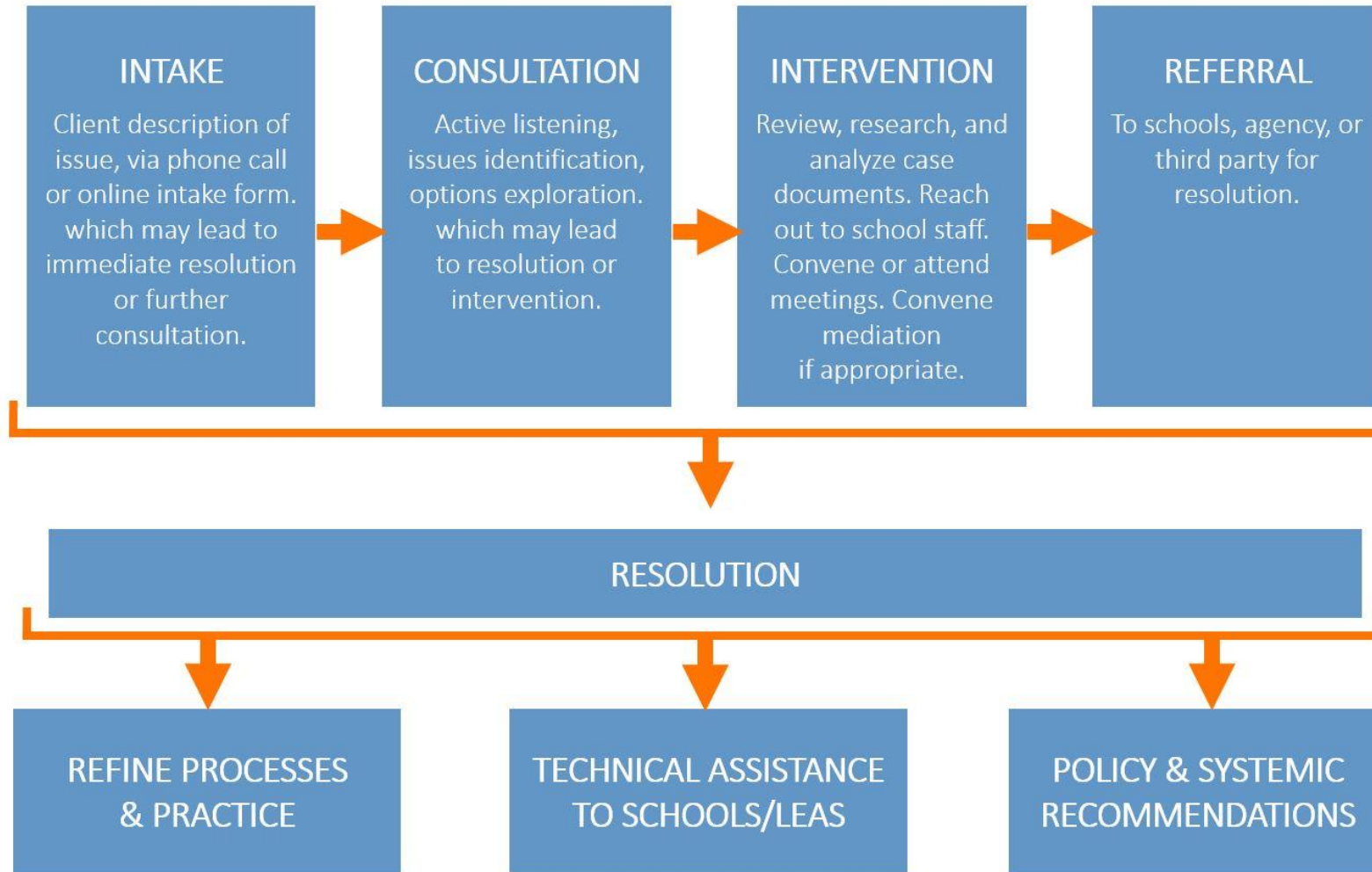
- Our office serves as a venue for families to have voice in directly addressing the issues their student is facing and the school level.
- In many instances such issues are systemic inequities that are causing our children, particularly children of color and students with disabilities, to fail.

Reduce Systemic Inequities

- We believe it is our responsibility to speak out against the systemic inequities that hurt our city's children.
- We believe that through our work, and in our partnership with families and schools, we are creating a barrier-free system in which education equity is the primary focus. Such a system will allow students and families to benefit fully from their public school systems.



How We Serve: Our Process



During intake, we ask a series of questions to determine the scope of the callers concerns and to determine if further consultation and actions are required.

During consultation, we work to understand the caller's perspective and help identify additional issues and contributing factors.

During Intervention we work as an impartial third party to help reach a resolution.

We understand that sometimes there are other partners who can better address the issues- in those cases we make a referral.

Our process is designed to allow for a resolution at any point. We use the data we collect from cases to:

- Refine our processes and practice
- Develop and provide technical assistance to schools and local education agencies; and
- Create policy and systemic recommendations.

Adapted from the Washington State Office of the Education Ombudsman (2011). *Ombudsman Resource Manual*.



Ways We Serve:

Examples of Our Practice and Our Support for Families

Engagement - School Environment

A fourth grade student who stopped doing his classwork and homework because he became dejected from getting in trouble multiple times and being seen as the “problem child.” He became at risk for academic failure. We mediated a meeting to help the school come up with alternative ways of addressing any behavior problems and addressing his triggers.

A fourth grade student who has a developmental delay and speech impairment has suicidal ideation as a result of bullying, which her mom feels the school has handled dismissively. We connected the parent to the school’s bullying coordinator to help develop a safety plan and arrange a victim transfer.

Disability - Special Education

A ninth grade student was retained three times and unable to attend class due to her crippling anxiety and severe emotional disturbance. We coached the family through obtaining an IEP evaluation and advised the school to implement accommodations through a 504 plan until results of evaluation were complete.

A fifth grade student diagnosed with ADHD and hallucinations couldn’t be around a lot of people without misbehaving. He has been on a 504 plan for several years, which is no longer effective. We coordinated a placement meeting with the school to identify a better placement with smaller class sizes.

Access

A third grader with autism and anxiety/mood disorder was suspended after a behavior tech took away a magnet that his teacher allowed him to take outside of the classroom. His mom felt that the situation was handled inappropriately due to his diagnoses. We coordinated with the principal to share necessary accommodations with each teacher to prevent reoccurrence.



Ways We Serve:

Our Work with Schools & Education Leaders

While we work with students and families, we also partner with LEAs and other education stakeholders in the following ways:

Schools & Local Education Agencies

- Mediating conversations between families and between families and LEAs.
- Providing technical support to LEAs on revisions to bullying and discipline policies.
- Researching policy on per-pupil funding reimbursement post enrollment count.
- Advising schools on how to implement McKinney Vento law and support families dealing with homelessness.
- Developing an individualized case report for a charter LEA to update their policies and procedures.
- Working with schools to plan out the implementation of services needed for a student with a disability or in need of behavior supports.
- Providing guidance and recommendations on new policies and procedures.

Other Education Stakeholders

- Advising Council of the District of Columbia Committee on Education of developing a discipline floor to keep students in schools.
- Advising school founders on family engagement.
- Identifying discipline issues unique to charters for the Government Accountability Office.



Contact Summary – Quarter 1

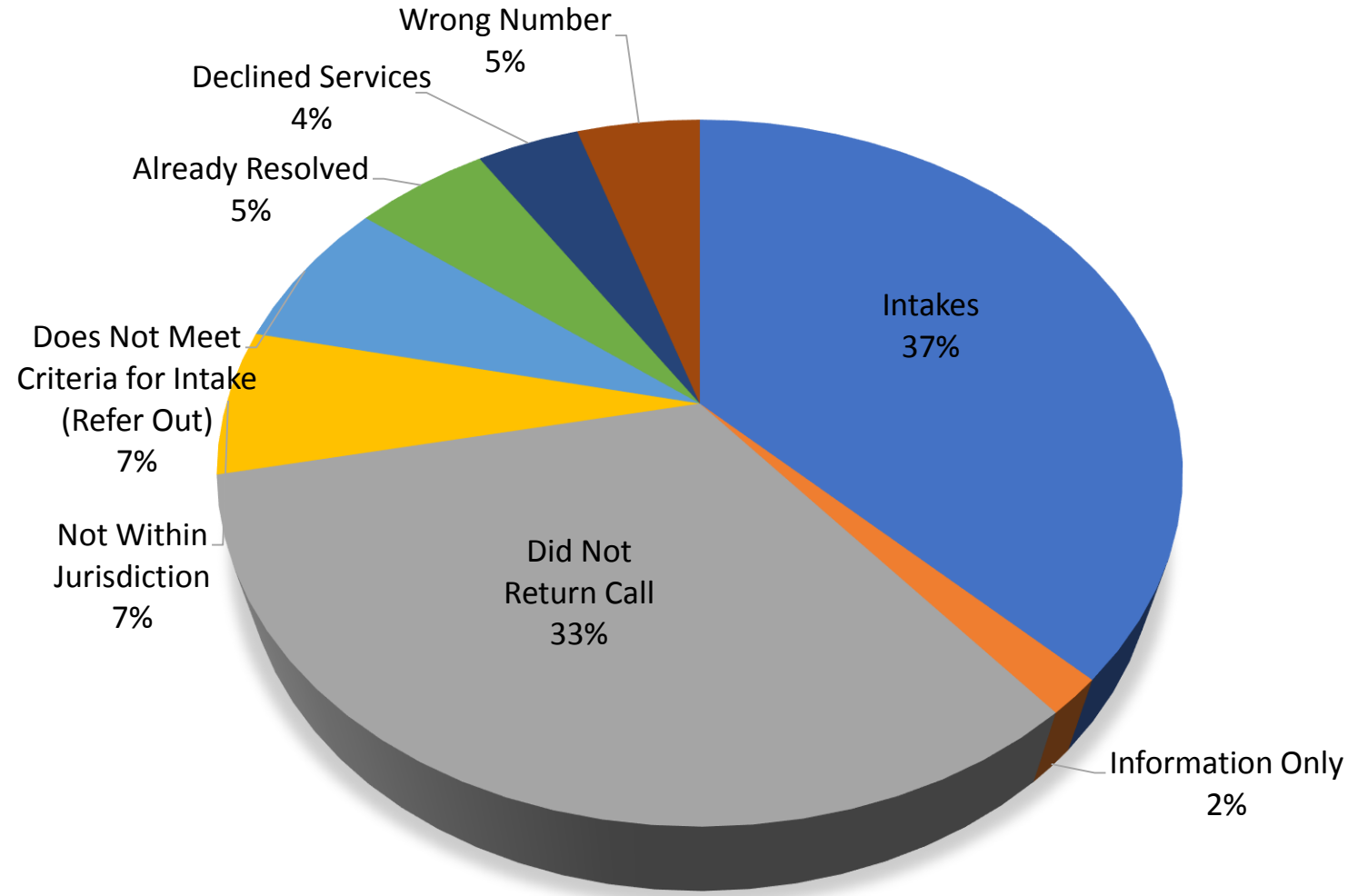
This chart represents all cases from August 15 – October 31, 2018.

This shows the total number of contacts our office received in Quarter 1 and what type of action was taken in response.

It also shows how many of those contacts (emails, calls, referrals) became cases that our staff actively worked to resolve.

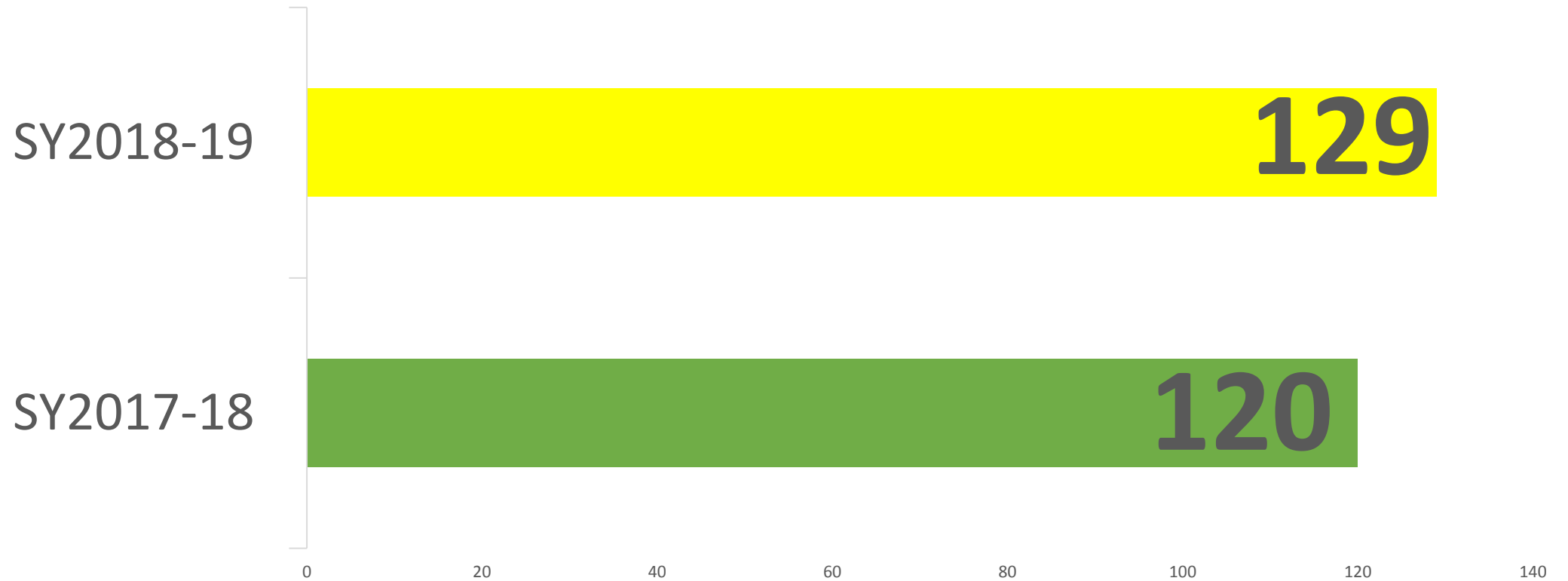
Total Contacts	226
Total Converted to Cases	129

A contact becomes a case when we determine that our direct intervention is necessary to most appropriately address issue.



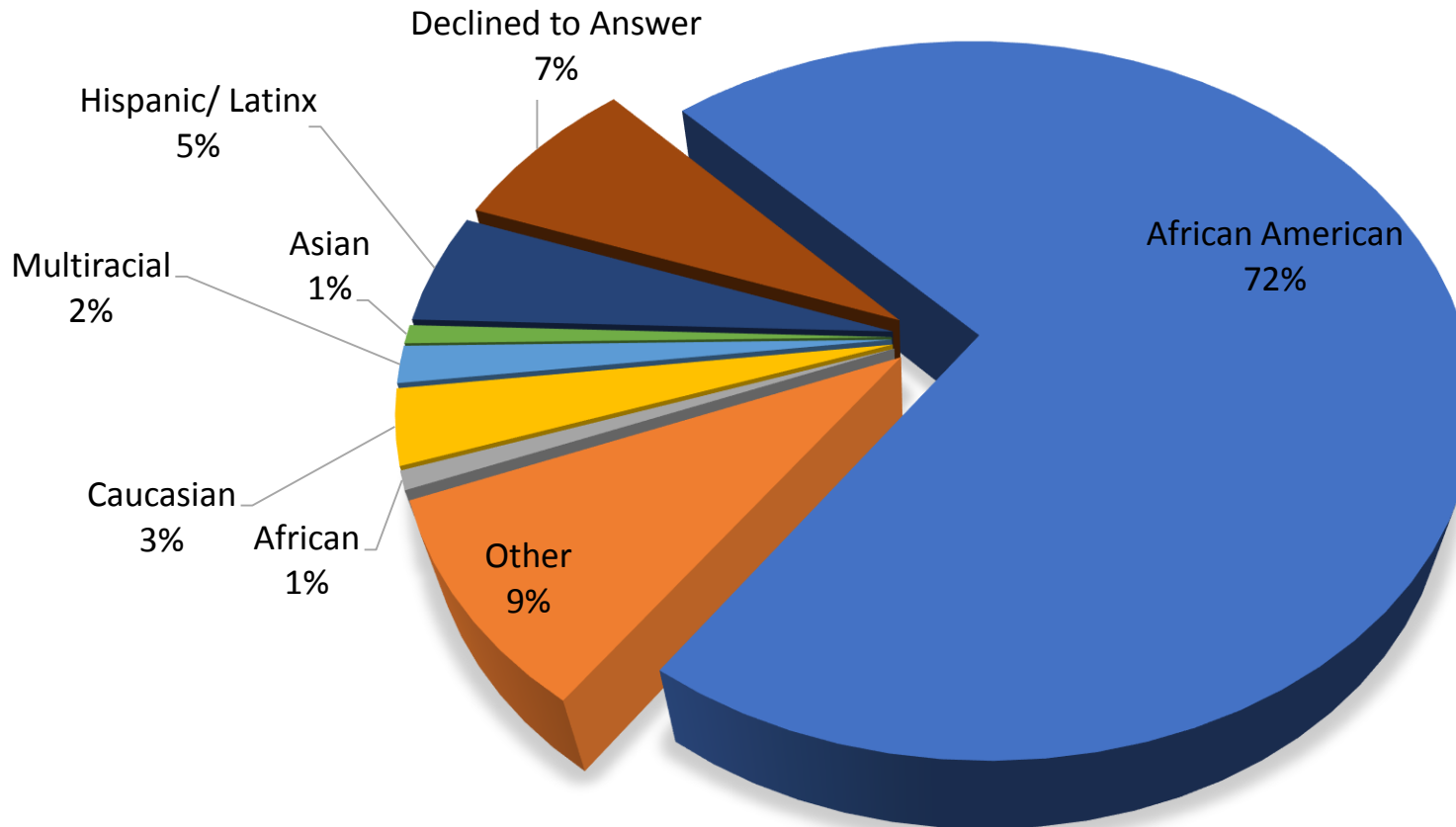
Total Cases for Quarter 1

This chart compares Quarter 1 this year (SY2018-19) to Quarter 1 last year (SY2017-18).



Cases by Student Race/ Ethnicity

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15 and October 31, 2018

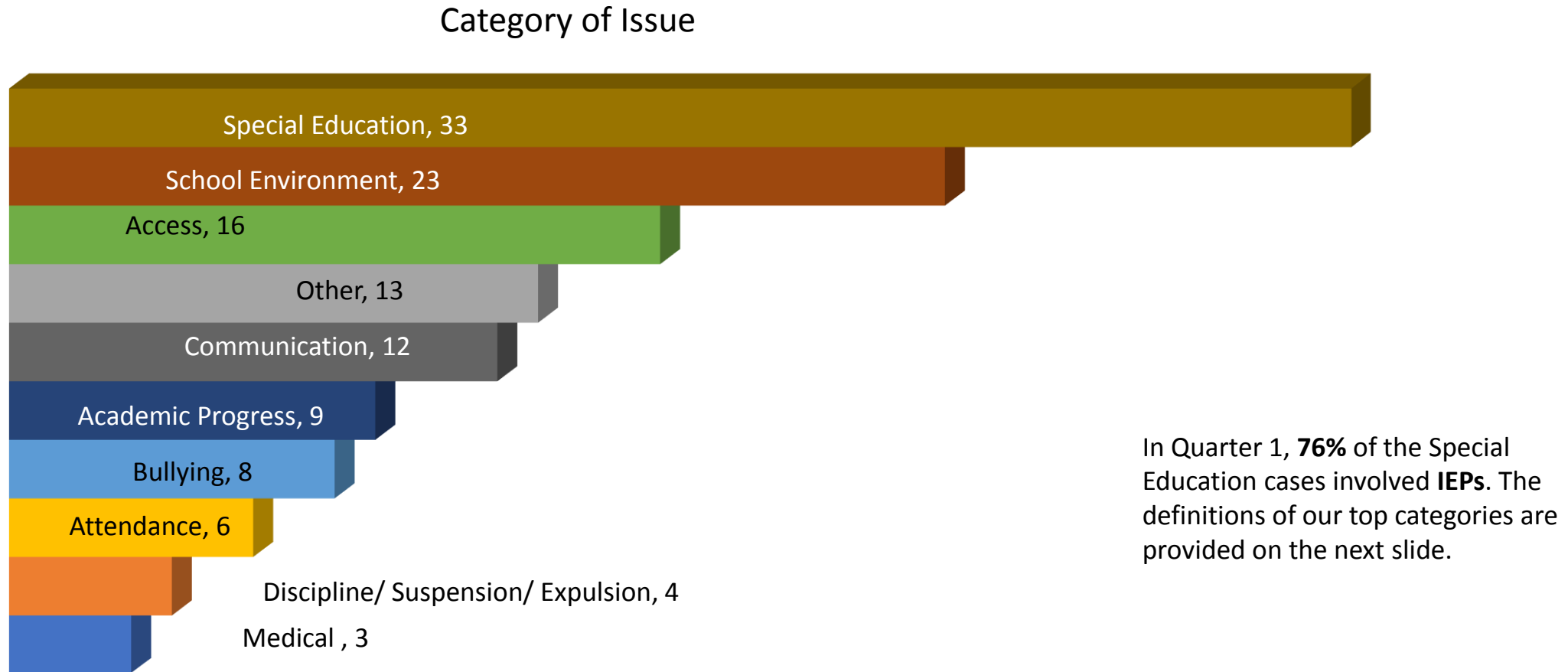


According to Education Forward DC, the student population in DC is

- **71% African American**
- **17% Hispanic**
- **9% Caucasian**
- **2% Asian**
- **2% Multiracial**

Cases by Category

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018.



Category Definitions

This list provides definitions for the categories shown on the previous slide.

- **Academic Progress:** Issues preventing a student from accessing their education related to grades, credits, transcripts, and curriculum that impact learning or perception of learning.
- **Access:** Issues preventing a student from accessing their education unrelated to the curriculum, or due to procedural difficulties or gaps
- **Communication:** Issues preventing a student from accessing their education due to real or perceived breakdowns in productive communication.
- **Special Education:** Issues preventing a student from accessing their education due to a student's diagnosed or suspected disability.
- **School Environment:** Issues preventing a student from accessing their education due to the safety, behavior, and environment issues, or actions of students or staff against the student that signal a need for intervention or support from the school. This category also includes bullying and corporal punishment.
- **Bullying:** School Environment issues in which a member of the school community is bullying a student. This includes the legal definition, a family member's impressions, and sexual assault.
- **Discipline - Expulsion/Suspension:** Issues regarding a student who has been temporarily or permanently placed out of school due to a behavior or disciplinary infraction.
- **Other:** Issues preventing a student from accessing their education due to issues unrelated to any of the other issues.

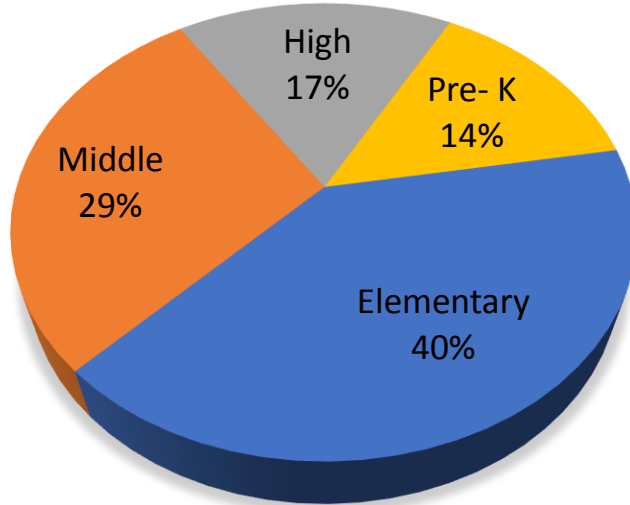
Cases by Category (Special Education)

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018..

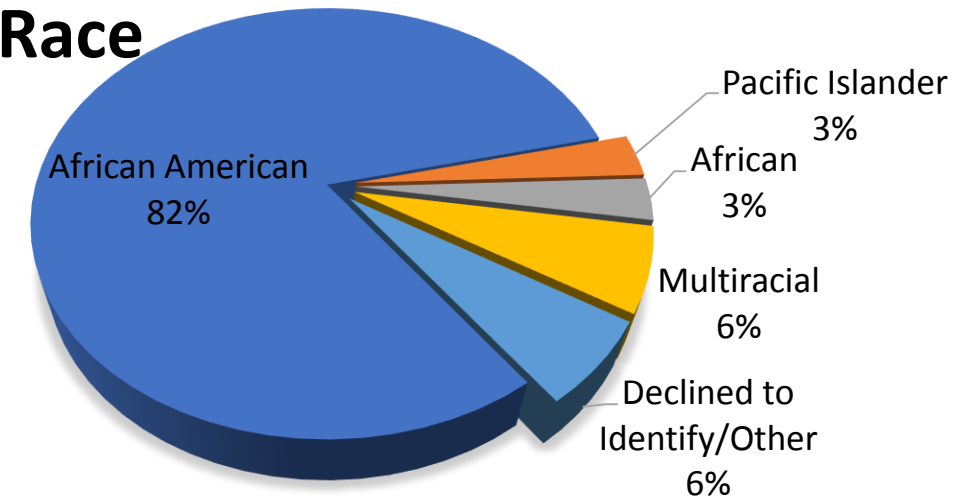
33

Cases in Quarter 1 with
Special Education as the
core issue.

Student Grade Band



Student Race



This shows how the number of African American Students who had a case with us involving problems surrounding special education services compares to the percentage of cases this quarter.

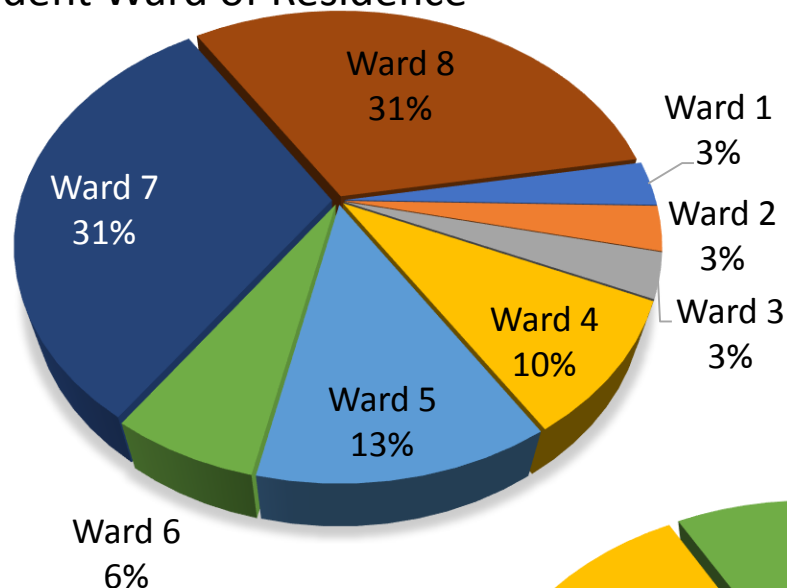
For all of the cases the office handled in Quarter 1, the student race ethnicity breakdown is:

- 72% African American
- 5% Hispanic
- 3% Caucasian
- 1% Asian
- 2% Multiracial

Cases by Category (Special Education)

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018.

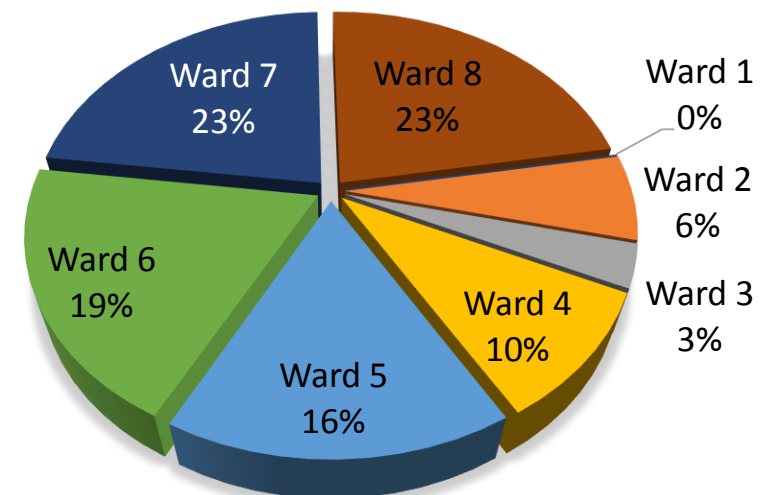
Student Ward of Residence



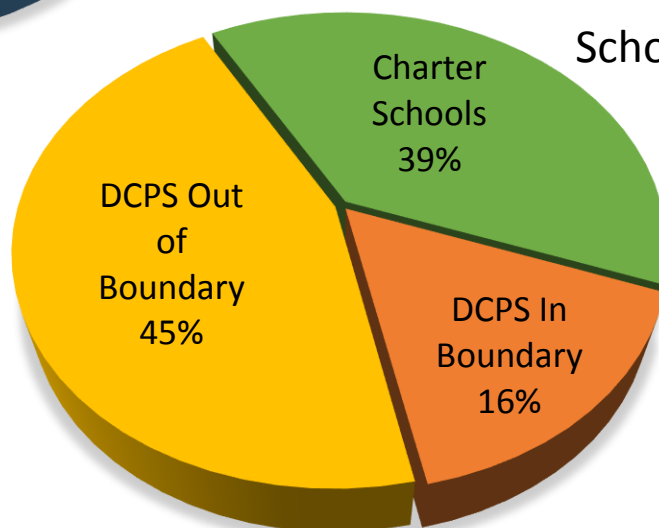
33

Cases in Quarter 1 with
Special Education as the
core issue.

School Ward



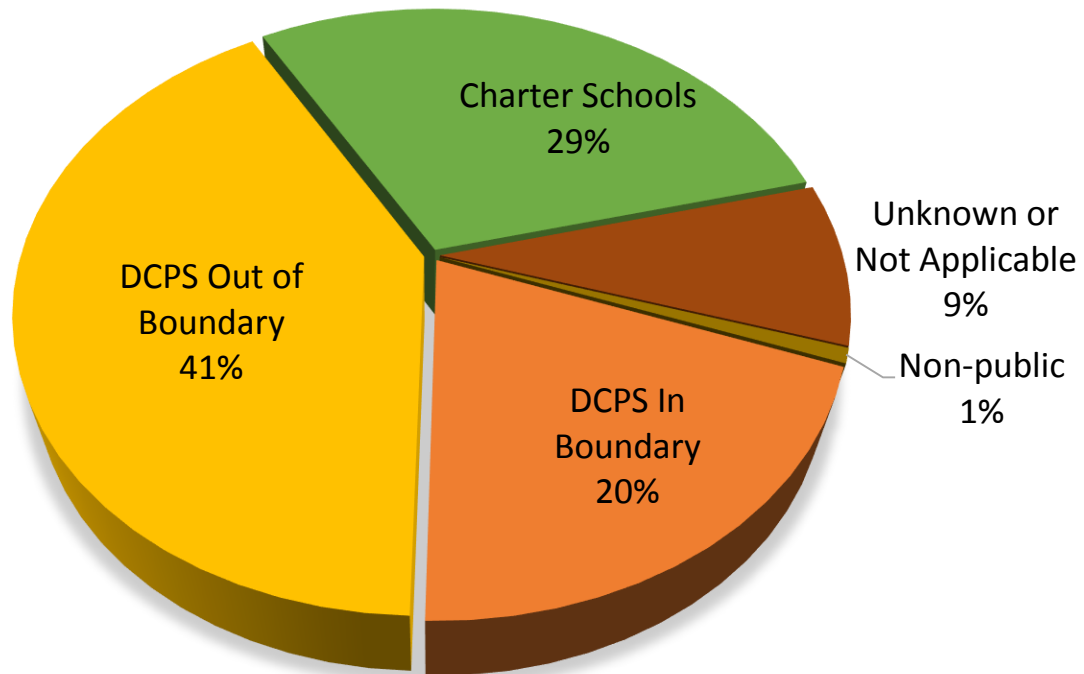
School Type



Although **62%** of our special education cases come from students who **live in Wards 7 and 8**, only **46%** come from **schools located in wards 7 and 8**. In fact, **50%** of the students who live in Wards 7 and 8 (who had a special education case with our office) attend either a charter school that is located outside of their ward or an out-of-boundary DCPS school.

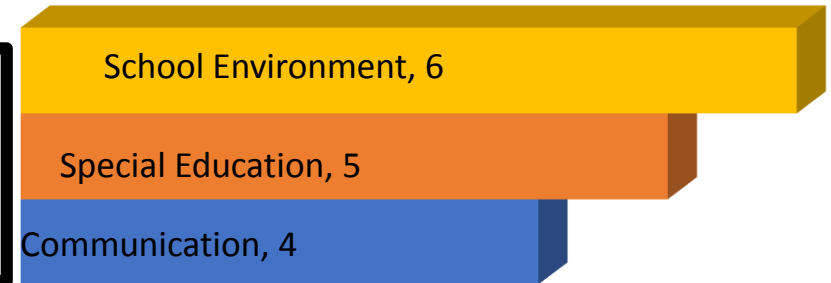
Cases by School Type

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018..



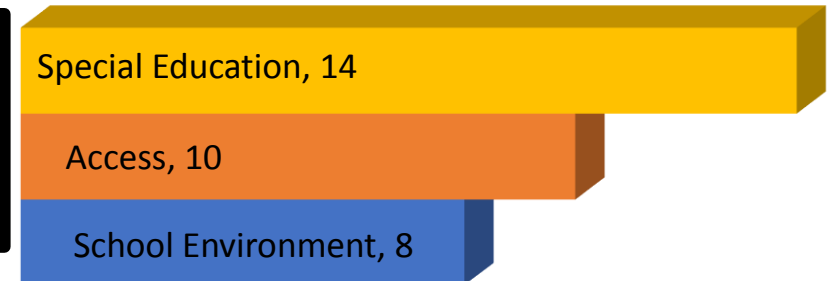
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Top Categories for In-Boundary DCPS Schools



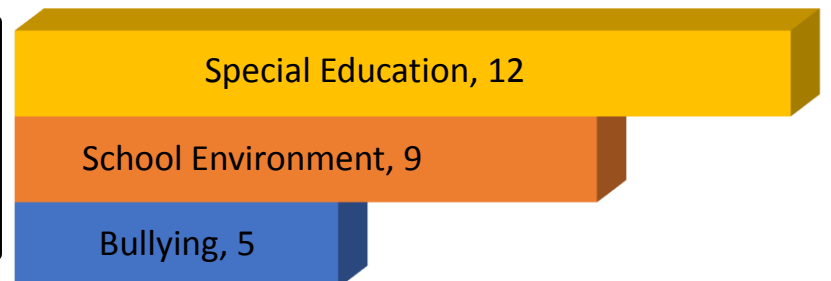
52

Top Categories for Out-of-Boundary DCPS Schools



37

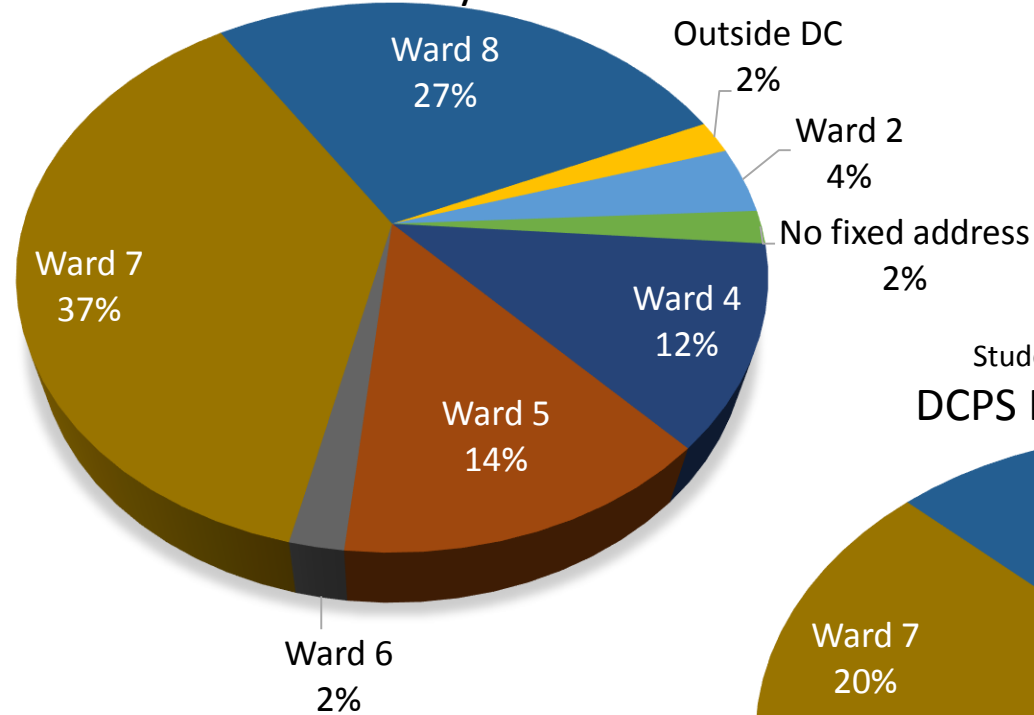
Top Categories for Public Charter Schools



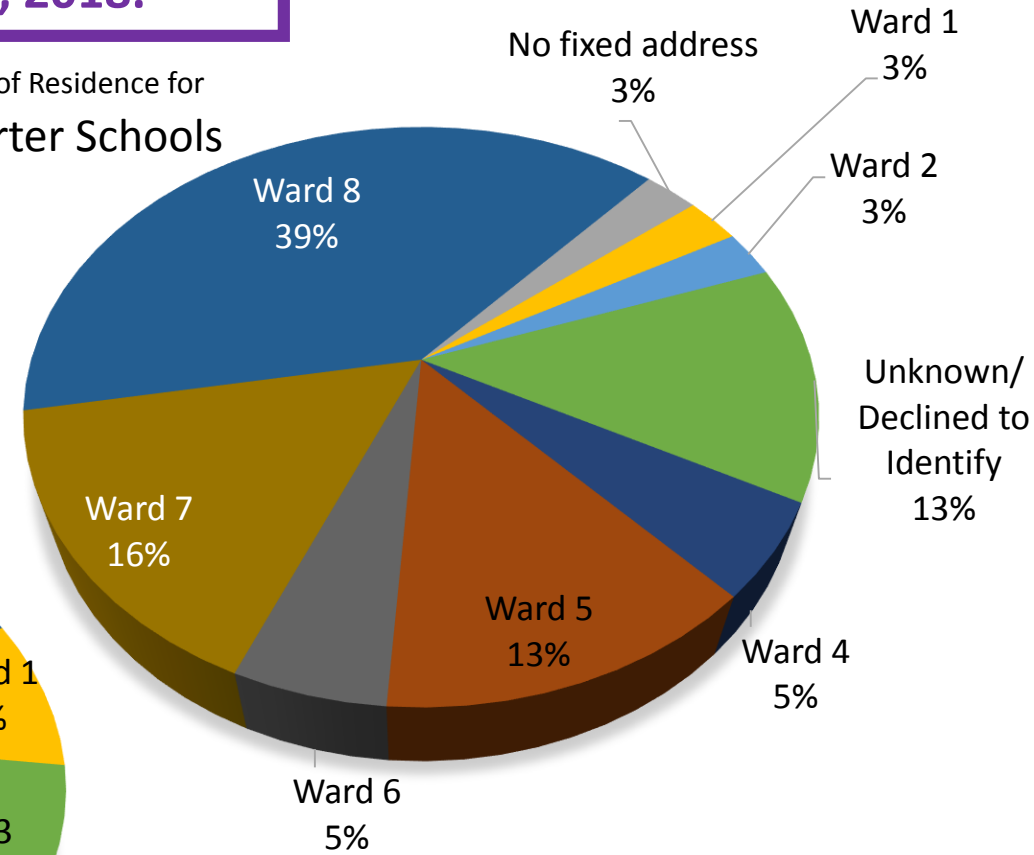
Cases by School Type

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018.

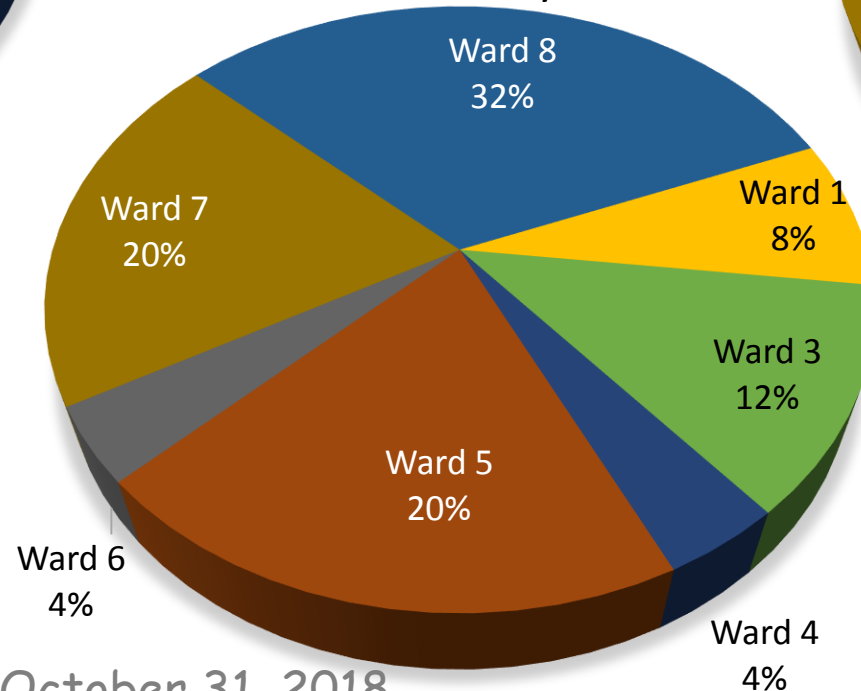
Student Ward of Residence for DCPS Out-of-Boundary Schools



Student Ward of Residence for Public Charter Schools

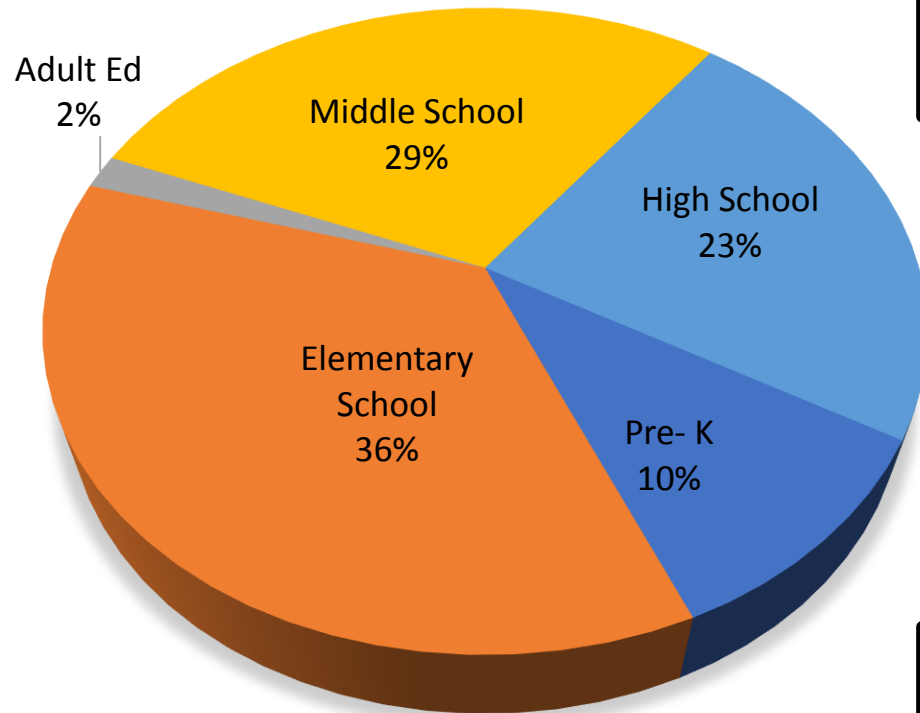


Student Ward of Residence for DCPS In-Boundary Schools



Cases by Grade Band of Student

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018..



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Top Categories for Elementary Schools

Special Education, 16

School Environment, 9

Communication, 7

34

Top Categories for Middle Schools

Special Education, 10

School Environment, 9

Bullying, 3

Access, 4

27

Top Categories for High Schools

Academic Progress, 6

Access, 5

Special Education, 3

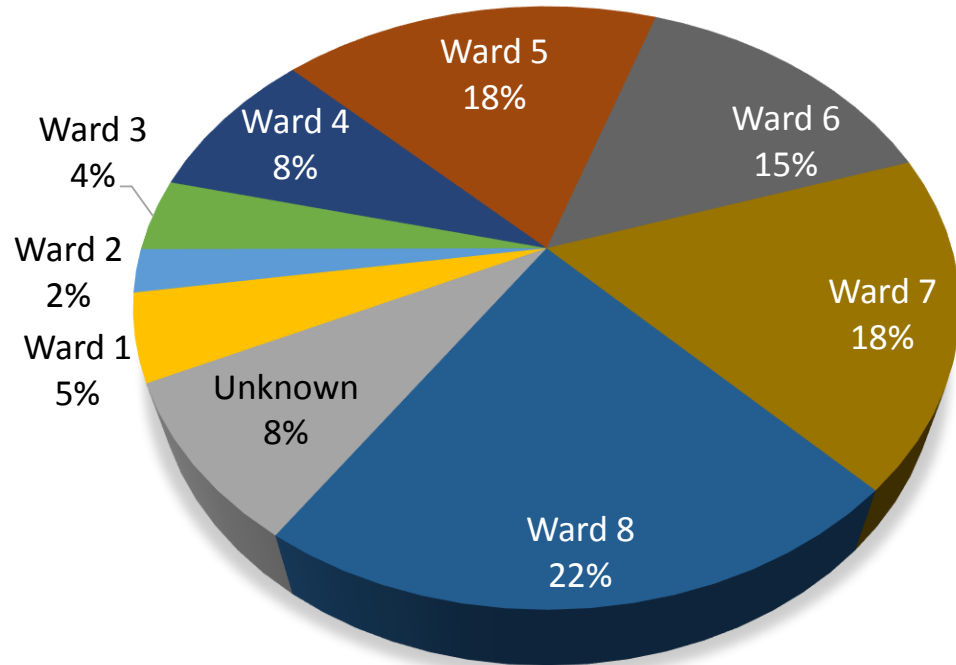
School Environment, 3

Bullying, 3

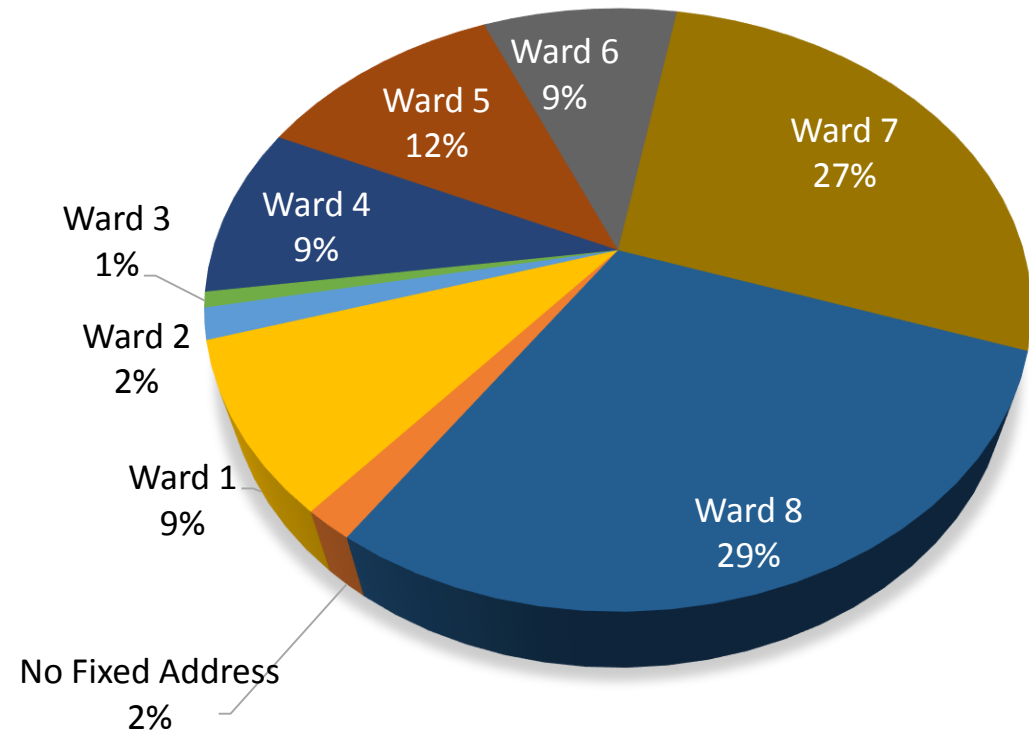
Cases by Ward

This chart represents all cases collected between
August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018.

School Ward



Student Ward of Residence



Ward Profile: Ward 8

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018.

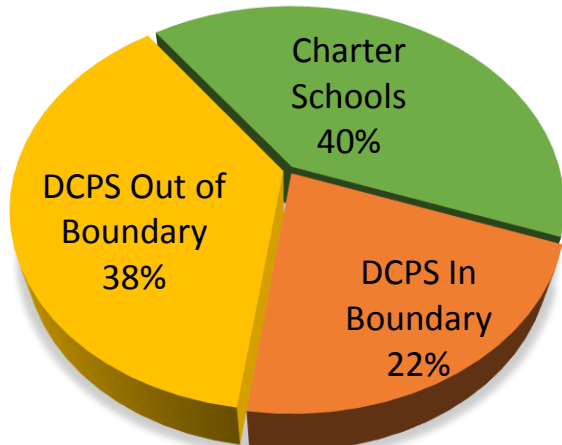
Top Categories from Students Who live in Ward 8



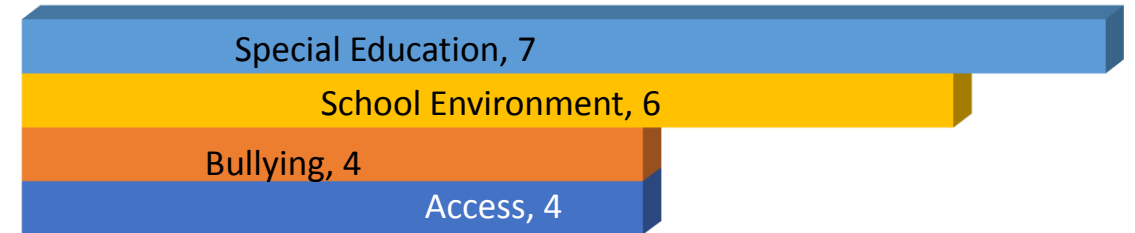
38

Cases in Quarter 1 Involving Students Who Live In Ward 8.

School Type for Students Who Live in Ward 8



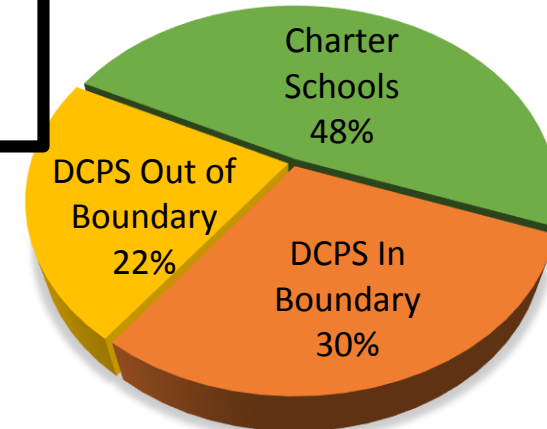
Top Categories from Schools Located in Ward 8



29

Cases in Quarter 1 Involving Schools In Ward 8.

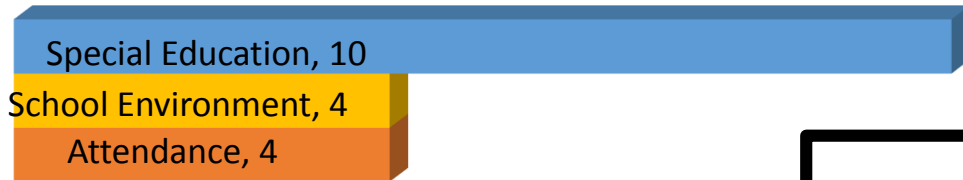
School Type for Cases Involving Schools in Ward 8



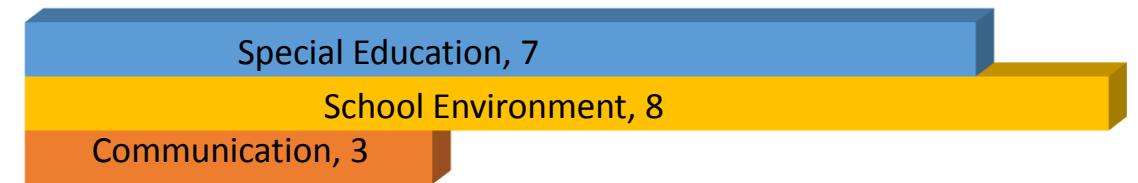
Ward Profile: Ward 7

This chart represents all cases collected between August 15, 2018, and October 31, 2018.

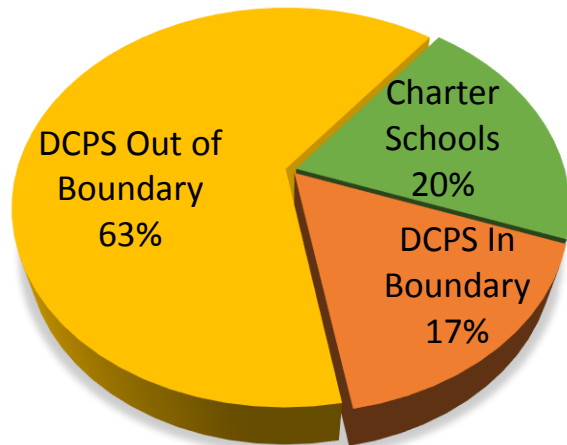
Top Categories from Students Who live in Ward 8



Top Categories from Schools Located in Ward 8



School Type for Students Who Live in Ward 8



77% of the cases involving a student who lives in Ward 7 involve either an out-of-boundary school or a charter school outside Ward 7.

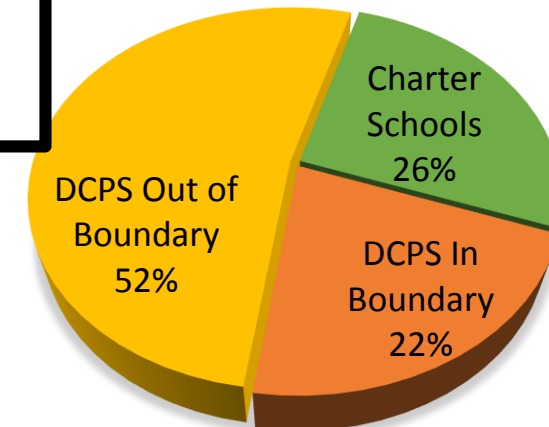
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Cases in Quarter 1 Involving Students Who Live In Ward 7.

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Cases in Quarter 1 Involving Schools In Ward 7.

School Type for Cases Involving Schools in Ward 8



We Look Forward to Partnering With You!



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