



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

154 West 93rd Street New York, New York 10025 - Room 204 Tel (212) 678-2782 Fax (212) 678-2804 Email: CEC3@schools.nyc.gov

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Resolution on High School Equity and Excellence

Approved at the April 17, 2019 CEC3 Business and Calendar Meeting by a Roll Call Vote of the CEC3 members present at the time of the vote (10 in favor / 0 opposed / 0 abstain)

WHEREAS, there are 489 NYC Department of Education ('DOE') high schools, including 9 Specialized High Schools, across the five boroughs; and

WHEREAS, only 5% of these high schools (26 of 489)¹ offer at least 4 of these STEM-focused AP classes (AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, AP Calculus AB and AP Calculus BC) and only 15% of high schools (73 of 489) offer at least 7 AP classes in any topic; and

WHEREAS, New York City has one of the most diverse populations, but its school system is one of the most segregated², denying students the opportunity to benefit from myriad academic and social gains associated with diverse educational environments and restricting equitable access to accelerated programming; and

WHEREAS, changes to high school admissions intended to increase equity have not included proposals to improve academic programming at under-performing elementary and middle schools to prepare students for advanced curricula; and

WHEREAS, high school admissions are inordinately complex; subject to four different admissions methods³ layered with district, neighborhood, middle school or language priorities; and

WHEREAS, District 3 ('D3') students have a geographical disadvantage in this complex process, being in the only Manhattan district without admissions priority to any high schools in their district,

¹ Of these 26 schools, 6 are Specialized high schools. Data tables with HS stats at www.cec3.org/high-school-admissions-committee

² "New York Schools Most Segregated in Nation", UCLA Civil Rights Project, March 26, 2014, www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu

³ Open (Unscreened Admissions), Education Option (50% random, 50% ranked with 16% low ELA, 68% middle, 16% high ELA), Screened (various screens including tests, essays, GPA, auditions, interviews), and SHSAT (Specialized HS Adm. Test)

and being restricted from many of the high-performing schools outside of D3, due to admissions priorities granted to other districts; and

WHEREAS, D3 students currently take the SHSAT and receive offers to Specialized High Schools (SHS) at a higher rate than other Manhattan districts.⁴; and

WHEREAS, the mayor's proposed changes to SHS admissions will reduce nearly 300 D3 SHS offers to fewer than 100 over 3 years, further intensifying competition for high-demand high schools⁵ with extensive AP STEAM or early college programming; and

WHEREAS, there is no transparent plan, process or timeline for changes to admissions, or for sharing data projections with communities or Education Councils, even though many of these changes will disproportionately impact particular districts and are often made mid-cycle; and

WHEREAS, the proposed changes to SHS admissions were not reviewed by the School Diversity Advisory Group, were shared with CECs for feedback only after the legislation was introduced; and

WHEREAS, there is no comprehensive plan for integration and equity improvements across the entire system and no (shared) plans to increase the number of schools with AP STEAM or early college programs for students at all academic levels, in spite of the intense competition for such schools; and

WHEREAS, changes to admissions meant to increase access and diversity have NOT included eliminating the admissions priority given to District 2 for 7 schools with extensive AP offerings; purposefully preserving this inequity⁶ in spite of Chancellor Carranza's September 26th, 2018 statement⁷ that he doesn't believe we should cling to a system that puts up these barriers; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the DOE must continue to focus on expanding access to high-quality high school programming for all students and make increasing equity and integration across the entire system a priority by reevaluating admissions barriers through a transparent, data-based process which includes community engagement; and

⁴ Data available at cec3.org/high-school-admissions-committee

⁵ "Couldn't get into Yale? Ten New York City high schools are more selective", New York Times, March 10, 2017

⁶ Of the 19 non-SHS with the highest SAT scores, only 7 do not have admissions restrictions for D3 applicants

⁷ September 26, 2018 CEC3 Town Hall with Chancellor Carranza, audio available at www.cec3.org

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DOE must eliminate all district priorities, which are contrary to its stated objectives of equity and access, and conduct a thorough evaluation of all borough priorities to ensure that they serve the goals of equity and transparency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DOE should provide detailed multi-year data projections to show how enrollment patterns and programming will change at other high schools if the mayor's Specialized High School proposal becomes state law;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the DOE should directly engage district communities to develop and enact integration and equity initiatives across the entire city, as SHSAT seats represent only 5% of total seats. The mayor's proposal highlights that there are thousands more students ready for advanced curricula; focusing on replication of successful models will make high quality college prep seats available across the system ; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DOE must work to simplify High School Admissions including: the intersection with state laws, reducing the number of separate screening submissions, avoiding changes mid-cycle, and instituting a feedback loop with PAs and Education Councils for major changes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DOE must re-evaluate schools that are not meeting the demands of students, in order to increase the number of schools offering rigorous college-prep programs with comprehensive STEAM curricula, as well as extracurricular activities, to ensure a balance of high quality options; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DOE should add 5000 (1250 9th grade) seats with access to a comprehensive STEAM⁸ curricula, including opening a high school in geographic proximity to, or within, District 3, and expanding seats at current schools with comprehensive STEAM programs in place, in order to fill the demand for STEAM curricula, ease the intense competition for seats with those qualifications and to prepare students of diverse academics needs and backgrounds for the future.

⁸ STEAM is used versus STEM, recognizing the need for comprehensive science curricula that prepares students for the ever-increasing technological aspect of modern careers, without losing sight of the importance of the arts and humanities.