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**Resolution
In Support of Comprehensive Community Input to any and all Proposed Changes to
Specialized High School Admissions
and
In Support of Public Access to Department of Education Data Concerning Proposed
Admissions Rubric Metrics**

Co-sponsors: Maud Maron, John Keller, Amy Cheung

Whereas:

1. The Mayor's administration has proposed significant changes to the admissions process for the Specialized High Schools of New York City¹ including, but not limited to, phasing out the SHSAT, which is the single test used for admission to all eight schools. The admissions process for New York City's Specialized High Schools is controlled by New York State education law known as "Hecht-Calandra" and during the last legislative session, Bill A10427a (the SHSAT Bill) was significantly rewritten and introduced two days before the end of the session by Assembly Member Charles Barron, reported by the Assembly's Education Committee to the Assembly Floor on June 6, 2018, and scheduled for debate and a vote. The rushed debate period allowed no time for meaningful community input into the rewritten Bill or analysis of its impact on current and future students of District 2. The SHSAT Bill will likely be brought up for debate and a vote in the Legislative Session beginning in January 2019;

¹ Specialized High Schools that would be impacted by the Mayor's proposal include Bronx High School of Science, Brooklyn Latin School, Brooklyn Technical High School, High School for Mathematics, Science, and Engineering at City College, High School of American Studies at Lehman College, Staten Island Technical High School, Queens High School for the Sciences at York College and Stuyvesant High School

2. The New York City Department of Education (DOE) has both supported and publicly endorsed the Mayor's SHSAT Bill including through presentations to Community Education Councils by its Office of Student Enrollment;
3. The Mayor's administration and the DOE have a track record of obfuscating data that do not support its agendas, misrepresenting the results of studies to support its goals and failing to apprise parents of current, relevant data.² The DOE withheld from the public, for over five years, the Metis study, which it commissioned, and which indicated that the SHSAT exam is a good predictor of how well students would do in Specialized High Schools.³ The Mayor's administration continues to seek biased interpretation of education data⁴;
4. Among its other provisions, the SHSAT Bill would create a quota system which requires each Specialized High School to make offers to the top 7% of students from each DOE public middle school, based on a set of criteria that will be specifically *identified and weighted at the discretion of the Chancellor*, which criteria will include, but is not limited to: students' rankings on their 7th Grade New York State Math and ELA exam scores, their rankings within their individual schools on their 7th Grade English, Math, Social Studies and Science course grades, and their being ranked "in the top 25% of the city." This criteria is arbitrary, inconsistent, not designed to identify academically accelerated students, vulnerable to varied implicit biases, and easily manipulated to serve interests outside of identifying academically accelerated students;
5. The set of criteria, and their weights, which would be used under the provisions of the SHSAT Bill have not been the subject of any public study using relevant data concerning the suitability of comparing course grades from every NYC middle school to screen students for Specialized High Schools;
6. No data have been publicly identified or provided by the DOE to show that grading is comparable across middle schools in the district and the city, leading to unfairness in how students from different middle schools will be offered seats to Specialized High Schools;
7. The lack of proportional representation from Black and Latino students at Specialized High Schools, which the SHSAT Bill aims to redress, is a symptom of the lack of adequate support from the DOE to the effective education of Black and Latino students in

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/26/nyregion/deblasio-school-renewal-bill.html>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/03/nyregion/admissions-test-shsat-high-school-study.html>

⁴ A recent job listing for a "Senior Fellow in the Office of the First Deputy Mayor" who will report to the "Senior Education Policy Advisor" includes in the Duties and Responsibilities: "Write and produce a series of reports on the major education initiatives of the de Blasio administration providing detailed and compelling stories about the positive transformation of NYC schools resulting from those initiatives" and "synthesize and analyze specific examples of the ways in which the administration initiatives have promoted progress in particular schools" raising concerns that the administration wishes to spin education data to support predetermined narratives rather than engage in a thorough and honest analysis of data regardless of the actual policies' educational outcomes.

the K-8 system. In addition, Black and Latino students do not take the test in proportionate numbers as other ethnicities, and 27% of Black and Latino students -- far more than any other ethnicity -- decline offers from the Specialized High Schools in favor of private and boarding schools;

8. The SHSAT Bill proposes to reallocate seats as a remedy to this diversity issue without addressing the root cause of the problem⁵, and without a proper plan to address the difference in achievement in the resulting student population;
9. Asian students, who are the fastest growing student group at Specialized High Schools, are the minority group with the highest poverty rate in NYC. Stuyvesant High School's student body is 42% Free and Reduced Price Lunch students (FRPL). One in five students at Stuyvesant are immigrants, 74% of students at Stuyvesant are either immigrants or children of immigrants and more than half of Specialized High School families do not speak English at home. The Mayor's proposal will make Specialized High Schools less diverse in terms of languages spoken and students' country of origin;
10. The three original Specialized High Schools originated as STEM schools and six out of nine of the current Specialized High Schools are currently STEM schools. Academically rigorous STEM schools allow New York City Public School students to competitively pursue higher education that leads to success in STEM industries. "They provide a free, first-rate education that would otherwise be unattainable to thousands of students from disadvantaged backgrounds";
11. Specialized High Schools represent only eight out of over 700 New York City High School Programs. Over 120 of those Programs use holistic admissions rubrics. The SHSAT test-only admissions system for eight schools is a choice pursued by 30,000 kids annually and creates an academic environment that can not be replicated if replaced by the proposed Bill;
12. While some District 2 schools could potentially see a modest increase in Specialized High School acceptances those increases would be in the single digits. Many more schools in District 2 would see significant decreases. Last year, 655 District 2 students received acceptances (including private and catholic) and under the 7% quota system of the SHSAT Bill, the number of students receiving offers to Specialized High Schools would be reduced to 177 -- a 73% loss of seats;

⁵ Specialized High Schools enrolled black & Latino students in significantly higher numbers when there were honors programs in almost all schools. In the 1989-1990 school year, Brooklyn Tech was 51% black & Latino, Bronx Science 22% and Stuyvesant 10%. After the DOE ended many of its honors programs as a result of anti-tracking proposals, those numbers fell to 13%, 9% and 4% respectively in a schools system which is majority Black and Latino.

- a. The public school decreases would be as follows⁶:

District 2 Middle School	SHS Acceptances in 2017-2018	Capped acceptances under Mayor’s proposal
NYC LAB MS	113	13
Robert F. Wagner MS	77	30
East Side MS	75	11
Salk School of Science	70	9
Simon Baruch MS	53	27
Battery Park City School	20	6
PS126	18	8
Clinton School	17	7
School of the Future	15	7
Spruce	10	4
ICE	8	5

13. The “ripple effect” of an influx of students who would otherwise attend Specialized Schools, but are barred from admissions due to the 7% quota, into the screened schools to which they would likely seek admission, will, by necessity, displace the District 2 students who would otherwise attend those screened high schools. The DOE has not publicly commented on, or provided data as to which District 2 High Schools, if any, would have increased capacity to absorb the displaced students. Districts which, like District 2, include several Middle Schools schools who usually receive more offers than the 7% allowable quota, but do not have District specific High Schools, will experience even greater disruption as a result of the Administration’s proposal;

14. The above noted changes in admissions patterns will have a significant impact on all District 2 students and their families, both immediately and over time:

- a. Students can be in the top 1% of the city based on the composite score but not offered a spot *because they are at a selective middle school*.

⁶ MeritFund.org

- b. Some schools will have far fewer than 7% of their students in the top 25% and it is unclear from DOE presentations what happens to the balance of seats that ends up not allocated through the 7% set aside.
 - c. The composite score, which includes ELA exam results and English and Social Studies class grades, will favor native English speakers reducing the number of English Language Learner (ELL) students admitted to Specialized High Schools;
15. Reliance on the Composite Score under the SHSAT Bill will result in the main differentiating factors being State Math and ELA Exam scores.
- a. This shift from SHSAT to State Exams significantly undermines the Administration's assertion that this Bill is needed to remedy the reliance "on a single test."
 - b. The SHSAT is explicitly designed as a test to identify the top 5% of students, the NYS exams are not. The NYS Exams have no discriminating power at the top range of the scale, which is exactly where the Specialized High Schools operate. Switching from the SHSAT to NYS exams as an admissions tool, eliminates the ability to accurately identify the top 5% of students.
 - c. Under State Law the State Exam test results must "not be the sole, primary, or major factor in admissions decisions" but that is exactly what will happen due to grade inflation and compression;
16. The Mayor's plan would change the demographic makeup of Specialized High Schools but wholly fails to address any of the fundamental educational failures of elementary or middle schools which serve primarily Black and Latino students.

Therefore Be it Resolved, that the Community Education Council for District 2 (CECD2), asks the DOE withdraw its support from the Mayor's SHSAT Bill until comprehensive, meaningful and significant feedback from the families of District 2 can be received, responded to and fully taken into account by the Office of Student Enrollment;

Therefore Be it Further Resolved, that CECD2 asks the Mayor to delay continued consideration of the SHSAT Bill until a formalized process for community input that fully engages school teachers, administrators, students and families from all NYC School Districts and the Specialized High Schools is established, well-publicized and implemented;

Therefore Be it Further Resolved, that CECD2 seeks from the Office of Student Enrollment Public Access to all Department of Education Data which are relevant to understanding and formulating the composite scores which would be created and implemented under the SHSAT Bill;

Therefore Be it Further Resolved, that CECD2 seeks from the Office of Enrollment a comprehensive Review and Report of the impact of the SHSAT Bill on Middle School students and families, both in District 2 and across the city.