

Notes on the Mayor's SHSAT proposal



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What is the proposal?

The Mayor's proposal is to eliminate the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) and increase student participation in the Discovery Program.

September 2019: Discovery Program will offer up to 20% of specialized high school seats to economically disadvantaged students who missed the test cut-off by 1-2 pts.

Year 1: 3% of top middle school students receive offers based on ranking. SHSAT is used to determine the rest of the offers.

Year 2: 5% of top middle school students receive offers based on ranking. SHSAT is used to determine the rest of the offers.

Year 3: 7% of top middle school students receive offers based on ranking. The remaining seats are filled by public and private school students who are ranked by the DOE by composite score of their grades (min. GPA of 3.7) and scores on 3-8 standardized exams.

(Source: "Mayor Bill de Blasio: Our specialized schools have a diversity problem. Let's fix it." <https://bit.ly/2sBXGDS>)

How are the top % of students selected?

The NYCDOE Chancellor will determine the criteria for choosing the top percentage of students:

- 1) The top 7% will be determined by course grades, standardized test scores, and “other measures” as determined by the Chancellor.
- 2) Students would be assigned a composite score based on these factors.
- 3) Students are then ranked according to their school preference and composite score. Offers to specialized high schools will be based on that ranking.

(Source: Mayor’s Press Conference on SHSAT - June 3rd)

Why change the SHSAT at all? *(Data from NYCDOE)*

	2018 Admissions							
	Native American	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Multi-racial	Unknown	Total
Tester Summary								
Total Testers	297	8,809	5,730	6,495	5,139	303	1,560	28,333
Distribution of Testers, by Ethnicity	1.0%	31.1%	20.2%	22.9%	18.1%	1.1%	5.5%	100.0%
Offer Summary								
Bronx High School of Science (10X445)	7	518	25	65	185	32	80	912
Brooklyn Technical High School (13K430)	7	935	87	137	567	45	126	1,904
HS for Math, Science, and Engineering at City College (05M692)	1	29	11	23	58	2	25	149
High School of American Studies at Lehman College (10X696)	1	24	5	11	68	8	24	141
Queens High School for the Sciences at York College (28Q687)	0	122	5	7	10	2	5	151
Staten Island Technical High School (31R605)	0	149	2	5	141	0	29	326
Stuyvesant High School (02M475)	8	613	10	27	151	26	67	902
The Brooklyn Latin School (14K449)	5	230	62	45	164	13	63	582
Total Offers, by Ethnicity	29	2,620	207	320	1,344	128	419	5,067
Distribution of Offers, by Ethnicity	0.6%	51.7%	4.1%	6.3%	26.5%	2.5%	8.3%	100.0%
Percent of Testers who Received an Offer, by Ethnicity	9.8%	29.7%	3.6%	4.9%	26.2%	42.2%	26.9%	17.9%

	2017 Admissions							
	Native American	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Multi-racial	Unknown	Total
Tester Summary								
Total Testers	263	8,345	5,847	6,614	5,070	187	1,527	27,853
Distribution of Testers, by Ethnicity	0.9%	30.0%	21.0%	23.7%	18.2%	0.7%	5.5%	100.0%
Offer Summary								
Bronx High School of Science (10X445)	7	558	21	55	210	16	74	941
Brooklyn Technical High School (13K430)	6	949	90	142	597	24	115	1,923
HS for Math, Science, and Engineering at City College (05M692)	1	64	14	32	71	6	11	199
High School of American Studies at Lehman College (10X696)	1	24	7	14	71	1	28	146
Queens High School for the Sciences at York College (28Q687)	1	123	11	10	21	0	13	179
Staten Island Technical High School (31R605)	2	156	1	8	149	1	22	339
Stuyvesant High School (02M475)	6	598	13	28	204	10	67	926
The Brooklyn Latin School (14K449)	1	192	37	41	101	7	46	425
Total Offers, by Ethnicity	25	2,664	194	330	1,424	65	376	5,078
Distribution of Offers, by Ethnicity	0.5%	52.5%	3.8%	6.5%	28.0%	1.3%	7.4%	100.0%

How will the proposal impact the specialized high schools?

According to the Mayor's office, approximately 25-30% of admissions offers would be extended to top students in the first year. So the test would determine 70 - 75% of admissions. By the third year, we can expect approximately 60-70% of seats to go to top middle school students. 30-40% of seats will go to other public and private school students based on ranking of their composite scores.

According to the Mayor's office, projections suggest that 45% of offers will go to Black and Latino students in the third year of the plan.

Specialized high schools will have demographics that more closely align with the city's demographics at large. Research suggests that integrated schools improve cognitive skills such as a critical thinking. (Read the Century Foundation report here: <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-racially-diverse-schools-and-classrooms-can-benefit-all-students/> OR here: <https://bit.ly/235HOYO>)

Arguments against changing the SHSAT

These are concerns expressed to the MBPO by constituents in Manhattan:

Conflicts with Existing Desegregation Plans

The diversity plan on the UWS is almost entirely based on the merits of academic diversity.

Potentially Raises the Value of Standardized Testing

Though the SHSAT will not be in use, the 3-8 grade standardized exams may increase in importance.

Chancellor's Criteria

Grades and test scores seem to be a given but there is room for other factors as well. It will be up to the Chancellor to make sure that standardized middle school exams do not simply replace the SHSAT as a gatekeeping tool.

Fairness to Asian Students

Currently, Asian students receive just over 50% of offers. The plan would decrease that %, drastically.

Minimal Impact on School Segregation

The specialized high schools only serve about 2% of the entire school system.

The Bottom Line

New York City has one of the most segregated school systems in the country. Read the report:

<https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/ny-norflet-report-placeholder>

OR use this link: <https://bit.ly/2pF49xU>

Inequities in Admissions

Over 60% of students are Black and Latinx but Black and Latinx students only receive 10% of offers to specialized high schools. Asian students represent 17.25% of the student population but receive over 50% of offers. White students represent 16.29% of the student population but receive just under 30% of offers:

<https://www.nycenet.edu/PublicApps/register.aspx?s=X111>

OR use this link: <https://bit.ly/2zSwJ2Z>

References

Read about the Mayor's proposal here:

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2018/06/02/mayor-bill-de-blasio-new-york-city-will-push-for-admissions-changes-at-elite-and-segregated-specialized-high-schools/>

OR use this link: <https://bit.ly/2sBXGDS>

Read the legislation to eliminate the SHSAT (A1047A) here:

http://nyassembly.gov/leg/?default_fld=&leg_video=&bn=A10427&term=2017&Summary=Y&Memo=Y&Text=Y

OR use this link: <https://bit.ly/2Ees12I>

Read the report from Sean Corcoran (Institute for Education and Social Policy) and Christine Baker-Smith (Research Alliance for New York City Schools) here:

https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/sg158/PDFs/Pathways_to_elite_education/PathwaystoAnEliteEducation.pdf

OR use this link: <https://bit.ly/2JFmRzO>