

## STUDENT PANEL ON HS ADMISSIONS PROCESS

MS54 General PTA Meeting May 12, 2020 8:30am

*Students share how they approached the HS admissions process and what they learned along the way, moderated by PTA Co-corresponding Secretary Joanne Giordano*

### STUDENT PANELISTS:

- **A**, Anande – HSMSE (also Beacon)
- **AG**, Anna Giulia – Bronx Science (also Clinton)
- **F**, Felicia – Bronx Science (also Clinton)
- **L**, Logan – Frank Sinatra (also LaGuardia, & Lehman)
- **M**, Maia – Beacon (also Brooklyn Latin)
- **R**, Ruby – Stuyvesant
- **S**, Sia – Brooklyn Tech

### **HOW DID YOU TARGET YOUR RESEARCH AND SCHOOLS?**

**M** – toured almost every “reach” school; list should include reach schools / target schools / likely match schools

**F** – looked at most “popular” schools (in terms of where Booker kids have typically gone, and others that stood out in research); toured more than 20, then developed a ranking based on personal preferences of STEM, size (big), location.

**R** – made a list beforehand of Specialized and non-Specialized, visited websites, went to the tours and asked questions

**A** – thought about what he wanted (nearby, STEM, smaller school) – knew Specialized preference right away; for non-Specialized did tours and talked to kids there

**AG** – did a lot of research on the DOE website with attention on student improvement scores and talked to families with older students about their experiences; attended Booker and other community HS meetings. Recommends visiting as many schools as possible, because the environment is very important. Also pay attention to the priority group for admissions (on myschools.nyc)

**S** – found it helpful to ask questions of the students and administration at the schools during tours

**L** – Looked across the map for Specialized, non-Specialized, Private and Catholic, and even started touring in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Used the website InsideSchools to look at academics and arts, even went to some performances at target schools.

### **WHAT DID YOU DO TO PREP FOR SHSAT / AUDITION FOR ARTS SCHOOL?**

**L** – did SHSAT tutoring; auditioned for vocal and drama at Frank Sinatra (FS) and LaGuardia. You need to know your stuff and be prepared – voice teacher, private lessons, ask friends in arts HS for help. At FS you bring in your 32-bar cut (1-2 minutes) for the pianist and sing along; LaGuardia you sing Acapella and tap-back a few things. *(Happy to share more info, please contact; chose FS over LaGuardia & Lehman because of the program and similar size as Booker)*

**S** – Also worth noting that at FS, there’s 8-9 other students in the room as you sing, and you also do a group song; at LaGuardia, you’re by yourself. For SHSAT, tutored with both GRF and iBidprep.

**AG** – Auditioned for Fine Arts at LaGuardia (no offer) – prepared by taking the Afterschool Portfolio class with Ms. Kricorian beforehand. At the audition had to draw a still life from memory (select from 2 options); draw a figure from observation; draw a scene with 2 figures in oil pastels (select from 2 options)

**F** – Also did Fine Arts Audition at LaGuardia, the Afterschool Portfolio class with Ms. Kricorian was helpful. Also took the SHSAT and tutoring (Spring/Fall class with ibidprep)

**M** – Took SHSAT and got offer but going to Beacon. Started studying for SHSAT in 7<sup>th</sup> grade after the state tests with a private tutor, also brought SHSAT Test Prep book to summer camp

A – Took SHSAT group class as well (Spring/Fall class), and recommends taking as many practice tests as possible

R – used the Kaplan book which was helpful

**ADVICE ON PREPARING FOR OTHER TESTS / PORTFOLIOS / WRITING SAMPLES FOR OTHER SCREEN HIGH SCHOOLS?**

F – wrote most of these over the summer, which was helpful to feel prepared and focus on SHSAT, schoolwork, and all the tours in the Fall

R – Some of the Bard test questions were interesting: if you could create a law, what would it be? Math had about 20 questions, with the last one more complex (much like state tests)

S – for Beacon, had to write 2 essays (*1 on challenge you overcame, 2 on extracurricular activity*) and hand in a 7<sup>th</sup> grade assignment (must be something you've done alone, not with a partner; recommends handing in an ELA project vs STEM). Also for Beacon they have grouped rankings for their admissions rubric (e.g. 95%+ = 5, 90-95% = 4, etc. so a 99% gets same score as 96, for example); Don't know anyone going to Beacon that had average below 90 (*MODERATOR NOTE: Beacon is one of the schools that receives the most applications across the city*)

**FOR THE NON-SPECIALIZED SCHOOL LISTS – DID EVERYONE COME UP WITH 12?**

F – yes, and knows some people that got their 11<sup>th</sup> choice

A – yes, safest option and be sure to put target and likely matches

L – yes, and with many arts schools you apply to different programs within the school which takes up multiple slots

**PLEASE SHARE TIPS/ADVICE FOR APPLYING TO HS:**

F – You should definitely include some reach schools (there is always a chance) but also include target or likely match schools. Schools CANNOT see how you rank them (though some schools will say they can, they cannot) so go for it.

R – Create a chart with all the information in the same place; Teacher recommendations are extremely helpful (for private school applications); Don't overwork yourself – do what you can a little bit each week.

A – Speak to friends attending the schools to get their perspective, they may have a different viewpoint than the students leading the tours

AG – important to take notes of things you find on tours that aren't on the website; environment is something to note, how you feel when you are at the school...

S – At each tour, write down 3 things you like and 3 things you didn't like; study for SHSAT as early as possible; City-wide HS fair was helpful to determine which schools to tour/not tour; parents talking to parents is also helpful for insights on happiness and workload

L – Also thought the fairs were really helpful; main thing was to stay focused and be prepared; the arts auditions were really long days (7 hours at LaGuardia) and not allowed to use phones. Whether schools have in/out lunch or outdoor space is also a consideration.

M – for non-specialized tests / interviews/ essays (Beacon = portfolio, Bard = test, and then interview if qualify where was asked "what do you like to do in your spare time" so might want to think about ahead of time). Also made pros and cons lists.

*MODERATOR NOTE: TUTOR RESOURCES WILL BE SHARED IN FRIDAY'S EMAIL BLAST*