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Resolution 6 (SY24-25)

Resolution Urging the Inclusion of State Test Scores in Admissions for Screened NYC Middle Schools

Approved by a vote of 8 Yes, 3 No, and 1 Absent on May 14, 2025

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Stephen Stowe - Yes | 7. Yanqing (Angi) Chen - Yes |
| 2. John Ricottone - Yes | 8. Alina Lewis - No |
| 3. Elizabeth Chan - Yes | 9. Sabrina McNamara - Absent |
| 4. Kevin Zhao - Yes | 10. Maya Rozenblat - Yes |
| 5. Meifang (Junmi) Chen - Yes | 11. Tamara Stern - No |
| 6. Wenming (Angie) Chen - Yes | 12. Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio - No |

Sponsors: Kevin Zhao

Co-sponsors: Stephen Stowe, Meifang (Junmi) Chen, Yanqing (Angi) Chen, John Ricottone

WHEREAS, there should be no one-size fits all approach in New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) middle schools admissions. This resolution applies only to those middle schools choosing to offer academically screened admissions. This resolution does not apply to zoned middle schools with open enrollment or middle schools using other forms of screening (ie - arts).

WHEREAS, the NYCPS commissioned an exit survey of parents who have left the system. The number one reason for leaving was “more rigorous education than possible in NYC”, cited by 41% of respondents¹.

¹ [enrollment-survey-deck---april-2025---public-deck | DocumentCloud](#)

WHEREAS, currently middle schools which use an academic screened admissions process are required to use an average of the applicants core 4th grade class grades as the sole academic criteria for admission. Given that grading is performed on a 1-4 scale, this is a relatively unrefined measure of grading. As a result many students fall into the “4” category, meaning admission is increasingly based on the student’s lottery number ².

WHEREAS, grades are a highly subjective measure of assessing student performance. As quoted from an article in Education Week, “grading methodology varies from teacher to teacher and grades themselves tend to include a mix of non-academic factors, such as student behavior, class participation, and extra credit. Plus, grade inflation has picked up since the start of the pandemic”³. In comparison standardized assessments provide a more objective, refined measure of student learning that complements classroom grades;

WHEREAS, the New York State ELA and Math exams are specifically designed to measure proficiency in foundational skills — reading, writing, and mathematics — that are essential for academic growth and long-term success;

WHEREAS, standardized tests are used in schools to measure student achievement and allow for evaluation of student learning and provision of academic support within a class or school. Therefore it stands to reason that standardized tests can also inform student placement at middle schools utilizing a screened admissions process as well as assessing student capacity to handle accelerated coursework;

WHEREAS, there is extensive social science research on the positive and negative attributes of standardized testing. A comprehensive overview of this research is beyond the scope of this resolution.

WHEREAS, in recent years a large number of colleges and universities have begun reinstating standardized testing as a requirement for admission. Many universities - including Yale, MIT and Dartmouth - conducted internal data analyses during the test-optional period and found that the absence of standardized test scores often reduced their ability to fairly evaluate applicants, requiring greater reliance on other indicators — such as extracurriculars, advanced coursework, or recommendation letters — that students from low-income families frequently lack access to.

- Yale - “Because the admissions committee needs to first establish an applicant’s academic foundation before it can consider their many other strengths and potential contributions to Yale, **we’ve found that standardized tests are especially valuable for students attending high schools with fewer academic resources and fewer college-preparatory courses.**” ⁴.
- MIT - “Research conducted by the admissions office shows that the standardized tests are an important factor in assessing the academic preparation of applicants from all backgrounds, according to Dean of Admissions and Student Financial Services Stuart Schmill. **He says the standardized exams are most helpful for assisting the admissions office in identifying socioeconomically disadvantaged students** who are well-prepared for MIT’s challenging education, but who don’t have the opportunity to take advanced coursework, participate in expensive enrichment programs, or otherwise enhance their college applications”⁵.

² [Middle School](#)

³ [Grades and Standardized Test Scores Aren't Matching Up. Here's Why](#)

⁴ [Yale announces new test-flexible admissions policy | Yale News](#)

⁵ [Q&A: Stuart Schmill on MIT’s decision to reinstate the SAT/ACT requirement | MIT News | Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#)

- Dartmouth - “Our bottom line is simple: we believe a standardized testing requirement will improve—not detract from—our ability to bring the most promising and diverse students to our campus....They also found that **test scores represent an especially valuable tool to identify high-achieving applicants from low and middle-income backgrounds**; who are first-generation college-bound; as well as students from urban and rural backgrounds”.⁶

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Community Education Council for District 20 calls on the NYCPS to reinstate the use of state test scores (ELA and Math) as a component of the admissions process for middle schools using an academic screened admissions process;

⁶ [Reactivating Dartmouth's Testing Policy | Dartmouth Admissions](#)