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Resolution 11 (SY21-22)

**Screened High School Admission Policy Must Reward Academic Achievement**

Resolution approved 2/9/22 with 8 Yes; and 3 Excused

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Steve Stowe- Yes         | 7. Jona Isufi- Yes         |
| 2. Jennifer Hu- Yes         | 8. Li Ping Jiang- Yes      |
| 3. Elizabeth Chan- Excused  | 9. Maya Rozenblat- Excused |
| 4. Vito LaBella- Yes        | 10. Joyce Xie- Yes         |
| 5. Marie Brugueras- Excused | 11. Kevin Zhao- Yes        |
| 6. Ghada Amin- Yes          |                            |

**Sponsors: Vito LaBella, Stephen Stowe**

**WHEREAS**, CECD20 believes that the current High School admissions policy for the academic year 2022-23 fails to meet the educational needs of District 20 and NYC students.

**WHEREAS**, many families were hopeful that Mayor Eric Adams and Chancellor Banks would have engaged the community before implementing a policy decision that affects so many students and could have lasting, adverse long-term effects on NYC high schools. CCHS would have been an obvious choice to help host such engagement for impacted students, graduating 8th graders.

**WHEREAS**, New York City has approximately 400 public High Schools with 700 different programs. Of those, an estimated 15% have traditionally used screens based on the academic performance of applicants to select admitted students.

**WHEREAS**, metrics used for screening historically have included a combination of 7th grade numerical grades for the entire year, results of the Math and ELA NY state tests taken in 7th grade, and in certain cases, a school-specific assessment, an essay, and/or the submission of a graded work sample.

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in multiple middle schools across the city either not giving numerical grades in 7th grade, or in the DOE allowing students to replace their numerical grades with “meets expectations” or non-numerical grades.

**WHEREAS**, while NY state tests were held for 2020-21, they were shortened, and families had to opt-in to have their child participate, resulting in approximately only 21% of students (3rd to 8th grades) taking the state

tests. More specifically, for students who were in 7th grade in the spring of 2021 and are applying to High School for the fall of 2022, only 19.4% took the Math test, and 19.9% took the ELA test.

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 2021, the Bill de Blasio Administration, and former NYC Department of Education (“DOE”) Chancellor Porter announced that the use of academic screens would be maintained for High School admissions in 2022-23. This announcement was made just two weeks before their departure and came at a date when High School applications are usually well underway in prior years.

**WHEREAS**, on or around January 30, the DOE finally outlined the details of the previously announced rules for academic screenings, which departed significantly from how screening was implemented in prior years. More specifically, the screening is done by placing applicants in 4 groups – 1, 2, 3, and 4, with 1 being the highest performing. Determination of a student’s group is made by: (1) converting numerical grades obtained in the four core subjects (ELA, Social Studies, Math and Science) into a “composite score” whereby very large bands for the numerical grades result in the same composite score; (2) selecting the “best of”: (i) full 7th grade year, (ii) 8th grade first marking period and (iii) 8th grade second marking period, for each of the four core subjects. This methodology effectively results in students obtaining a similar group number within an extremely broad range of grades. The methodology also creates absurd outcomes, with students with higher GPAs being ranked in lower groups – see Appendix for examples of calculations.

**WHEREAS**, given the scarcity of screened high schools with an estimated 15% of the seats opened for 9th grade admission based on academic results, the numbers of students ranked in Group 1 will far exceed the number of seats available in sought-after programs. Therefore, CECD20 believes it is highly likely that only Group 1 students - but not all of them - will receive placement in those programs.

**WHEREAS**, the DOE has confirmed that, in the event where the number of applicants exceeds the number of seats available, placement will be done via a lottery among students in the same group, similar to the lottery that was already implemented in certain screened High Schools last year as well as in Middle Schools last year and again this year.

**WHEREAS**, what is being presented as a screened admission process is not a screen but effectively a lottery. A lottery with an exceptionally low cutoff threshold of 85 GPA, or much lower (see Appendix), given that students may choose their highest GPA among several marking periods. Even adjusting for COVID-19, this threshold is significantly lower than 95-99%, which was historically the typical threshold to fill seats at screened high schools.

**WHEREAS**, a High School admission process managed centrally by the DOE based on a single and loose academic scoring rubric makes the outcome solely dependent on the lottery number for all the screened schools. Consequently, a poor lottery number prevents an applicant from qualifying across all screened schools in one fell swoop.

**WHEREAS**, parents have also expressed concern the method mentioned above will poorly match students with certain academic strengths with screened schools catering to specific academic areas, such as Math, Science, or Writing.

**WHEREAS**, the DOE has issued an exemption for a group of schools called the Consortium Schools to apply their own selective admission criteria to admit 9th graders based on an essay and video submission to the school - a selection process that is eminently subjective. Meanwhile there is no alternative option for high academically achieving students seeking admission to academically challenging programs.

**WHEREAS**, District 20 and indeed all of South Brooklyn has historically sent a high proportion of its 8th Grade students to the Specialized High Schools. Due to the late timing of the high schools admissions process this year, decisions on non-Specialized High Schools will be required a month after the Specialized High School offers are made. As a result, students delaying decision on Specialized High Schools and ultimately deciding on a non-Specialized High School may result in unfilled seats at Specialized High Schools (which do not have waitlists).

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CECD20 requests that all of the Specialized High Schools admit the maximum number of students possible for the 2022-23 admissions cycle and that the DOE establishes a wait list for Specialized High Schools that expires in October, after the final enrollment numbers are due.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CECD20 opposes the currently proposed admission process for screened high schools as it is a misnomer. With the recently announced admission rules, the DOE is essentially renegeing on the promise it made to families in December and instead, is creating a de facto lottery process.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CECD20 further finds this process unnecessary as the vast majority of public high schools in New York City already admit students using the Educational Option admission method or a simple lottery, so the lottery option remains entirely available to students and families who make that choice, similar to prior years.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CECD20 demands that the DOE allows screened High Schools to conduct a true screening of their applicants. The screening rubrics should be left to the discretion of each High School, as opposed to the choice of a single criterion determined by the DOE. In that context, the selection of the students should also be directly made by each school's administration as opposed to a placement centrally managed by the DOE.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that individual high schools should be allowed to use the criteria of their choice as their administrators are the most qualified to devise the appropriate rubric for selecting their future students. These criteria could include a combination of any of the following:

- A ranking of applicants based on actual numerical grades obtained in the first marking period of 8th grade, with or without considering state test scores (i.e., not penalizing those without test scores);
- An individual assessment, either virtual or in-person, administered by the high school;

- A submission of one or several graded work samples from 8th grade;
- A school-specific essay with blind evaluation;
- Teacher recommendations;
- A more granular mapping of grades, which would better differentiate students' academic performance, as proposed below:

For each grade in the 4 core subjects	Points received
95-100	400
90-94	375
85-89	350
80-84	325
<79	300

- A ranking of applicants using the sum of points above instead of a grouping.
- School-specific selection rubrics which allow for more specialization in subject areas, such as STEM or humanities.

Appendix: Examples of possible distortions resulting from Group calculations using the DOE criteria

- Note how the highest performing student in Group 1 with a 98 average is equated with the next student who failed one subject.
- Note how the highest performing student in Group 1 with a 98 average is equated with two students with an 80 average, one of whom has barely passed 2 subjects and another who failed one subject.
- Note further how several students with GPAs solidly in the 85-89 range could fare worse than those same two students with an 80 average and likely be shut out of screened schools entirely.

Point Scale	Grade
400	85-100
300	75-84
200	65-74
100	0-64

Point Avg	Group
350-400	1
250-349	2
150-249	3
<150	4

	Grade	Equivalent
ELA	99	400
Math	98	400
Soc Studies	98	400
Science	97	400
<b>GPA</b>	<b>98.0</b>	
Average		400
<b>Group</b>		<b>1</b>

	Grade	Equivalent
ELA	70	200
Math	96	400
Soc Studies	92	400
Science	94	400
<b>GPA</b>	<b>88.0</b>	
Average		350
<b>Group</b>		<b>1</b>

	Grade	Equivalent
ELA	85	400
Math	75	300
Soc Studies	85	400
Science	75	300
<b>GPA</b>	<b>80.0</b>	
Average		350
<b>Group</b>		<b>1</b>

	Grade	Equivalent
ELA	85	400
Math	85	400
Soc Studies	85	400
Science	65	200
<b>GPA</b>	<b>80.0</b>	
Average		350
<b>Group</b>		<b>1</b>

	Grade	Equivalent
ELA	84	300
Math	84	300
Soc Studies	84	300
Science	100	400
<b>GPA</b>	<b>88.0</b>	
Average		325
<b>Group</b>		<b>2</b>

	Grade	Equivalent
ELA	99	400
Math	99	400
Soc Studies	84	300
Science	74	200
<b>GPA</b>	<b>89.0</b>	
Average		325
<b>Group</b>		<b>2</b>

	Grade	Equivalent
ELA	84	300
Math	84	300
Soc Studies	84	300
Science	88	400
<b>GPA</b>	<b>85.0</b>	
Average		325
<b>Group</b>		<b>2</b>