

President Steve Stowe
First Vice President Jennifer Hu
Second Vice President/IEP Rep Elizabeth Chan
Recording Secretary Vito LaBella
Treasurer/ BBP Appointee Marie Brugueras



Council Members

Ghada Amin Maya Rozenblat- ELL Rep
Jona Isufi Joyce Xie
Li Ping Jiang Kevin Zhao- BBP Appointee

Resolution 3 (SY22-23)

Calling For Reform of Middle and High School Admissions To Preserve Community Choice and Diversity in the Public School System

Resolution approved 9/14/22 with 9 Yes; 0 No and 2 Excused

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

Co-Sponsors: Marie Brugueras, Vito LaBella, Stephen Stowe

WHEREAS, under former Mayor Bill DeBlasio, in December 2020, middle schools were no longer permitted to utilize academic screens as a basis of admission. In addition, schools were required to utilize a lottery if applicant demand exceeded supply of seats. Furthermore, in December 2021, high schools were no longer allowed to utilize academic screens nor their own admissions rubrics, but instead were required to use a centralized system grouping students by GPA and then selecting students for admission from these groups using a lottery¹. These changes were purportedly justified due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of academic data.

WHEREAS, on Monday, September 12th, Governor Kathy Hochul allowed Executive Order 11.9 Declaring a Disaster Emergency due to COVID-19 to expire, thereby ending the official state of emergency related to the pandemic.

WHEREAS, consistent in-person schooling and testing has resumed, providing ample academic data which could be used for admissions to schools starting in the 2023-2024 school year.

WHEREAS, these admissions policy changes were also part of Mayor DeBlasio's efforts to increase the proportion of low-income students and racial diversity at certain schools that traditionally reported higher academic metrics².

WHEREAS, despite frequent negative commentary, New York City and its public school system in many ways represents a model of diversity success. Specifically, over the past several decades, the City has developed a public education system which boasts a significantly more diverse profile than Los Angeles Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Houston Independent School District (See Appendix 1). The argument that NYC public schools are the most segregated

¹ NYC announces 2022-23 admissions policies for middle and high schools, Chalkbeat, December 14, 2021; <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2021/12/14/22834144/nyc-middle-high-school-admissions-changes-2022>

² NYC announces sweeping changes to middle, high school application process, Chalkbeat, December 18, 2020; <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2020/12/18/22188384/changes-nyc-school-application-process>

in the country loses much of its impact when considering that most other large cities haven't even been successful at step 1 in the process - namely, convincing a diverse range of families to cohabitate in the same urban jurisdiction and send their children to its public schools.

WHEREAS, proponents of increasing socio-economic and racial diversity often cite increased academic outcomes for Black & Hispanic students with no significant loss of educational achievement for White students. In addition, qualitative outcomes such as greater tolerance and cultural awareness are cited as benefits³.

WHEREAS, supporters of academic screens argue that students at a higher level of academic readiness should be allowed to reach their full academic potential, which is more readily achieved in schools where all students are learning at a high level and course offerings can be appropriately targeted. In addition, lottery-based admission systems provide a disincentive to academic achievement.

WHEREAS, there is a third group - a very large, often overlooked population which is relatively neutral on the debate and seeks school options using entirely different criteria than either academic screens or socio-economic / racial diversity.

WHEREAS, thanks to its success over the years at building a diverse, urban community, New York City contains many families advocating for each of these viewpoints. The Department of Education (DOE) has an obligation to serve its varied, diverse constituencies.

WHEREAS, as stated at the outset of this resolution, the DOE under the DeBlasio administration increasingly centralized middle and high school admissions policies, removing the ability of schools - and ultimately communities - to determine their own educational policies. The DeBlasio administration focused on socio-economic / racial diversity above all else. Families who sought a challenging, accelerated academic curriculum - including many immigrant, non-White families - were disregarded. In particular, Asian families felt especially targeted by the DeBlasio administration⁴. District 20's student population is 44% Asian descent.

WHEREAS, current Mayor Eric Adams and DOE Chancellor David Banks have adopted a more balanced approach, acknowledging the need for quality, local schools serving all of the City's communities, engaging with parents who were previously ostracized for supporting academic screens, and remaining committed to socio-economic / racial goals but on a more practical rather than ideological basis.

WHEREAS, under the lottery-based admission system instituted by Mayor DeBlasio, District 20 has reported some of the worst placement results in the entire City. For Middle School admissions, the percentage of students receiving one of their top 3 choices this year was just 74%, the lowest rate in the entire City. For High School admissions, the same figure was 67%, the 8th worst in the entire City. District 20 was also well below the City average for Top 5 placement.

WHEREAS, Asian families in District 20 received even lower High School placement rates with only 57% receiving a Top 3 High School Choice (City average 74%; District 20 average 67%). And just 68% of District 20 Asian families received a Top 5 High School Choice (City average 83%; District 20 average 77%). The data for demographic breakdown at the Middle School level has been requested from the DOE but it is expected to show similar results. In particular, the expectation is that a large number of Asian families tend to apply to a smaller number of reputable Middle Schools but this can not be confirmed until the DOE provides the data.

³ The Benefits of Socioeconomically and Racially Integrated Schools and Classrooms, The Century Foundation, April 29, 2019; <https://tcf.org/content/facts/the-benefits-of-socioeconomically-and-racially-integrated-schools-and-classrooms/>

⁴ 'Fire Carranza!': Why Asian-Americans Are Targeting Schools Chief, New York Times, March 3, 2020; <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/nyregion/carranza-asian-americans-schools.html>

WHEREAS, data from the Office of District Planning shows that in the prior school year 2021-2022, District 20 K-12 enrollment declined 8.3%. The number of students leaving increased almost 35% from the previous year. In 65% of these cases, the families left the City entirely. The lottery-based admissions process has been one of several factors compelling families to leave the system.

WHEREAS, the DOE recently announced the expansion of academically accelerated programming at the High School for Language and Diplomacy to provide additional opportunities for students unhappy with their high school placement.

WHEREAS, in early 2022, the Department of Education (DOE) under Mayor Eric Adams announced that arts-themed schools could resume utilizing auditions and portfolio evaluations for screening applicants.

WHEREAS, a system in which artistic talent is allowed to serve as a basis for admission but academic talent is not, is patently unfair.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Community Education Council of District 20 calls upon Chancellor David Banks, First Deputy Chancellor Daniel Weisberg and the Office of Student Enrollment to:

- End the practice of the former DeBlasio administration of mandating a single specific enrollment policy for all middle school and high schools.
- End the mandated use of lottery-based admissions in middle and high schools.
- End the suspension of academic screens.
- Allow middle and high schools to use their own admissions policies which reflect the desires of their diverse populations and could encompass a range of policies including but not limited to academic screens, diversity in admissions and lottery-based admissions.
- In Districts with low placement rates for Top 3 and Top 5 Middle School and High School choices (such as District 20), conduct an analysis of the data in conjunction with community outreach and expand the offerings most sought by families in these Districts with the goal of improving Top 3 and Top 5 placement rates closer to the City average.
- Utilize District-based offices to ensure a diversity of middle and high school admission policies exist within each District, similar to the administration's efforts to ensure every District has at least one elementary school Gifted & Talented program.
- Specifically in District 20, and in line with the recent policy at High School for Language and Diplomacy, establish and promote additional academically-screened middle schools or increase middle school programs offering rigorous, accelerated academic curricula on par with the middle schools currently believed to be the most rigorous and sought-after throughout the District.
- Consider placing a new specialized high school in District 20 in line with one of Mayor Adams' campaign promises to open more specialized High Schools in each borough. There were 27,000 test takers this year, for fewer than 5,000 seats. While Brooklyn currently has one large specialized high school, District 20 high school capacity is extremely limited, resulting in many applicants forced to travel out of the District to attend a specialized high school.

These changes would result in a wider variety of options which will give all families confidence that there is a place for them in NYC public schools, preserve the City's racial and ethnic diversity, and reflect the diverse views on education within the City.

Appendix 1- Racial / ethnic breakdown of students in major urban US public school systems

Figures in Percentage Terms (%)	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
New York City	16	25	41	15
Los Angeles USD	6	8	74	11
Chicago PS	4	36	47	11
Miami-Dade CPS	1	19	73	6
Houston ISD	4	22	62	10

Source: US News & World Report