



Date: August 12th, 2026

Sponsors: Dr. Kaliris Y. Salas-Ramirez and Lawanda Joyner

District 4 Resolution on Recommendation for Diversity in High School Admissions for Specialized High Schools

WHEREAS, the Hecht Calandra Act of 1972 amended New York State Education Law to provide that the principal means of admission into each of the specialized high schools is an examination called the Specialized High School Admissions Test (“the SHSAT”)

WHEREAS, [NYS Education Law 2590-H](#) provides that the specialized high schools “shall include the present schools known as: The Bronx High School of Science, Stuyvesant High School, Brooklyn Technical High School, Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and the Arts in the borough of Manhattan, **and such further schools which the city board may designate from time to time** [emphasis added].”

WHEREAS, [in 1971 the New York Times reported](#) that the Hecht Calandra bill “was drawn to defend against a special study initiated by the city's school Chancellor, Dr. Harvey B. Scribner, to look into charges that the four schools were ‘culturally biased’ against blacks and Puerto Ricans.”

WHEREAS, [during the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, five additional schools were established and designated as “specialized high schools”](#): The High School for Math, Science and Engineering at City College; High School of American Studies at Lehman College; Brooklyn Latin School; Queens High School for the Sciences at York College; and Staten Island Technical High School (collectively, “the Bloomberg schools”).

WHEREAS, eliminating the SHSAT as the sole admissions method for The Bronx High School of Science, Stuyvesant High School, and Brooklyn Technical High School would require an amendment of New York State Education Law, but the designation of the Bloomberg schools as “specialized high schools” could be changed by the city board (that is, by the Panel for Educational Policy) at any time, after which the admissions criteria for these schools could be modified by the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) Chancellor.

WHEREAS, the specialized high schools' admissions outcomes constitute the most extreme examples of the results of a sorting process that systematically advantages members of groups with the greatest social and economic resources. Every year, the City releases these numbers, and the acceptance of just a handful of Black and Latinx students to the City's elite high schools reliably sends shock waves through the City and country, prompting expressions of outrage and calls for reform. In March 2019, for example, the *New York Times* published an article entitled [“Only 7 Black Students Got Into Stuyvesant, N.Y.’s Most Selective High School, Out of 895 Spots.”](#) One year later, the paper published an article with nearly identical statistics, headlined [“This Year, Only 10 Black Students Got into N.Y.C.’s Top High School.”](#) In 2021, once again: [“Only 8 Black Students Are Admitted to Stuyvesant High School.”](#) The ritual repeats year after year.

WHEREAS, [in the current admissions year](#), only three Black students were admitted to Stuyvesant and overall just 3.5% of specialized high school offers went to Black students and just 6.5% of offers went to Latinx students, even while [Black students made up 19.3% of students](#) in NYCPS this year and Latino students made up 42.3% (about 17% of the students who took the SHSAT last year are Black, while 25% are Latinx).

WHEREAS, in a public school system where the overall poverty rate hovers around 75%, schools like Stuyvesant and Bronx Science - where the poverty rate is around 45% - rank among the wealthiest public high schools in the city. and [data from the NYC Independent Budget Office](#) show that students from specialized high schools overwhelmingly come from census tracts in the higher income quintiles.

WHEREAS, [in the 2023-2024 school year, only four \(4\) English Language Learners \(ELLs\) were enrolled in the specialized high schools requiring the SHSAT for admission, among the 15,654 total enrollment at the SHSAT Schools.](#) Students classified as ELLs therefore accounted for just 0.026% of students at those schools despite making up 16.3% of students citywide.

WHEREAS, Students With Disabilities account for just 2% of specialized high school enrollment, compared to 22% for NYCPS enrollment as a whole.

WHEREAS, Students in Temporary Housing make up just 2% of specialized high school enrollment, compared to [approximately one-eighth of total NYCPS enrollment](#).

WHEREAS, the SHSAT is a norm-referenced (rather than a criterion-referenced) exam. That is, students' scores do not reflect objective mastery of a body of knowledge but how they did in relation to everyone else who took the test. So more test prep – even free test prep – just makes the test more difficult – it's a system that will always reward those with more resources - forcing disadvantaged students to pay a burdensome, regressive tax to test prep companies. Additional

free tutoring programs will only make the test more competitive, and students who can pay for enhanced/individualized test prep will come out ahead.

WHEREAS, while many post-secondary institutions accept standardized exam scores as one element of an application for admissions, no American college or university admits students based solely on the results of a single standardized test.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the District 4 Community Education Council (“CEC4”) calls on Mayor Zohran Mamdani to instruct his appointees to the Panel for Educational Policy to immediately introduce a resolution to remove the “specialized high school” designation from the five Bloomberg schools.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that CEC4 requests NYCPS Chancellor Kamar H. Samuels to immediately prepare recommendations to revise admissions criteria at the five Bloomberg schools.

D4 CEC Council members as follows:

Dr. Kaliris Salas-Ramirez, Sophie Oulai, Lacey Jordan, Lawanda Joyner, Vandana Bonilla, Elizabeth Soto-Cardona, Johanna Dominguez, Adriana Tlacomulco, Tia Jackson and Kiera Jerez Alston.

Motion by Elizabeth Soto-Cardona seconded by Kiera Jerez Alston.

This Resolution was approved unanimously by the council members at D4 CEC Calendar Meeting held on August 12th, 2026.