

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

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**CITYWIDE COUNCIL ON HIGH SCHOOLS**  
**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

## Citywide Council on High Schools President's Message:



This is the first year in the Citywide Council on High Schools' history that all member positions are filled. This school year began with Mayor Bill DeBlasio's introduction of his Equity and Excellence initiatives. Computer Science, Algebra, Advance Placement, and College Access for All plus Single Shepherd (only in Districts 7 and 23). All this to ensure the career and college readiness of all students in the New York City public schools. This has been a year for Common Core aligned Regents, a new SAT exam, change in graduation requirements, Affinity schools, credit recovery, school closures, co-locations, consolidations, Renewal schools and diversity.

In addition, the opening of 7 Field Support Offices, major changes in the Board of Regents and Pre-K for All. My thanks and gratitude to my fellow council members for their hard work and dedication throughout this school year.

Constance Asiedu

CCHS President 2015-2016

*With special thanks for her contribution to this 2015-2016 CCHS Annual Report,  
past CCHS member Monique Lindsay.*

## **Structure and Powers of CCHS**

The CCHS is among the 32-community education councils (CECs) and four Citywide Councils created when the New York State Legislature enacted mayoral control of New York City schools in 2002. While CECs have retained a few of the powers and functions of the community school boards they replaced, such as drawing school zoning lines, the CCHS can only:

- “Advise and comment on any educational or instructional policy involving high schools”;
- “Issue an annual report on the effectiveness of [DOE] in providing services to high school students” and make recommendations on improvements;
- Hold at least one calendar and one business meeting per month. These are public meetings where high school issues are addressed.

The structure of CCHS is different from that of the CECs or even of the other Citywide Councils. The CCHS is the only council that has borough-based representation: two elected representatives for each borough are joined by three additional members appointed by the public advocate, the Citywide Council on Special Education and the Citywide Council on English Language Learners. Like other councils, the CCHS also has a non-voting student member.

Although official actions (such as resolutions) must be voted upon and approved by at least seven members, much of the council's work is carried on through the borough representatives. With more than 400 high schools, this is the only practical way for the council to have meaningful relationships with individual schools. Further, since each borough except Staten Island has at least 75 high schools, CCHS representatives have divided responsibilities along district or geographic lines within the boroughs they represent. This splitting of responsibilities reflects the large number of schools and the representatives need to cover them. It is in no way required. The three appointed members are not restricted to any geographic area.

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## **Introduction**

This report of the New York Citywide Council on High Schools covers the 2015-16 school year. It is intended to provide an overview of the state of the city's high schools and to document key developments affecting our high schools during this time.

In many respects, 2015-16 was a relatively quiet year in New York City education. In her second year in office, Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña introduced a number of new programs, many of them aimed at increasing college and career readiness, and continued work on previously announced initiatives. The city continued to grapple with how to deal with chronically low-performing schools and with a lack of racial diversity in many of its schools.

The administration's key 2015-16 initiatives involving high schools included:

- Implementation of the "Renewal" program for chronically low-performing schools;
- A new focus on encouraging racial diversity at city schools;
- Launching of the Equity and Excellence initiatives, which include Algebra for All, providing every high school student with access to Advanced Placement classes, and increasing resources to provide all students with a pathway to college;
- Instituting new policies aimed at improving the social-emotional climate in schools and reducing punitive discipline;
- Opening the Borough Support Centers.

As of the 2015-16 school year, New York City had more than 400 high schools offering some 700 programs. There are general academic high schools of varying sizes, career and technical schools, schools for students who did not succeed in their initial high school, schools for recent immigrants, academically selective high schools and schools that focus on the arts.<sup>1</sup> Some schools start at grade 6 and a few extend to grade 14. While the system includes schools with thousands of students -- Brooklyn Tech has almost 5,500 -- it also has a smattering of schools with 200 or less, such as World View High School in the Bronx. Most schools offer a general academic program aimed at making students "college and career ready" but some do that with a smorgasbord of Advanced Placement classes, foreign languages and unusual electives. Others provide few classes beyond those mandated by the state Board of Regents. The hundreds of schools include some of the most acclaimed high schools in the nation along with schools that for years have struggled, failing to engage and graduate many of their students.

More than 67 percent -- two-thirds -- of students who entered high school in 2011 graduated in June four years later, a dramatic increase from a decade earlier when only 47 percent of students

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<sup>1</sup> New York City Department of Education, *2016 New York City High School Directory* ([http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B0C37C45-E280-434D-9DF7-3251B7F895B0/0/2016HighSchoolDirectory\\_English.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B0C37C45-E280-434D-9DF7-3251B7F895B0/0/2016HighSchoolDirectory_English.pdf)).

graduated on time.<sup>2</sup> Less than half the graduates, however, leave high school ready for college.<sup>3</sup> In addition, thousands of students fall away from the system between 1st grade and graduation. Of the 71,704 children who entered 1st grade in a city public school in 2003, only 39 percent reached their senior year of high school 12 years later. An additional 19 percent remained in city schools but had fallen behind.<sup>4</sup>

Just as New York City high schools are a diverse group, so are the approximately 329,000<sup>5</sup> young people who attend them. During the 2013-14 school year, about 39 percent of students in city high schools were Hispanic, 30 percent Black, 16 percent Asian, and 13 percent White. (The remaining students were classified as American Indian, Mixed Race or unknown.) Around 13 percent were English language learners. Almost 17 percent had a disability that required them to receive some special education services. About three quarters came from families whose incomes were low enough that the student qualified for a free or reduced-price lunch, and more than 18,000 were in temporary housing, including the city shelter system, at some point during the year. Approximately 30 percent were considered over age for the grade they were in.<sup>6</sup>

### **Equity and Excellence**

In September 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio delivered a speech announcing a number of education initiatives under the umbrella of his Equity and Excellence plan. Taken together the various components of the plan are intended to give students a solid academic foundation, ensure that courses are rigorous and demanding, ensure students master key skills -- such as reading and algebra -- on time and create a path to college for all public school students.<sup>7</sup> Altogether, the Mayor said, the various programs will cost about \$186 million a year.<sup>8</sup>

The key components of the plan affecting high school students are as follows:

**Computer Science for All:** Under the plan students would learn computer science at all three levels of education (elementary, middle and high school) by 2025. To make this a reality, the Department of Education (DOE) plans to train almost 5,000 teachers in computer science. The program will cost \$81 million over 10 years with substantial contributions from the Robin Hood

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<sup>2</sup> New York City Department of Education statistics ([http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B871C8F2-0812-4B34-A5BA-BA67378B875C/0/2015Graduation\\_Rates\\_Public\\_Citywide.xlsx](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B871C8F2-0812-4B34-A5BA-BA67378B875C/0/2015Graduation_Rates_Public_Citywide.xlsx)).

<sup>3</sup> New York City Office of the Mayor, "With Graduation Rates Rising, Mayor de Blasio Congratulates Students and Educators," Jan. 14, 2016 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/052-16/with-graduation-rates-rising-mayor-de-blasio-congratulates-students-educators#/0>).

<sup>4</sup> New York City Independent Budget Office, *New York City Public School Indicators: Demographics, Resources, Outcomes*, October 2015 (<http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/new-york-city-public-school-indicators-demographics-resources-outcomes-october-2015.pdf>).

<sup>5</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Annual Enrollment, 2015-16 Snapshot" ([http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/20056B95-8351-4E45-B8A1-9901B4B6A93B/0/DemographicSnapshot201112to201516Public\\_FINAL.xlsx](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/20056B95-8351-4E45-B8A1-9901B4B6A93B/0/DemographicSnapshot201112to201516Public_FINAL.xlsx)).

<sup>6</sup> New York City Independent Budget Office, Op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> New York City Office of the Mayor, "Equity and Excellence: Every Student, Every Day," (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/education-vision-2015-watch-speech.page>) Sept. 16, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> New York City Office of the Mayor, "Equity and Excellence: Mayor de Blasio Announces Reforms to Raise Achievement Across All Public Schools," Sept. 16, 2015 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/618-15/equity-excellence-mayor-de-blasio-reforms-raise-achievement-across-all-public>).

Foundation and the AOL Charitable Foundation. Schools will have a fair amount of discretion in how they implement the classes. Computer science could, for example, be incorporated into other subjects, such as art or math. In addition, DOE plans to expand existing high school computer science offerings, such as AP computer science and software engineering.<sup>9</sup>

Under the program, Chancellor Fariña announced in June, 34 schools will offer the one-year Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles course beginning in 2016-17. In addition, 22 middle and senior high school will provide students with a multiyear sequent in software engineering.

The high schools offering new computer science programs under the initiative are:

### **Bronx**

- Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship: A College Board School (District 11)
- Belmont Preparatory High School (District 10)
- Bronx Arena High School (District 8)
- Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics (District 9)
- Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School (District 12)
- Bronx Early College Academy for Teaching and Learning (District 9)
- Bronx Guild (District 8)
- Harry S. Truman High School (District 11)
- High School for Violin and Dance (District 9)
- International School for Liberal Arts (District 10)
- Millennium Art Academy (District 8)
- MS/IS 368 IN-Tech Academy (District 10)
- Young Women's Leadership School of the Bronx (District 9)

### **Brooklyn**

- Aspirations Diploma Plus High School (District 23)
- Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (District 17)
- Brooklyn Studio Secondary School (District 21)
- Clara Barton High School (District 17)
- Frances Perkins Academy (District 14)
- George Westinghouse Career and Technical Education High School (District 13)
- Green School; An Academy for Environmental Careers (District 14)
- High School for Innovation in Advertising and Media (District 18)
- John Dewey High School (District 21)
- Millennium Brooklyn High School (District 15)
- Susan S. McKinney Secondary School of the Arts (District 13)

### **Manhattan**

- High School for Environmental Studies (District 2)

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<sup>9</sup> New York City Office of the Mayor, "Computer Science for All: Overview" (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/education-vision-2015-facts.page>).



- High School of Fashion Industries (District 2)
- High School for Health Professions and Human Services (District 2)
- Hudson High School of Learning Technologies (District 2)
- Humanities Preparatory Academy (District 2)
- Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics (District 4)
- Manhattan International High School (District 2)
- Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers (District 2)

### Queens

- Grover Cleveland High School (District 24)
- High School for Construction Trades, Engineering and Architecture (District 27)
- Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology (District 27)
- Richmond Hill High School (District 27)
- Robert H. Goddard High School of Communication Arts and Technology (District 27)
- Townsend Harris High School (District 25)
- Veritas Academy (District 25)
- Young Women's Leadership School, Astoria (District 30)

### Staten Island

- Concord High School (District 31)
- Port Richmond High School (District 31)<sup>10</sup>

With employment in New York's technology sector growing rapidly, DOE hopes this initiative will enable more public school graduates to find jobs in this field. It also hopes to address the scarcity of Blacks and Latinos working in the technology.

To prepare for the program, DOE plans to provide intensive training for as many as 400 teachers at all grade levels in how to implement a hands-on computer science program. This will require doubling of the department's DOE STEM Institute. The high school program will involve training teachers so they can work with students on making their own websites, building robots, using videogames and animation, designing and launching apps, and developing computer simulations of climate change and ecosystems.<sup>11</sup>

**Algebra for All:** Under this initiative, which will cost \$19 million a year when fully implemented, all city public school students are to complete algebra by 9th grade. This will enable more students to take advanced math courses, such as calculus, in high school. To reach this goal, all students will have access to an algebra class in 8th grade. There also will be programs earlier in middle school to prepare the children for algebra, a challenge given that only

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<sup>10</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces Over 200 Schools Participating in Computer Science for All for 2016-17," June 1, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Over+200+Schools+Participating+in+Computer+Science+for+All.htm>).

<sup>11</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces New Computer Science Education to Reach Over 50 Schools," March 9, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Farina+Announces+New+Computer+Science+Education+to+Reach+Over+150+Schools.htm>).

35 percent of students in grades 3 through 8 are considered proficient in math, according to the state standardized test.

Currently, according to DOE, more than 40 percent of middle schools do not offer algebra and less than 30 percent of 8th graders take the algebra Regents exam. Many students do not take the algebra Regents until 10th grade, limiting the number of more advanced math classes they can take in high school. (For more, see the section on Common Core, page 5.)

**AP for All:** The mayor's office says the city has brought new Advanced Placement (college credit) courses to more than 70 high schools since 2013. It hopes to continue and expand upon this effort by ensuring every high school student has access to "a range" of AP classes by 2021. In 2016, 145 schools did not offer any AP classes. As a first step, the administration will add new AP classes at 63 schools in the 2016-17 school year. This includes 35 schools that did not have any AP classes in 2015-16 and others that offer few of the classes. To increase offerings at small schools in particular, 39 of the schools will share the courses with other high schools on their campuses. The city's expectation is that, by fall 2018, 75 percent of students will be offered at least five AP classes and that by 2021 all students will have that access.

As part of this, the mayor's office has said the city will "focus on growing the equity of AP course enrollment" and provide needed supports so that more English language learners and students with special needs will have access to AP classes. Expanding the offerings is projected to cost \$51 million when the initiative is fully implemented in 2021.<sup>12</sup> (For more, see the section on AP, page 26.)

The schools offering new AP classes are:

**Bronx:**

- Bronx Academy of Health Careers (District 11)
- Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School (District 12)
- Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy (District 10)
- Bronx Leadership Academy High School (District 9)
- Bronx Leadership Academy II (District 7)
- Bronx River High School (District 8)
- Bronx School of Law and Finance (District 10)
- Bronx Theatre High School
- Explorations Academy (District 12)
- Herbert Lehman High School (District 8)
- High School for Contemporary Arts (District 11)
- High School for Teaching and the Professions (District 10)
- Morris Academy for Collaborative Studies (District 9)
- New Explorers High School (District 7)
- Pelham Lab High School (District 8)
- Renaissance High School for Musical Theater & Technology (District 8)

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<sup>12</sup> Ben Chapman, "Exclusive: de Blasio's 'AP for All' Push Will Offer City High Schools New Advanced Placement Courses," *New York Daily News*, June 12, 2016

- Schuylerville Preparatory High School (District 8)
- Urban Assembly School for Careers in Sports (District 7)
- Westchester Square Academy (District 8)
- World View High School (District 10)

### **Brooklyn**

- ACORN Community High School (District 13)
- Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance (District 16)
- Bushwick Leaders High School for Academic Excellence (District 32)
- Frances Perkins Academy (District 14)
- FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety (District 19)
- High School for Civil Rights (District 19)
- High School for Enterprise, Business and Technology (District 14)
- High School of Sports Management (District 21)
- Kingsborough Early College School (District 21)
- Life Academy High School for Film and Music (District 21)
- Nelson Mandela School for Social Justice (District 16)
- New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science III (District 22)
- New Visions Charter High School for Humanities III (District 22)
- Origins High School (District 22)
- Professional Pathways High School (District 22)
- PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers (District 14)
- School for Classics: An Academy of Thinkers, Writers and Performers (District 19)
- School for Legal Studies (District 14)
- Secondary School for Journalism (District 15)
- Sunset Park High School (District 15)
- Transit Tech Career and Technical High School (District 19)
- World Academy for Total Community Health High School (District 19)

### **Manhattan**

- Chelsea Career and Technical Education High School (District 2)
- College Academy (District 6)
- Global Learning Collaborative (District 3)
- High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry (District 3)
- High School for Health Careers and Sciences (District 6)
- High School for Law and Public Service (District 6)
- High School for Media and Communications (District 6)
- Hudson High School of Learning Technologies (District 2)
- Innovation Diploma Plus (District 3)
- Manhattan Academy for Arts & Language (District 2)
- Manhattan Business Academy (District 2)
- Marte Valle High School (District 1)
- Unity Center for Urban Technologies (District 2)
- Urban Assembly School of Business for Young Women (District 2)

- Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem (District 4)

### **Queens**

- Academy of Medical Technology: A College Board School (District 27)
- Civic Leadership Academy (District 24)
- Frederick Douglass VI High School (District 27)
- Pan American International High School (District 24)
- Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology (District 27)
- Young Women's Leadership School, Astoria (District 30)<sup>13</sup>

**College Access for All:** This program to enable every student to go to college will begin in middle school when all students will have the opportunity to visit a college campus. In high school students are to receive more resources and additional supports to help them apply and be admitted. By 2018, no student is to graduate without having his or her own individual college and career plan.

DOE will begin implementing the program at 100 high schools in September 2016. The selected schools all have fairly low rates of students going on to post-secondary education. The selected schools will participate in a five-day program over the summer to develop plans to "build a school-wide college and career culture" and provide supports to students. They also will be able to access part of a \$3.5 million fund. To implement the programs the department will hire 11 college planning coaches, each of whom will work with about 10 schools.

The initial phase of the program, including the \$3.5 million fund, will cost about \$6.8 million. Once the program is fully operational, the high school portion is slated to cost about \$15 million a year. This initiative is also tied to the free SAT program (see page 26).

The schools that will launch the College Access for All Program are:

### **BRONX**

- Academy for Scholarship & Entrepreneurship: A College Board School (District 11)
- Antonia Pantoja Preparatory Academy (District 8)
- Archimedes Academy for Math, Science & Technology Applications (District 8)
- Astor Collegiate Academy (District 11)
- Bronx Academy of Health Careers (District 11)
- Bronx Design and Construction Academy (District 7)
- Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy (District 10)
- Bronx School of Law and Finance (District 10)
- Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice (District 9)
- Bronxwood Preparatory Academy (District 11)
- Crotona International High School (District 10)

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<sup>13</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces 63 High Schools to Offer New Advanced Placement Courses for 2016-17 Through AP for All," June 13, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/63+High+Schools+to+Offer+New+Advanced+Placement+Courses+Through+Ap+for+All.htm>).

- Explorations Academy (District 12)
- Frederick Douglass Academy III (District 9)
- Harry S Truman High School (District 11)
- Health Opportunities High School (District 7)
- High School of Computers and Technology (District 11)
- High School of Language and Innovation (District 11)
- High School for Teaching and the Professions (District 10)
- International Community High School (District 7)
- International School for Liberal Arts (District 10)
- KAPPA International High School (District 10)
- Metropolitan High School (District 12)
- Millennium Art Academy (District 8)
- New Directions Secondary School (District 9)
- Pablo Neruda Academy (District 8)
- School for Excellence (District 9)
- Theatre Arts Production Company High School (District 10)
- Urban Assembly Bronx Academy of Letters (District 7)
- Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation (District 12)
- Validus Preparatory Academy (District 9)
- World View High School (District 10)

## **BROOKLYN**

- Academy of Innovative Technology (District 19)
- Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance (District 16)
- Brooklyn Community Arts and Media High School (District 13)
- Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology (District 16)
- Brooklyn Lab School (District 19)
- Brooklyn School for Global Studies (District 15)
- Brooklyn Studio Secondary School (District 21)
- Brooklyn Theatre Arts High School (District 18)
- Bushwick Leaders' High School for Academic Excellence (District 32)
- Cobble Hill School of American Studies (District 15)
- EBC High School for Public Service (District 32)
- FDNY High School (District 19)
- Frances Perkins Academy (District 14)
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt High School (District 20)
- George Westinghouse High School (District 13)
- Green School: An Academy for Environmental Careers (District 14)
- High School for Civil Rights and Law (District 19)
- High School for Global Citizenship (District 17)
- High School for Youth and Community Development (District 17)
- Lyons Community School (District 14)
- P-TECH (District 17)
- Performing Arts and Technology High School (District 19)

- Professional Pathways High School (District 22)
- PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers (District 14)
- Science Skills Center High School for Science, Technology & The Creative Arts (District 13)
- Secondary School for Journalism (District 15)
- South Brooklyn Community High School (District 15)
- Teachers Preparatory High School (District 23)
- Transit Tech CTE High School (District 19)
- Victory Collegiate High School (District 18)
- W.H. Maxwell CTE High School (District 19)
- William E. Grady CTE High School (District 21)
- World Academy for Total Community Health High School (District 19)

### **MANHATTAN**

- Cascades High School (District 1)
- Emma Lazarus HS for English Language Scholars (District 2)
- Facing History School (District 2)
- Global Learning Collaborative (District 3)
- Gregorio Luperon High School (District 6)
- Henry Street School (District 1)
- High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry (District 3)
- High School for Language and Diplomacy (District 2)
- High School for Law, Advocacy and Community Justice (District 3)
- High School of Arts and Technology (District 3)
- Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School (District 2)
- Leadership and Public Service High School (District 2)
- Manhattan Academy for Arts and Language (District 2)
- Marta Valle High School (District 1)
- Unity Center for Urban Technologies (District 2)
- Urban Assembly Media High School (District 3)
- Urban Assembly New York Harbor School (District 2)
- Urban Assembly School of Business for Young Women (District 2)
- Urban Assembly School of Design and Construction (District 2)
- Urban Assembly School for the Performing Arts (District 5)

### **QUEENS**

- Excelsior Preparatory High School (District 29)
- Frederick Douglass Academy VI High School (District 27)
- Grover Cleveland High School (District 24)
- High School for Law Enforcement and Public Safety (District 28)
- Information Technology High School (District 30)
- Mathematics, Science Research & Technology High School (District 29)
- Newcomers High School (District 30)
- Newtown High School (District 24)

- Queens Academy High School (District 25)
- Queens High School for Information, Research, and Technology (District 27)
- Queens Preparatory Academy (District 29)
- Queens Vocational & Technical High School (District 24)
- Preparatory Academy for Writers: A College Board School (District 29)
- Rockaway Collegiate High School (District 27)
- William Cullen Bryant High School (District 30)

#### **STATEN ISLAND**

- Ralph R. McKee High School (District 31)<sup>14</sup>

**Single Shepherd:** In fall 2016 all students in District 7 in the Bronx and District 23 in Brooklyn will be paired with a counselor who is to advise the student starting in 6th grade and stay with that student until he or she graduates from high school and even beyond. The city will hire about 100 counselors, each of whom will have about 100 students. The "shepherds" will provide academic, social and emotional support, which could improve outcomes, particularly for at-risk students. The two districts where the program is being tested have the lowest high school graduation rates in the city but, if Single Shepherd succeeds, it could be expanded.<sup>15</sup> The cost of the program in the two districts will be \$15 million a year.

Many experts who have commented on Equity and Excellence have focused more on what the mayor did not include than what he did. They also questioned how the city would fund the programs if the economy slowed down and tax revenues declined.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Helping Struggling Schools**

The city's lowest performing schools continued to demand attention as DOE reiterated its policy of providing these schools with additional support and resources, rather than shutting them. As part of this, the schools would become community schools, working in partnership with a community based organization to address various needs confronting students and their families, including medical care and counseling. Dr. Fariña has also been looking at combining small or struggling schools or combining weak schools with stronger ones.

The administration in 2014 identified some 94 low-performing schools -- 36 of them with high school grades -- and said that the schools would have three years to develop and implement a School Renewal Plan. By 2016-2017, these so-called Renewal schools would have to demonstrate significant progress in academics in meeting its targets. Those that did not could see

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<sup>14</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces First 100 High Schools to Implement College Access for All in 2016-17," June 16, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/College+Access+for+All+-+High+School.htm>).

<sup>15</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Equity and Excellence," (<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/equityandexcellence/default#AP>).

<sup>16</sup> Kate Taylor, "de Blasio's Plan to Lift Poor Schools Comes with High Costs and Big Political Risks," *New York Times*, Sept. 16, 2015.

leadership or faculty changes, a reorganization, such as being combined with another school, or even closure.

This policy collided head on with a state plan, approved in March 2015, that gives low-performing schools one or two years to make "demonstrable improvement." Schools that do not improve could be placed in receivership, meaning they could then be managed by a non-profit or a charter network. It would also allow the schools to avoid union rules. Although the final state plan was somewhat less draconian than the one originally proposed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, unions and the de Blasio administration denounced it as too harsh.

In July, the state announced 62 New York City schools on the receivership list. All ranked in the bottom 5 percent of schools in the state. One high school, Automotive in Brooklyn, was listed as "persistently struggling," meaning it has a one-year deadline. The other high schools have two years.<sup>17</sup> Schools on the list with high school grades are:

### **Bronx**

- Alfred E. Smith Career and Technical Education High School (District 7)
- Banana Kelly High School (District 8)\*
- Bronx High School of Business (District 9)\*
- Bronx High School for the Visual Arts (District 11)
- Bronxwood Preparatory Academy (District 11)
- DeWitt Clinton High School (District 10)\*
- Dreamyard Preparatory School (District 9)\*
- Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology (District 10)\*
- Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies (District 7)\*
- Herbert Lehman High School (District 8)\*
- Monroe Academy for Visual Arts & Design (District 12)
- New Explorers High School (District 7)\*

### **Brooklyn**

- Aspirations Diploma Plus High School (District 23)
- Automotive High School (District 14)\*
- Boys and Girls High School (District 16)\*
- Bushwick Leaders High School for Academic Excellence (District 32)
- Cypress Hills Collegiate Preparatory School (District 19)\*
- FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety (District 19)
- Foundations Academy (District 14)\*
- Juan Morel Campus Secondary School (District 14)\*
- W.E.B. DuBois Academic High School (District 17)

### **Manhattan**

- Marta Valle High School (District 1)

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<sup>17</sup> Patrick Wall, "The State Names 62 NYC Schools that Must Quickly Improve or Face Takeover," *Chalkbeat New York*, July 16, 2015.



- Frederick Douglas Academy II Secondary School (District 3)

### **Queens**

- August Martin High School (District 27)
- Flushing High School (District 25)\*
- Grover Cleveland High School (District 24)
- John Adams High School (District 27)\*
- Martin Van Buren High School (District 26)\*
- Richmond Hill High School (District 27)\*<sup>18</sup>

(\* indicates the school is part of the city's Renewal program for struggling schools announced in 2014)<sup>19</sup>

As of July 2016, 37 New York City schools will have improved enough to be removed from the list. Although they no longer face the threat of receivership, these schools will be reviewed by the state education department. The high schools are:

### **Bronx**

- Alfred E. Smith Career and Technical High School (District 7)
- Bronx High School for the Visual Arts (District 11)
- Bronxwood Preparatory Academy (District 11)
- Dreamyard Preparatory School (District 9)
- New Explorers High School (District 7)

### **Brooklyn**

- Aspirations Diploma Plus High School (District 23)
- Automotive High School (District 14)
- Bushwick Leaders High School for Academic Excellence (District 32)
- FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety (District 19)
- W.E.B. DuBois Academic High School (District 17)

### **Manhattan**

- Marta Valle High School (District 1)
- Frederick Douglas Academy II Secondary School (District 3)

### **Queens**

- Grover Cleveland High School (District 24)
- John Adams High School (District 27)
- Richmond Hill High School (District 27)<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Sarah Darville, "Here are the 63 New York City Schools that Could be Taken Over by Outside Groups," *Chalkbeat New York*, July 17, 2015

<sup>19</sup> Sarah Darville, "These 94 Schools are Set to Receive Extra Funding and Learning Time." *Chalkbeat New York*, Nov. 3, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Keshia Clukey, "Schools Improve Off 'Struggling Schools,' and Into Uncertainty, *Politico New York*, March 2, 2016

Some schools were subjected to severe measures. In 2015, two -- Boys and Girls High School, a once iconic school that has struggled in recent years, and Automotive -- were classified as "out of time" schools, meaning that the schools had to improve quickly and dramatically or face closure. As part of the program, teachers and guidance counselors had to reapply for their jobs. Almost three quarters of all teachers at Boys and Girls did not return for the 2015-16 school year. At Automotive 63 percent did not return.<sup>21</sup> Principal Caterina Lafergola stayed on for another year but announced she was leaving to take a position as principal of a Long Island high school in July 2016.<sup>22</sup>

In an effort to save Boys and Girls, which has traditionally had many allies in Brooklyn, DOE proposed moving one of the city's top performing schools, Medgar Evers College Preparatory School, into Boys and Girls. In an unusual arrangement, Michael Wiltshire, principal of Medgar Evers College high schools, in 2014 became principal of Boy and Girls, but kept his other job. He championed the merger, noting that Medgar Evers had poor facilities and Boys and Girls building was under-utilized as enrollment there has shrunk. Parents of Medgar Evers students balked at the plan, demanding, among other things, that their children have a separate entrance so they would not have to go through the metal detectors at Boys and Girls. In June the city withdrew the planned merger.<sup>23</sup> Shortly after that, the department announced that Wiltshire would no longer be principal of Boys and Girls and would return to running Medgar Evers full time.

The reversals at Boys and Girls were widely viewed as a setback for the de Blasio administration's program to transform struggling schools. According to the department, things had improved there under Wiltshire: It says graduation rates have increased, and absenteeism among both students and teachers has fallen. However, at the same time, enrollment in the school has dropped dramatically, and the school has had to grapple with two major leadership changes in two years.<sup>24</sup>

In 2016, the state designated five more high schools as out of time, requiring staff to reapply for their jobs. The schools are:

### **Bronx**

- Banana Kelly High School (District 8)
- Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology (District 10)
- Herbert Lehman High School (District 8)

### **Queens**

- August Martin High School (District 27)

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<sup>21</sup> Patrick Wall, "At Two High-Profile Renewal Schools, Rehiring Process Ends in Dramatic Staff Shakeups," *ChalkBeat New York*, July 15, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Susan Edelman, "Principal who 'Fixed' Failing Grades Moves to LI School," *New York Post*, May 29, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Patrick Wall, "City Scraps Divisive Co-Location Plan for Boys and Girls, as Focus Shifts to Leadership Change," *Chalkbeat New York*, June 6, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Eliza Shapiro, "Boys and Girls Shakeup Could Spell Trouble for City's School Turnaround Effects," *Politico New York*, June 23, 2016.

- John Adams High School (District 27)

Other Renewal schools were not required to undergo this process.<sup>25</sup>

In a seeming contradiction, Adams was on the out of time list event though the state had said the school would be coming off the receivership list in July 2016. According to the state Department of Education, schools that have committed to a course of action must proceed with it, even if their status has changed.

Even as some schools improved and others tried to avoid receivership, debate continued over the best way to deal with persistently low performing schools and the effectiveness of the city and state efforts.

In October, State Education Commissioner Mary Ellen Elia expressed concern that the state law could be too harsh. While she told a hearing called by the chair of the State Assembly Education Committee that the schools needed to make progress, she asked for more discretion in giving some schools more time to meet their goals.<sup>26</sup>

In December, though, the city's Renewal plan came under widespread attack for not being harsh enough -- for not setting high enough goals for the schools and being too slow to shut down schools. Merryl Tisch, the departing chancellor of the State Board of Regents, said the plan did not set sufficiently ambitious goals and that at times the best solution would be to close a school.<sup>27</sup> As she neared the end of her time in office, Chancellor Tisch reiterated her criticism, saying the schools in the Renewal program had not improved as much as she would have wished and that people should demand more rapid change.<sup>28</sup> Commissioner Elia and Betty Rosa, Dr. Tisch's successor, have been more supportive of the Renewal program.

Responding to criticism, DOE, which had previously refused to release the goals for the Renewal schools, made them public in December. According to an analysis of the release, the city goals require Renewal schools to raise their four-year graduation rates by an average of 17 percent. On average, the graduation rate at the schools was 47 percent in 2014. This appeared to be more demanding than the state program for struggling schools.<sup>29</sup>

The administration also has cited what it says is the success of the Renewal school program and has noted that the number of city schools on the state receivership list has fallen. Skeptics, though, have countered that the state has been too quick to take schools off the struggling and persistently struggling list. For example, Automotive High School in Brooklyn was removed even though it ranks in the lowest 5 percent of high schools in the state. To be considered

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<sup>25</sup> Patrick Wall, "At Two High-Profile Renewal Schools, Rehiring Process Ends in Dramatic Staff Shakeups," *Chalkbeat New York*, July 15, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Geoff Decker, "Elia Says School Turnaround Law Needs Changes to Provide More Time and Money," *Chalkbeat New York*, Oct. 15, 2015

<sup>27</sup> Leslie Brody, "Questions Raised on Turnaround Plan for Schools," *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 4, 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Eliza Shapiro and Keshia Clukey, "Tisch Keeps Up Criticism of City's Struggling School Program," *Politico New York*, March 14, 2016

<sup>29</sup> Patrick Wall, "After Criticism, City Publishes Renewal Goals, Arguing They Top State Targets," *Chalkbeat New York*, Dec. 8, 2015.

struggling a school must have a graduation rate of under 60 percent for three consecutive years. Automotive's rate topped 60 in 2011, the first of the three years considered. It fell to 47 percent last year.<sup>30</sup>

The Renewal program came under a different sort of criticism in January when Ernest Logan, the president of the Council of Supervisors and Administrators, the union for principals and other administrators, wrote a column attacking the Renewal program, calling it "a recipe for disaster." In particular, he said the program requires enormous amounts of paperwork as principals are "evaluated on an alphabet soup of diagnostic and accountability tools" and are pulled out of their schools for an excessive number of meetings. Although the schools were supposed to have coaches and administrators from other schools, he said that few had actually arrived on the scene. He also said the DOE had limited the principals' ability to make key decisions.<sup>31</sup>

Mr. Logan repeated his criticism in an interview with the *New York Times*, charging, "This became a political mess, because the mayor made this his political thing. ... They've lost their focus on kids." Although he had been a frequent critic of the Bloomberg administration, Mr. Logan told the *Times* that he thought a majority of his 6,000 members "would say they probably had a better shot of being able to effectively do their job under the old administration."

The de Blasio administration countered that the Renewal program's approach was necessary to improve outcomes for children in the struggling schools. The chancellor said the principals of these schools needed extra oversight and would be able to become more autonomous if and when achievement at their schools improved.<sup>32</sup> She said most principals were happy with the program. Mayor de Blasio also defended the program, saying the schools had received extra resources because of it.<sup>33</sup>

An analysis of enrollment figures by *Chalkbeat* make it clear the schools continue to face challenges. It found that 81 of the 94 schools in the Renewal program saw their enrollments drop between the launch of Renewal in fall 2014 and spring 2016. The high schools on the list each lost an average of 146 students, with some, such as DeWitt Clinton, Herbert Lehman, John Adams and Flushing High School each seeing their enrollments declined by hundreds of students. Enrollment at embattled Boys and Girls High School in Brooklyn, fell to 343 students, down from 4,400 a decade ago. The declines were attributed to students dropping or transferring, while fewer incoming 9th graders applied. Whatever the reason, declining enrollments can threaten a school's future. The chancellor has gone on record saying that very small schools -- those with 250 students or less -- "cannot provide the robust education our students deserve."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Susan Edelman, "Failing Schools Escape Takeover Despite No Improvement," *New York Post*, March 13, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Ernest A. Logan, "What Happened to the Promise?" *CSA News*, January 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Kate Taylor, "Principals' Union Says Mayor de Blasio Has Lost Focus on Students," *New York Times*, Jan. 10, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Patrick Wall, "Officials Defend 'Renewal' Program After Attack by Principals Union," *Chalkbeat New York*, Jan. 14, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Patrick Wall, "Despite Major City Investment, Struggling 'Renewal' Schools Shed Another 6,300 Students," *Chalkbeat New York*, May 25, 2016.

## **School Closings**

Despite its opposition to the extensive scale school closures that were a hallmark of the Bloomberg administration, Mayor de Blasio has said he would close struggling schools that do not improve and would not always wait three years to do so. This year DOE recommended and the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) voted to approve the closing of two high schools. One, Foundations Academy in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which had opened with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2005, had less than 80 students and one of the lowest graduation rates in the city.<sup>35</sup> It was on the state's list of struggling schools and in the city's Renewal program. The other, Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies in the Bronx, also had been targeted by the city and the state as a struggling school. The administration indicated the school had not shown signs of progress and that its enrollment had tumbled to 101, making it difficult to offer needed classes and services.<sup>36</sup> The panel also approved DOE's plan to consolidate Peace and Diversity Academy, one of the city's smallest high schools, into the larger Metropolitan High School, both in District 12 in the Bronx. The schools already shared a building.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile academics and others continue to scrutinize the wave of school closures under the Bloomberg administration. In a study focusing on 29 high schools shut between 2002-03 and 2008-09, James J. Kemble of the Research Alliance for New York City Schools at NYU's Steinhardt School concluded that students who might have otherwise attended the closed school were likely to enroll in a higher performing school after the closing and that these students had better outcomes, including graduation rates, than they likely would have had otherwise. In addition, Kemble concluded that the closing of a school did not negatively affect student enrolled in that school during the phase-out period. Despite this, Kemble said the closings left many problems unsolved. The students who would have attended the closed schools had they not been shuttered had a graduation rate of only 56 percent at the schools they attended instead. Kemble wrote, "Large numbers of students are still being left behind. ... The system is still characterized by wide disparities in student outcomes, based on race and socio-economic status."<sup>38</sup>

## **Co-locations**

DOE has continued its policy of having schools share space. In 2015-16, it approved these changes in space utilizations affecting high schools, to be effective in September 2016:

### **Bronx**

- Placing Crotona Academy High School in a new facility (District 12; building X358)
- Consolidation of Peace and Diversity Academy with Metropolitan High School (District 12, building X099)

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<sup>35</sup> Camille Bautista, "City Votes to Shutter Three Brooklyn Schools," *DNA Info*, Feb. 25, 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Sarah Darville, "Fariña Announces Plans to Close a Struggling Bronx High School," *Chalkbeat New York*, Feb. 25, 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Monica Disare, "With Little Debate, Education Panel Signs Off on de Blasio's First School Closures," *Chalkbeat New York*, Feb 24, 2016.

<sup>38</sup> James J. Kemble, *High School Closures in New York City: Impacts on Students' Academic Outcomes, Attendance and Mobility*, Research Alliance for New York City Schools, November 2015.

## **Brooklyn**

- Co-locations of Frederick Douglass Academy IV with JHS 057, MS 385 and Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance (District 16; building K057)
- Opening and co-location of Brooklyn Prospect Charter School -- Clinton Hill with Brooklyn Community High School of Communication, Arts and Media; Brooklyn High School for Leadership and Community Service and PS 369 (Districts 13, 75; building K117)
- Opening and co-location of high school grades of Unity Preparatory Charter School of Brooklyn with Brownsville Academy High School (District 17; building K907)
- Opening and co-location of PS K753 with High School for Innovation in Advertising and Media; High School for Medical Professions; Urban Action Academy and School for Cooperative Technical Education (Districts 18, 75, 79; building K500)
- Opening and co-location of high school grades of Achievement First Brownsville and Achievement First Apollo with JHS 292 (District 19 and 84; building K292)

## **Queens**

- Co-location of Alternate Learning Center with Channel View School for Research, Rockaway Park High School for Environmental Sustainability, Rockaway Collegiate High School and PA Q256 (Districts 27, 75 and 88; building Q410).<sup>39</sup>

## **Community Schools**

In 2015-16, DOE began rolling out the community school program it had announced the previous year. These are schools that try to support children and their families by offering programs that address a child's emotional and physical needs as well as academic ones. These schools involve partnerships between the school, students, parents and community groups, and offer a variety of services such as health care, vision tests, tutoring, job training, mental health counseling and family counseling. The initial list of schools has 19 high schools and 6-to-12 schools. The community school effort, which includes all the Renewal schools, has been billed as a key part of the de Blasio administration's effort to improve schools that have struggled with low performance over the years.

In November 2015, DOE issued a policy requiring that community schools share these features:

- A collaborative school governance structure that includes a community based organization;
- Expanded learning time;
- Being open after school and in some cases offering programming on weekends, during breaks and over the summer;

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<sup>39</sup> Material excerpted from agendas for public meetings of the Panel for Educational Policy (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Common/Templates/ArchiveTemplate/Archive.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID=%7bA1074103-0E4E-48BD-B898-1E890456274A%7d&NRORIGINALURL=%2fAboutUs%2fleadership%2fPEP%2fmeetings%2fAgendas%2fdefault%2ehtm&NRCACHEHINT=Guest>).

- Mental health, medical and social services for students who need them;
- Access to "educational opportunities and programs" for family members.<sup>40</sup>

Community school advocates, however, have charged that the administration has not committed to long-term funding for the schools. In June, they said that the city was relying on state grants, many set to expire at the end of June, rather than ensuring more stable city funding for the project. Several months later, however, a dispute broke out between advocates of the schools and the de Blasio administration over funding issues. The dispute centered on 12 early community schools, whose state funding is set to expire. The high schools on this list are:

- Boys and Girls High School (Brooklyn, District 16)
- Bushwick Leaders High School for Academic Excellence (District 32)
- Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School (Bronx, District 12)
- Heritage School (Manhattan, District 4)
- Kurt Hahn Expeditionary Learning School (Brooklyn, District 18)

On a broader level, proponents of community schools have expressed concern that the administration sees the community schools as a quick fix for struggling schools and does not have a long-term commitment to the concept. They note that three years -- the amount of time the schools have to make significant improvement or face restructuring or closure -- is not enough time to turn a school around.<sup>41</sup> In support they cited a recent study by the National Education Policy Center, which found fully implementing policies that can transform a school takes five years or more. "While community school models show promise, evidence and logic tell us that there must be time between initiating a program and seeing measureable results," the report said.<sup>42</sup>

Although the New York City program is barely off the ground, Gov. Andrew Cuomo has backed a similar statewide effort, proposing a \$100 million program that would make struggling schools community schools.<sup>43</sup>

### **Changes at the Board of Regents**

2015-16 saw major changes at the Board of Regents, the body that sets education policy in New York state. These changes came after a year that saw heated disputes in the state over standardized testing and teacher evaluations and when some 20 percent of parents decided to not

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<sup>40</sup> New York City Department of Education, "New York City Department of Education Community Schools Policy: Second Revised Public Notice," Oct. 13, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/E481F72F-4286-49F4-BC9E-20D7B5D86695/188118/SecondRevisedPublicNoticeNYCDOECommunitySchoolsPol.pdf>).

<sup>41</sup> Patrick Wall, "As 12 Early Community Schools Face Funding Cuts, Advocates Question City's Long-Term Commitment," *Chalkbeat New York*, June 14, 2016.

<sup>42</sup> Julia Daniel, Kevin G. Welner and Michelle Renee Valladares, "Time for Improvement: Research-Based Expectations for Implementation of the Community Schools Initiative in New York City," National Education Policy Center, June 2016.

<sup>43</sup> Monica Disare, "Gov. Cuomo Unveils Plan to Expand Community Schools, Urges Scrutiny of Charter Enrollment," *Chalkbeat New York*, Jan. 13, 2016

allow their children to take the standardized English Language Arts and Math exams given to all 3rd through 8th grade New York public school students in the spring.

In October, Meryll H. Tisch, the chancellor of the board, announced she would step down when her term ended in March 2016. During her time in office, Dr. Tisch saw the state adopt the Common Core standards and instituted more rigorous standardized tests. In making the announcement, Dr. Tisch, who had held the post since 2009, said she had tried to make major changes and, in doing so, had encountered opposition. She defended her position, saying, "We cannot take this moment to back away from the need for higher standards. We cannot back away from standards. We cannot back away from assessments that give us an accurate measure of student performance and that informs instruction and curriculum."

Despite Dr. Tisch's statement many observers see the state already moving away from some of the policies she championed.<sup>44</sup> They note that the state education department and the governor's office are both reviewing the Common Core standards (for more, see page 20).

The Board of Regents elected Betty A. Rosa, an educator from the Bronx, to replace Dr. Tisch. Many saw Dr. Rosa's appointment as a victory for the teachers union, New York State United Teachers, and a setback for the so-called reform agenda, which in addition to testing, had called for basing a substantial amount of a teacher's evaluation on tests and for holding schools accountable based on test scores and other data.<sup>45</sup> Dr. Rosa has criticized the new state standardized tests and has said that they should not be used in teacher evaluations. She has said that, if she had children of test age, she would have them "opt out" of the tests.<sup>46</sup>

Dr. Rosa's appointment came after the state legislature appointed three new members to the Board of Regents. Luis Reyes, a former New York City Board of Education member and currently a research associate at Hunter College's Center For Puerto Rican Studies in New York City, will fill the at-large seat previously held by Dr. Tisch. Nan Eileen Mead, a parent who is first vice president of the District 3 Community Education Council in Manhattan, will fill the unexpired term of Charles Bendit, who resigned from the board in February. Retired educator Elizabeth Smith Hakanson was appointed to the upstate seat that was previously held by Deputy Chancellor Tony Bottar. All three new members were appointed with little to no controversy or discussion, an indication that some of the tension over education that roiled Albany in previous years may have abated.<sup>47</sup>

## **Funding**

In his proposed budget, announced in late August, Mayor de Blasio called for spending \$23 billion for city schools in fiscal year 2016-17, approximately \$1 billion more than

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<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth A. Harris, "Meryll Tisch, Board of Regents Chair, Is Stepping Down," *New York Times*, Oct. 26, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> Tiffany Lankes, "How the Power of NYSUT Upended Education Reform Movement in New York," *Buffalo News*, March 26, 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Kate Taylor, "New York State Regents Elect Betty Rosa as Chancellor," *New York Times*, March 21, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> Keshia Curry, "In 'Significant' Change, Lawmakers Add Diversity to Regents Board," *Politico New York*, March 8, 2015.



in 2015-16. The additional money comes partly from a hike in state money for the schools, agreed to in the state budget for the fiscal year. The city plans to spend \$159 million to provide additional money to schools that are getting less than they should receive under the city's Fair Student Funding formula. This would insure that every school gets at least 87 percent of what it should, according to the mayor. DOE has reportedly found that about 35 percent of city high schools now get less than that.<sup>48</sup> Critics have blamed the shortfall at least partly on the state's failure to provide the city with funds set out in the settlement of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity suit over state funding of city schools.

The mayor's budget offered few new initiatives in education. It does include clinics for elementary schools serving large numbers of homeless students and money for his Equity and Excellence initiatives (see page 2), including additional Advanced Placement classes and college counseling. It does not fund universal free school lunch, which the CCHS had strongly advocated.<sup>49</sup>

City schools also are to receive \$783 million under the Smart Schools Bond Act, a mechanism to finance improvements in school technology and infrastructure passed by voters throughout the state in 2014. In its plan for the money, approved by the Panel for Educational Policy on April 20, 2016, DOE said it will spend \$100 million on building and leasing space for pre-kindergarten classes; \$300 million to remove Transportable Classroom Units, also known as temporary classrooms or trailers; and \$383.13 on technology. The biggest chunk of the technology money -- \$272.8 million -- will go to expand and improve digital networks and connectivity in schools. Another \$88 million will go for equipment, including devices needed to support the Computer Science for All initiative.<sup>50</sup>

The plan has raised concern in some quarters. In testimony to DOE, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, a longtime advocate of technology in schools, criticized the department for a "lack of public engagement, transparency and strategic planning" around the plan. She questioned the prices DOE was planning to pay for tablets and computers and faulted the department for not having "a clear picture" of what bandwidth speed is in schools. Brewer also said principals have learned that they would not be receiving as much additional money as they had anticipated.<sup>51</sup>

## **Common Core**

While much of the discussion of Common Core in New York has centered around elementary and middle school students -- and the state standardized tests they take -- the Common Core has

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<sup>48</sup> Amy Zimmer, "Mayor Increases 'Fair Share' Funding for Schools but Critics Want More," *DNA Info*, Jan. 22, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Patrick Wall, "As Homeless Population Swells, New York City Will Add More Health Clinics at Schools," April 26, 2016.

<sup>50</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Proposed DOE Smart Schools Bond Act Investment Plan," March 4, 2016 ([http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/A6AE85C1-DA40-47FD-B03F-AB373AE391FE/194722/REVISED\\_SSIPASOF32115\\_FULL.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/A6AE85C1-DA40-47FD-B03F-AB373AE391FE/194722/REVISED_SSIPASOF32115_FULL.pdf)).

<sup>51</sup> Gale Brewer, "Testimony for Department of Education Hearing on Proposed Smart Schools Bond Act Investment Plan," March 31, 2016.

had an impact on high school curricula as well. This year, the College Board introduced a new SAT, which it said is aligned with the Common Core. (David Coleman, one of the key architects of the Common Core, is president and chief executive officer of the College Board.) New York began offering Common Core aligned Regents exams for English Language Arts and algebra I in June 2014 and introduced the Common Core geometry exam in June 2015.<sup>52</sup>

Initial results showed students having difficulty with at least one of the new tests. Only 52 percent of students passed the Common Core algebra Regents in 2015, while 65 percent passed the old algebra Regents in 2014. The declines were particularly sharp for Black and Latino students. Failing the test could force students to take the algebra course two or more times, making it difficult for them to move on to advanced math or to take elective classes. Students must pass the algebra I Regents in order to graduate. The new test has fewer multiple choice questions than the old one along with more questions requiring extensive responses and includes some material that previously had not been covered until algebra II.<sup>53</sup> "The old algebra exam was at a 7th-grade level. The new algebra exam is at a 10th-grade level," Midwood High School principal Michael McDonnell told the Center for New York City Affairs. This can pose a real challenge to many 9th graders who enter high school behind grade level in math.<sup>54</sup>

The statewide pass rate in geometry fell from 82.3 on the old test in 2014 to 70.8 percent on the new test in 2015. The geometry Regents, however, is not required for graduation.<sup>55</sup>

The new English exam requires more reading and writing, but state officials have said they would adjust the scoring to keep pass rates similar to what they were with the old test. About 80 percent of high school students passed the pre-Common Core English Regents.<sup>56</sup> The number of students passing the English exams and other Regents went up somewhat last year from the previous year.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the widespread concern about the algebra test, the real crunch could come in 2022. In 2014, the Board of Regents established two cut scores for passing the Common Core exams: one that would apply to students taking the test in 2014 and another so-called "aspirational" score indicating the score a student would need to be considered ready for college classes. By 2022, all students will have to hit the college readiness score in order to graduate.

Opposition to the Common Core from some New Yorkers -- particularly to the way the state introduced the new standards and to the standardized tests -- could put this deadline and indeed the whole program in doubt. A task force on the Common Core standards, appointed by Gov. Cuomo, issued a report calling for an overhaul of the standards in the state, replacing them with

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<sup>52</sup> Susan Edelman, "What You Need to Know About the Common Core," *New York Post*, April 11, 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Geoff Decker, "Algebra Pass Rates Fall Amid Common Core Shift, Leaving At-Risk Students Furthest Behind," *Chalkbeat New York*, Nov. 5, 2015

<sup>54</sup> Kim Nauer, Nicole Mader and Laura Zingmond, *Rough Calculations: Will the Common Core Algebra Regents Threaten NYC's Graduation Rates?* Center for New York City Affairs, August 2015.

<sup>55</sup> John Hildebrand, "Passage Rates Fall on New Common Core Geometry Exam," *Newsday*, Nov. 5, 2015.

<sup>56</sup> Geoff Decker, "New York Looks to Tweak Rollout of Common Core English Regents Exam," *Chalkbeat New York*, Oct. 25, 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Ben Chapman and Lisa L. Colangelo, "NYC Students' Scores Improving for Most of Regents Exams, Report Shows," *New York Daily News*, Nov. 6, 2015.

standards to be developed in New York state and putting a moratorium on the use of test scores in teacher evaluations. The governor has endorsed the task force's recommendations, marking a reversal of his previous support of the Common Core and for using test scores in teacher evaluations.<sup>58</sup>

Although the report did not deal extensively with high schools, it noted that many students who pass the required Regents tests still must take remedial courses when they reach college. In light of that, the task force called for improved Regents exams or another assessment that "when combined with other factors, accurately predicts college readiness and identifies areas of academic weakness for students in the 10th and 11th grade."<sup>59</sup>

## **Diversity**

After decades in which the people running New York City schools paid little attention to racial diversity, DOE in 2015-16 began taking some steps to address racial and economic segregation in the schools. Some of the impetus for this came from the City Council, which in spring 2015 passed a law requiring DOE to provide detailed demographic information on students in individual schools and programs, report on criteria used for high school admissions and explain any steps it has taken to increase diversity.<sup>60</sup>

The city has taken the position that it is legally barred from taking race into account in school admissions decisions, something that some advocates dispute. DOE took a small step to address this issue in October when the Panel for Educational Policy voted to remove a footnote from the city school admissions policy that forbids schools from using race in enrollment decisions unless there is a court order directing it to do so. The chancellor said she would move to remove the language. The line was added after a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decision struck down two admissions policies elsewhere in the country that considered race. Advocates, though, have argued that the city policy went further than it needed to.<sup>61</sup>

Like Mayor Bloomberg, Mayor de Blasio has not made diversity in the schools a priority and has blamed the segregation on housing patterns in the city. Chancellor Fariña has repeatedly argued that efforts to increase diversity should take place at individual schools, not as the result of a top down policy from the DOE. She has called on schools to add programs that might attract a diversity of applicants or to develop partnerships with schools that have a different racial mix and has urged parents to consider a broader range of schools for their children. She has also said that the concept

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<sup>58</sup> Keshia Clukey, "Education Adviser Touts Cuomo's Move Away from Common Core, Evaluations," *Politico New York*, Feb. 29, 2016.

<sup>59</sup> New York State Common Core Task Force, *Final Report*, Dec. 10, 2015.

<sup>60</sup> Sabrina Rodriguez, "De Blasio Signs Law Requiring New School Diversity Reports," *Chalkbeat New York*, June 17, 2015.

<sup>61</sup> Patrick Wall, "City Agrees to Delete Contentious Footnote in Admissions Rules that Limits the Role of Race," *Chalkbeat New York*, Oct.28, 2015.

of diversity should extend beyond race and ethnicity to include students with disabilities and English language learners.<sup>62</sup>

In November, the city agreed to allow seven elementary schools to begin reserving some seats for students who are low income, English learners, involved in the child-welfare system or who have incarcerated parents. The plan does not affect any high schools.

For high schools, the city increased by 20 the number of schools that admit students using the "educational option" method, or ed-opt. In this method, schools have to take students with a range of academic abilities, selecting some who have low scores on standardized tests, some who score high and many in the middle. This academic diversity often leads to racial, ethnic and economic diversity as well. With the additions, 146 city high schools will now use this method.

Some question, though, how effective ed opt will be in increasing diversity. A study by *Chalkbeat* found that some ed-opt schools find it difficult to attract applicants who score well (a 3 or a 4) on the 8th grade standardized tests. (Admission decisions are based on the 7th grade test but high schools do not release their students' 7th grade scores.) " Last year, 83 percent of the incoming freshmen at the fully ed-opt schools did not read on grade level, according to city data, compared to 60 percent of freshmen at schools with screened or test-based admissions,' *Chalkbeat* found.

Observers attribute the decline in the number of high performing applicants to ed-opt schools to the availability of academically screened high schools, which may be more attractive to top students. There were far fewer selective schools in the 1970s when ed-opt was developed.<sup>63</sup>

## **Admissions**

More than 75,000 8th graders applied to be admitted to a New York City public high school in September 2016. Of these students, 93 percent were admitted to a school they listed on the application that allows all students to select up to 12 schools. Almost half -- 48 percent -- were admitted to their top choice. On the other hand, 7 percent, or 5,722 children, were not admitted anywhere. Those students must apply again but can only choose from among the far more limited number of schools that still have available slots.

Ninth graders wishing to transfer had a more difficult time of it. Of the 5,192 who applied to another school, only 62 percent got in.<sup>64</sup>

Large high schools in Brooklyn and Queens had the most applicants. These are the 20 schools with the highest number of applicants:

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<sup>62</sup> Patrick Wall, "On Upper West Side, Fariña Says School Integration Can't Be Forced on Parents," *Chalkbeat New York*, Oct.29, 2015.

<sup>63</sup> Patrick Wall, "Why Some New York City High Schools that Were Designed to be Diverse Aren't," *Chalkbeat New York*, Jan.15, 2016.

<sup>64</sup> Pamela Wheaton, "8th-Graders Get High School Admissions Results," *Inside Schools*, March 4, 2016.

School	Borough	District	Applicants
Francis Lewis High School	Queens	26	9,468
Forest Hills High School	Queens	28	8,375
Midwood High School	Brooklyn	22	7,929
Bayside High School	Queens	26	7,692
Benjamin Cardozo High School	Queens	26	6,921
Edward R. Murrow High School	Brooklyn	21	6,480
Townsend Harris High School	Queens	25	5,996
Baruch College Campus High School	Manhattan	2	5,116
Eleanor Roosevelt High School	Manhattan	2	5,582
Manhattan/Hunter Science High School	Manhattan	3	5,116
Central Park East High School	Manhattan	4	5,114
Pace High School	Manhattan	2	5,078
Beacon High School	Manhattan	2	5,006
Leon M. Goldstein High School for the Sciences	Brooklyn	22	4,842
James Madison High School	Brooklyn	22	4,455
Fort Hamilton High School	Brooklyn	20	4,315
Millennium High School	Manhattan	2	4,256
Thos. A. Edison Career & Technical High School	Queens	28	4,198
Bard High School Early College	Manhattan	1	4,161
New Utrecht High School	Brooklyn	20	3,845

While some of these high schools have zoned programs -- meaning they must admit any student who applies and lives in their area -- many of them, such as Francis Lewis and Forest Hills, also have selective programs. Other schools have no zoned program, meaning no student is guaranteed admission. Some of these are extremely selective. Townsend Harris, for example, had only about 306 slots for next year's 9th grade. Beacon High School had only 320.<sup>65</sup>

The admissions for the class of 2020 saw a dramatic rise in the number of students with disabilities accepted at the city's screened high schools, including some of the most selective ones. More than 2,500 students with disabilities were admitted to a screened high school this year compared with less than 1,000 in 2012. The number of students with disabilities admitted to the 15 most selective schools rose from 60 in 2012 to 275 in 2016. In general, 89 percent of students with disabilities applying to high school this year were offered admission at one of their top three choices. For several years DOE has been urging screened schools to admit more children with disabilities and calling on middle school guidance counselors to encourage students with disabilities to list these schools on their high school applications (for more, see page 43).<sup>66</sup>

Once again this year, very few Black and Hispanic students won admission to the city's eight academically elite public high schools that select their students entirely on the basis of a single standardized test -- the so-called specialized high schools test (SHSAT). Overall 19 percent of the 26,971 8th graders who took the test were offered admission to one of the schools. That

<sup>65</sup> Pamela Wheaton, "Top 20: Queens High Schools Get Most Applications," *Inside Schools*, March 7, 2016.

<sup>66</sup> Yasmeen Khan, "More Students with Disabilities Admitted to 'Screened' High Schools," *Schoolbook*, March 4, 2016.

percentage, though, varied widely between groups, with 34 percent of Asian test takers and 29 percent of Whites getting an offer, compared with 4 percent of Black test takers and 5 percent of Hispanics. These percentages represented a slight decline from 2015. The results mean that, in September 2016, the first-year class at Stuyvesant will have at most 9 Black and 14 Hispanic students, compared with as many as 682 Asians students (this assumes all students who were offered a seat take it). Staten Island Tech admitted no Black students. Overall Asians accounted for 54 percent of all admissions to specialized high schools other than Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Art, which admits students based on their record and an audition or portfolio. Whites received 27 percent of offers, Hispanics 6 percent and Blacks 4 percent.<sup>67</sup>

The figures fueled the long-standing debate over whether the admissions method for the schools should be changed to include multiple factors, such as grades, attendance and standardized test scores. Instituting such a change at the three oldest specialized schools -- Stuyvesant, Bronx High School of Science and Brooklyn Tech -- would require action by the state legislature. The de Blasio administration could, however, change the admissions policies at the five newer specialized high schools, which are not covered by the state law mandating the test. They are: High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College; High School of American Studies at Lehman College; Queens High School for the Sciences at York College; Staten Island Tech and the Brooklyn Latin School.

So far, the administration has expressed concern about the lack of Blacks and Hispanics at the schools but has not made any effort to change the admissions policy. Following the release of the admissions statistics this year, Chancellor Fariña issued a statement saying, "We are committed to achieving [more diversity] without impacting rigorous standards. We continue to review a variety of strategies to foster diversity at these schools. Still, we know that the best way to promote diversity at these schools is to ensure that every student gets a high-quality education starting in pre-k."<sup>68</sup>

Many observers agree that the likelihood of changing the admissions policy, at least for the three older specialized high schools, remains slim. Instead they have urged that the city expand programs to prepare students for the test, make sure middle school students and parents know about the test and the specialized high schools, and improve middle schools so more students will be prepared for competitive high schools. In response, the state budget for 2016-17 includes \$2 million in new funding for an array of programs supporters hope will help more Black and Hispanic students be admitted to the schools.<sup>69</sup> DOE announced it would use the funds to launch six initiatives to increase diversity. The programs will begin to be implemented this summer, with an eye on students taking the SHSAT in October 2016. The programs are expected to cost \$15 million through fiscal year 2020 and will not affect Fiorello La Guardia, the one specialized high school that does not use the SHSAT. The programs will feature:

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<sup>67</sup> Pamela Wheaton, op. cit

<sup>68</sup> Amy Zimmer, "Fewer Black and Latino Students Get Spots at Elite High Schools, Stats Show," *DNA Info New York*, March 4, 2016.

<sup>69</sup> Ben Chapman, "Exclusive: State Senate Earmarks \$2M for Diversity Outreach at Elite City High Schools," *New York Daily News*, April 10, 2016.

- An outreach program aimed at getting high-achieving students who might otherwise not take the test to take it. The department notes that while 96 percent of high-performing Asian students took the SHSAT only 76 percent of high-performing Black students did.
- Testing whether giving the SHSAT during the school day and at the students' schools will increase the diversity of students taking the test. The test is currently administered at central locations on the weekend.
- Providing afterschool programs designed to prepare students for the test.
- Expanding the DREAM program, which prepares promising 6th and 7th graders for the test, to include a new intensive program for 8th graders.
- Expanding the Discovery program, which offers students who narrowly missed the cutoff score for a specialized school the opportunity to take a summer program and possibly be admitted. The initiative will expand the existing Discovery program at Brooklyn Tech and add it at the High School of American Studies at Lehman College.
- Develop programs to make the climate at the specialized schools welcoming to all students, in the hopes that more students offered a place at one of the schools will take it. According to DOE 86 percent of Asians admitted to one of the schools accepted that offer while 73 percent of Blacks and Latinos did.<sup>70</sup>

(For more on high school admissions, see the section on Diversity on page 22.)

## **SAT and AP**

Beginning next year, all New York City 11th graders will have the opportunity to take the SAT, required for admissions to many colleges, for free during the school day. The test will be given on April 5, 2017.<sup>71</sup> The city has been offering the PSAT during the school day since 2007 and has seen a tripling of the number of students taking that test. The city hopes the free SAT will spur more students to take the test and so increase access to college for more students. (For more see the section on the College Access for All initiative, page 7.) The department began testing the free SAT program at 40 schools in 2014-15 and expanded that to 92 pilot schools in 2015-16.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> New York City Department of Education, "City Announces New Initiatives to Increase Diversity at Specialized High Schools," June 9, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/City+Announces+New+Initiatives+to+Increase+Diversity+at+Specialized+High+Schools.htm>).

<sup>71</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces First 100 High Schools to Implement College Access for All in 2016-17," June 16, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/College+Access+for+All++High+School.htm>).

<sup>72</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces Free SAT Access During the School Day for All High School Juniors," Oct. 26, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Fari%C3%B1a+Announces+Free+SAT+Access+During+the+School+Day+for+All+High+School+Juniors.htm>).

Some experts have expressed concern over whether students will do well enough on the test to improve their access to college. In general, students from low-income families or whose parents did not go to college do not do as well on the exam as other students. To address this concern, the city provided training to teachers at the pilot schools on the SAT, which has been completely revamped this year, and might provide more test preparation material. The College Board, which administers the test, has also said it will provide more free resources to help students prepare.<sup>73</sup>

Even without the free test, the number of New York City students taking the SAT has increased slightly, according to the DOE. In 2015, 48,678 high school seniors took the college entrance exam at least once, compared with 47,950 in 2014 and 45,754 in 2011. Despite that increase, student scores edged up slightly from 2014 to 2015 -- from 440 to 444 (out of a possible 800) on the critical reading test and from 463 to 466 on math. This contrasts with slight dips in scores in the rest of the state and nationally. Students in New York state as a whole, though, still outscored their city counterparts, with scores of 505 in writing and 515 in math.

More students also are taking Advanced Placement (AP) tests. Students who pass the test at the end of an AP course can get college credit. In 2015, 42,481 city students took at least one AP exam, and 24,395 students passed at least one. Both numbers represented an increase from 2014 and an increase of about 40 percent from 2011. (For more on increasing access to AP, see page 5.)<sup>74</sup>

### **Lack of Math and Science Classes**

While the city moves to increase the number of AP classes and to boost computer science offerings, many thousands of New York City high school students do not have access to standard college-preparatory math and science courses. According to a study by the Center for New York City Affairs, 39 percent of city high schools do not offer algebra 2, chemistry and physics, although they may offer one or two of those subjects. It also found that more than half the city's high schools do not offer any AP classes in math or science.

The study's authors attribute this shortage of key courses partly to the growth of small high schools that may not have enough students interested in or eligible for advanced math and science offerings. The report calls for stronger math and science instruction in grades k through 8 so more students will be prepared for the higher-level high school classes. (The center's list of what high schools offer which advanced math and science classes can be found here [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ee4f0be4b015b9c3690d84/t/55b007a3e4b0faf35f8f9f1b/1437599651361/Adv+Math+%26+Sci+list+7\\_21-1.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53ee4f0be4b015b9c3690d84/t/55b007a3e4b0faf35f8f9f1b/1437599651361/Adv+Math+%26+Sci+list+7_21-1.pdf))

The lack of classes at some schools limits a student's ability to earn an Advanced Regents diploma, which requires more math and science than the regular Regents diploma. About 18 percent of students in the class of 2015 earned this diploma. Twenty-five largely selective high

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<sup>73</sup> Kate Taylor, "As City Offers Free SATs, Questions About Student Preparation," *New York Times*, March 2, 2016.

<sup>74</sup> New York City Department of Education, "NYC AP, SAT and PSAT Results," (<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/F999C126-1BB7-4B93-93ED-BD5B6E3A849C/0/CollegeBoard2015ResultsWebsite.pdf>).



schools accounted for almost half of all Advanced Regents diplomas awarded in June 2015, while 100 schools had no students earning the more demanding diploma. The Center for New York City Affairs report noted racial disparities between these groups of schools, with White and Asian students accounting for 70 percent of the students at the schools awarding large numbers of Advanced Regents diplomas. On the other hand, 92 percent of the students at the schools not awarding any advanced diplomas were Black or Hispanic.<sup>75</sup>

DOE has said it is taking steps to address shortcomings in math and science instruction in the city, such as developing a math curriculum for pre-k and developing new materials. In addition, Chancellor Fariña has proposed that small schools share Advanced Placement teachers and even classes.<sup>76</sup>

### **Career and Technical Education**

New York City schools continue to expand and revamp career and technical education offerings. About 26,000 students are enrolled in one of the city's 51 designated CTE schools that provide both academic and CTE courses to all their students. This includes many small CTE schools opened since 2003. Altogether 134 schools offer some CTE courses, and every year 117,000 students enroll in a CTE course. While New York City schools offer courses in traditional trades, such as auto mechanics and construction, a number of the CTE programs focus on the growing fields of technology and healthcare.

The city has also opened several so-called P-Tech schools. These schools go from grade 9 through 14, offering a Regents diploma, an industry-supported credential in the given field and an associate's degree.

Overall CTE schools serve a diverse group of students. Forty-four percent of students in these schools are Hispanic, 36 percent Black, 12 percent Asian and 6 percent White. Six out of 10 students in CTE schools are male; 82 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

In July 2015, Chancellor Fariña appointed John Widlund as executive director of Career and Technical Education. Previously he served 12 years as principal of various CTE schools, most recently the School of Cooperative Education High School, which serves about 1,5000 students aged 16 to 21 at five locations. While there, he added new programs, including an internship program, and saw the number of students at the school completing their CTE work increase from 400 to more than 1,000 a year. Before that, he was principal at George Westinghouse High School and assistant principal at Ralph McKee Career and Technical Education High School.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Clara Hemphill, Nicole Mader and Bruce Cory, *What's Wrong with Math and Science in NYC High Schools (and What to Do About It)*, Center for New York City Affairs, July 2015.

<sup>76</sup> Beth Fertig, "Report: Too Many NYC Schools Lack College-Prep Science, Math," WNYC, July 23, 2015.

<sup>77</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces Appointment of John Widlund to Head NYC Career and Technical Education," July 6, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Fari%C3%B1a+Announces+Appointment+of+John+Widlund+to+Head+NNYC+Career+And+Technical+Education.htm>).

## **Graduation and Beyond**

Continuing a trend that has gone on for at least a decade, and which mirrors gains seen throughout the country, the New York City graduation rate rose in 2015. The four-year graduation rate (students receiving diplomas in June and in August) topped 70 percent for what the city Department of Education (DOE) said was the first time ever. This represented a gain of 2 percentage points.<sup>78</sup>

Looking at the four-year June graduation rate, about two-thirds -- 67 percent -- of all students who had started high school in September 2011 graduated in June four years later, a striking gain from the class that started school in 2001, only 46.5 percent of whom graduated in June four years later. The gain was more impressive for Regents diplomas, which were not widely required then. Only 30 percent of the 2001 cohort received Regents diplomas in June 2005, compared with the 64 percent of the cohort of 2011 in 2015. (The city and state did not release August graduation rates in 2005.)

The city noted that all racial groups saw their graduation rates improve, with the graduation rate for Hispanics rising by 2.5 points and for Blacks by 2.4 points. Despite that, Hispanics and Black students remained less likely to graduate than White and Asian students, with a rate of 64 percent for Hispanics and 65 percent for Blacks, compared with 85 percent for Asians and 82 percent for Whites. Other groups saw even lower rates. Only 41 percent of English language learners graduated within four years although the six-year graduation for this group was considerably higher at 51 percent. For students with disabilities, the four-year graduation rate was 41 percent.<sup>79</sup>

The city also pointed to gains in the two college readiness standards used in New York: the Aspirational Performance Measures (APM), which requires that a student have earned a score of at least 75 on their English Regents and 80 on their math, and the College Readiness Index (RI), which allows for a number of English and math measures, including the Regents, the SAT, ACT, a City University of New York (CUNY) assessment test or a performance based assessment, where students might have to submit portfolios of their work or demonstrate proficiency with a certain task. The percentage of students who graduated on time and demonstrated college readiness was 42.6 percent using the APM standard and 49.1 percent using the CRI, gains of 3.2 and 1.8 percentage points respectively. Meeting the standard is generally seen as indicating that a student is ready to do work at CUNY without needing any remedial classes.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces Graduation Rate Over 70 Percent for Class of 2015," (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Fari%C3%B1a+Announces+Graduation+Rate+Over+70+Percent+for+Class+of+2015.htm>)

<sup>79</sup> Graduation rates from the New York City Department of Education: [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/B871C8F2-0812-4B34-A5BA-BA67378B875C/0/2015Graduation\\_Rates\\_Public\\_Citywide.xlsx](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/B871C8F2-0812-4B34-A5BA-BA67378B875C/0/2015Graduation_Rates_Public_Citywide.xlsx)

<sup>80</sup> New York City Office of the Mayor, "With Graduation Rates Rising, Mayor de Blasio Congratulates Students and Educators," Jan. 14, 2016 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/052-16/with-graduation-rates-rising-mayor-de-blasio-congratulates-students-educators#/0>).

Slightly more than half of city high school graduates go on to further education, according to DOE statistics for the class of 2014, the most recent available. This includes a two or four-year college or a vocational or public service program.<sup>81</sup>

### **Changes in Graduation Requirements**

While most students qualify for high school graduation in New York by taking the five basic Regents exams (English Language Arts, a math, a science, U.S. history and global history), the Board of Regents has been adding alternative criteria for some students. In 2015, it gave students the option to graduate by passing four required Regents and to show proficiency in another area, such as art.

In 2016, the board established the Career Development and Occupations Studies credential, which enables students to demonstrate that they are ready for employment in lieu of one of the Regents. This would require them to have a career plan and to take career and technical education courses or to have a job experience. The move is part of an effort by the board to allow more students, particularly English language learners and students with disabilities, to graduate while maintaining standards. Some board members, though, questioned whether the new credential would be sufficiently rigorous.<sup>82</sup>

In an effort to help more students with disabilities graduate, the Board of Regents also granted more leeway in completing the requirements for a diploma. Rules approved by the board in June will allow students with Individualized Educational Programs to graduate from high school by passing only two Regents exams -- English and math -- with a score of 55 or above. If they do not pass one or more of the other three required tests, they could demonstrate their mastery of that subject to their local superintendent in other ways, such as the schoolwork they did during the course.<sup>83</sup>

The students would not receive the standard Regents diploma but a so-called local diploma that is accepted by the military and some colleges and employers. The measure went into effect for the class for 2016, although questions remained about how it would actually work. It is estimated the measure could affect 1,300 to 2,000 students statewide this year.<sup>84</sup> While state education commissioner Mary Ellen Elia said the new requirements would ensure that standard remain high, critics worried that it could undermine efforts to provide a rigorous education to all

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<sup>81</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Releases Redesigned School Quality Reports, Announces More Students Enrolling in College," Nov. 10, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Releases+Redesigned+School+Quality+Reports.htm>)

<sup>82</sup> Monica Disare, "Regents Approve New Path to Graduation Using a Skills Certificate," *Chalkbeat New York*, March 21, 2016.

<sup>83</sup> Monica Disare, "It's Official: New York is Making it Easier for Students with Disabilities to Graduate This Year," *Chalkbeat New York*, June 13, 2016.

<sup>84</sup> Kate Taylor, "Fewer Hurdles to Graduation for Disabled Students in New York," *New York Times*, June 13, 2016.

## **Credit Recovery**

Allegations of a cheating scandal at John Dewey High School in Brooklyn renewed concerns about so-called credit recovery offerings, aimed at letting students complete or even make up classes without taking an entire course. Such classes may be taught partly online or use worksheets or projects.

Dewey was on the brink of being shut down in 2012 when Kathleen Elvin was brought in as principal. During her tenure, graduation rates increased by 13 percentage points. In April, the city's Office of Special Investigations issued a report finding that, during the 2013-14 school year, some Dewey students received credit for classes in which they received no instruction. According to the report, Ms. Elvin did not follow DOE protocols for credit recovery and "no instruction was provided" during such courses at Dewey. Teachers charged that they were pressured to assess students who either failed a class or did not take it. If they refused, administrators reportedly changed the grades.<sup>85</sup> In response to the report, Chancellor Fariña fired Ms. Elvin.

In April, though, an arbitrator dismissed all charges against Ms. Elvin, called for her immediate reinstatement at Dewey and directed the department to pay her any wages she had lost as a result of her firing. The decision came after an audit found that the credit recovery program had met department guidelines and that students were entitled to the credits they had received.<sup>86</sup>

In August 2015, partly in response to the possible Dewey scandal, Dr. Fariña announced the creation of a Regulatory Task Force on Academic Policy to provide oversight on whether schools are adhering to DOE guidelines on awarding credits, including the use of credit recovery. Staff at the borough support centers is also to be on the lookout for any improprieties and report them to the special commissioner of investigations. The chancellor said she would have "zero tolerance" for schools not adhering to academic policies.<sup>87</sup>

Some experts believe that, when it is done right, credit recovery can play a useful role, letting students work at their own pace and allowing teachers to individualize courses. However, even before the chancellor's announcement, the use of credit recovery had declined dramatically. According to figures compiled by the Independent Budget Office, in 2010-11, credit recovery accounted for 2.6 percent of all high school credit attempts (not necessarily credits awarded), with 14.5 percent of all city high school students having attempted to earn at least one credit through credit recovery. By 2013-14, credit recovery accounted for a mere 0.3 percent of all credit attempts, with only 3.7 percent of students having tried to get credits through credit

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<sup>85</sup> Geoff Decker, "Principal Tapped by Bloomberg to Turn Around John Dewey HS Yanked After Probe," *Chalkbeat New York*, July 8, 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Kate Taylor, "Brooklyn Principal Removed from Post is Cleared of Charges," *New York Times*, April 13, 2016.

<sup>87</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces Tough Reforms to Hold Schools Accountable and Ensure Compliance with Academic Rules," Aug. 4, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Fari%C3%B1a+Announces+Tough+Reforms+to+Hold+Schools+Accountable+and+Ensure+Compliance+with+Aca.htm>).

recovery.<sup>88</sup> The decline came after the Bloomberg administration tightened the rules for credit recovery following an audit that found it was being used inappropriately at some schools.<sup>89</sup>

The CCHS has expressed its concern about abuses in the credit recovery program and in August 2015 unanimously passed a resolution requesting that the credit recovery program be suspended immediately.

### **The Great Restructuring (Continued)**

After becoming schools chancellor in January 2014, Dr. Fariña began reorganizing the Department of Education to return more authority to district and high school superintendents and to create a structure that reflected her educational priorities. Under her reorganization, the district superintendents, including 10 regional high school superintendents, hire principals and are responsible for ensuring that schools under their supervision comply with city guidelines.

In January 2015, Chancellor Fariña announced she would create seven field support centers -- two each in Brooklyn and Queens and one in each of the other three boroughs -- to help schools with a wide range of operational and instructional issues, including safety, technology, after-school programs and student behavior. There also are two citywide support centers: one for District 75, which has program for students with severe disabilities, and one for Affinity schools (see page 35). The support office would replace the Children First Networks created by former Chancellor Joel Klein in 2010. While principals can select which network to join, they are assigned a borough support center on the basis of geography.

Under this structure, superintendents will refer principals to the support centers for help. The chancellor thinks the new system will create more uniformity across the New York City schools. "One of the things I was hoping the reorganization would do is that you don't go into a school in one part of the city and a school in a different part of the city and see a very different focus. You need to have more consistency. You need to have more kids all on the same page," she told *Chalkbeat* in July.<sup>90</sup>

When she announced the plan in January, Dr. Farina said principals would retain the autonomy they had acquired during the Bloomberg administration. In January 2016, though, the head of the principals union, Ernest Logan, complained that principals in struggling schools were being micromanaged, and that throughout the system principals were subject to investigation and other interference<sup>91</sup> (for more, see schools page 10).

The support centers opened in July 2015. The department announced that each one would have a director and six deputy directors responsible for teaching and learning, finance and human resources, operations, student services, special education, and English Language Learners. In

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<sup>88</sup> New York City Independent Budget Office, *New York City Public School Indicators: Demographics, Resources Outcomes*, October 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Beth Fertig, "John Dewey High School Principal Fired for Grade-Fixing Schemes," *Schoolbook*, July 28, 2015.

<sup>90</sup> Patrick Wall, "New School-Support Centers Will Help Create Consistency Across Schools, Fariña Says," *Chalkbeat New York*, July 7, 2015.

<sup>91</sup> Kate Taylor, "Principals' Union Says Mayor de Blasio Has Lost Focus on Students," *New York Times*, Jan. 10, 2016

total, the centers have about 700 staff members, with 50 to 150 employees at each one. The directors are:

**Bronx:** Jose Ruiz (Districts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12)

**Brooklyn:**

Bernadette Fitzgerald (Districts 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 23 and 32)

Cheryl Watson-Harris (Districts 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22)

**Manhattan:** Yuet Chu (Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6)

**Queens:**

Lawrence Pendergast (Districts 24, 25, 26 and 30)

Marlene Wilks (Districts 27, 28 and 29)

**Staten Island:** Kevin Moran (District 31)

**Affinity:** Norberto Perez (citywide)

**District 75:** Joan Boreland (citywide)<sup>92</sup>

### **Learning Partners Program**

In July Chancellor Fariña announced an expansion of what she has said she sees as one of her signature achievements: the Learning Partners Program. Launched in the summer of 2014, the effort aims to spur cooperation between schools by grouping a school that has a particular strength with two or three other schools that want to improve in that area. In 2015, Dr. Fariña added new schools to the Learning Partners program and also started Learning Partners Plus in which 10 host schools would partner with five to seven schools to collaborate on trying to improve in a specific area. The program focuses on 16 different issues, such as creating a positive school culture and interventions for struggling students. According to the department, in 2015-16, 142 schools were participating in Learning Partners or Learning Partners Plus.

Two groups of high schools are in Learning Partners Plus. The teams involving high schools are below (host schools in bold). One is in the Bronx and one in Brooklyn.

#### **Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics (District 9)**

- Belmont Preparatory High School (District 9)
- Bronx Leadership Academy High School (District 9)
- Bronxdale High School (District 11)
- Bronx High School for Law and Community Service (District 10)
- Pelham Preparatory Academy (District 11)
- Theater Arts Production Company (District 10)

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<sup>92</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Announces Opening of New Borough Field Support Centers," July 7, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Announces+Opening+of+New+Borough+Field+Support+Centers.htm>).

**East Brooklyn Community High School** (District 18)

- Brooklyn Bridge Academy (District 18)
- Brooklyn Democracy Academy (District 23)
- Brooklyn Frontiers High School (District 15)
- Green School: An Academy for Environmental Careers (District 14)
- High School for Excellence and Innovation (District 22)<sup>93</sup>

The triads for the regular learning partners program that include high schools are (host schools are in bold):

**Academy for Careers in Television and Film** (Queens, District 30)

- Academy for Software Engineering (Manhattan, District 2)
- Hunters Point Community Middle School (Queens, District 30)

**Academy for Young Writers** (Brooklyn, District 19)

- Landmark High School (Manhattan, District 2)
- Origins High School (Brooklyn, District 22)

**Civic Leadership Academy** (Queens, District 24)

- Queens High School for Language Studies (Queens, District 25)

**Flushing International High School** (Queens, District 25)

- Brooklyn International High School (Brooklyn, District 13)
- International High School at Lafayette (Brooklyn, District 21)

**High School of Fashion Industries** (Manhattan, District 2)

- George Westinghouse Career and Technical Education High School (Brooklyn, District 13)
- The Urban Assembly School for Global Commerce (Manhattan, District 5)

**Lyons Community School** (Brooklyn, District 14)

- Business Of Sports School (Manhattan, District 2)
- Fort Hamilton High School (Brooklyn, District 20)

**Marble Hill High School for International Studies** (Bronx, District 10)

- Bronx Haven High School Bronx District 7)
- Frederick Douglass Academy III Secondary School (Bronx, District 9)

**Mott Haven Community High School** (Bronx, District 7)

- Bronx Bridge High School (Bronx, District 8)
- Bronx School of Law and Finance (Bronx, District 10)

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<sup>93</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces New Learning Partners Plus Program," July 16, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Fari%C3%B1a+Announces+New+Learning+Partners+Plus+Program.htm>).

**PS/ IS 266** (Queens, District 26)

- Albert Shanker School for Visual and Performing Arts (Queens, District 30)
- Bushwick School for Social Justice (Brooklyn, District 32)

**Renaissance High School for Musical Theater & Technology** (Bronx, District 8)

- Bronx River High School (Bronx, District 8)
- Pelham Lab High School (Bronx, District 8)
- Westchester Square Academy (Bronx, District 8)

**Williamsburg Preparatory School** (Brooklyn, District 14)

- Brooklyn High School for Law and Technology (Brooklyn, District 16)
- City Polytechnic High School of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology (Brooklyn, District 13)<sup>94</sup>

**Affinity Schools**

Several organizations outside DOE have worked with schools in the city. These organizations have a particular area of expertise, and the schools they work with have a similar educational approach. In recognition of this DOE has created what it calls Affinity groups where schools partner with one of these organizations, which then provide the school with a variety of support services. In some cases, the organization has created the school. The city also has a support center and superintendent for all the Affinity schools.

These are the organizations and the schools that partner with them:

**Community Studies, Inc. (also called The Consortium)**

**Bronx**

Arturo A. Schomburg Satellite Academy (District 12)  
Bronx Collaborative High School (District 10)  
Bronx Lab School (District 11)  
Community School for Social Justice (District 7)  
Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School (District 12)  
University Heights Secondary School (District 7)

**Brooklyn**

El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice (District 14)  
Gotham Professional Arts Academy (District 16)  
Lyons Community School (District 14)

**Manhattan**

Beacon High School (District 2)  
City as School (District 2)

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<sup>94</sup> New York City Department of Education, "2015-16 Learning Partners Program Triads" (<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/6F0AD252-1D0D-41DF-B16C-4C955899C7A3/0/LPPtriads201516new.pdf>).



East Side Community School (District 1)  
Essex Street Academy (District 1)  
Facing History School (District 2)  
Forsyth Satellite Academy (District 1)  
Harvest Collegiate High School (District 2)  
Humanities Preparatory Academy (District 2)  
Institute for Collaborative Education (District 2)  
Landmark High School (District 2)  
School of the Future (District 2)  
Urban Academy Laboratory School (District 2)  
Vanguard High School (District 2)

### **Queens**

Institute for Health Professions at Cambria Heights (District 29)  
Middle College High School at LaGuardia Community College (District 24)  
Queens Satellite High School for Opportunity (District 28)

## **City University of New York**

### **Bronx**

Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music (District 10)  
Health, Education and Research Occupations (HERO) High School (District 7)  
Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science (District 7)  
Kingsbridge International High School (District 10)

### **Brooklyn**

Academy of Hospitality and Tourism (District 17)  
Benjamin Banneker Academy (District 13)  
City Polytechnic High School of Engineering, Architecture and Technology (District 13)  
Kingsborough Early College School (District 21)  
Medgar Evers College Preparatory School (District 17)  
Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-Tech) (District 17)  
Science, Technology and Research Early College High School at Erasmus (District 17)

### **Manhattan**

City College Academy of the Arts (District 6)  
High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry (District 3)  
Inwood Early College for Health and Information Technologies (District 6)  
Manhattan Early College School for Advertising (District 2)  
Manhattan/Hunter Science High School (District 3)  
Stephen T. Mather Building and Craftsmanship High School (District 2)

### **Queens**

Business Technology Early College High School (District 26)  
Energy Tech High School (District 30)  
Maspeth High School (District 24)  
Queens High School for Language Studies (District 25)

Queens School of Inquiry (District 25)  
York Early College Academy (District 28)

### **International Network for Public Schools**

#### **Bronx**

Crotona International High School (District 10)  
English Language Learners and International Support Preparatory Academy (District 10)  
International Community High School (District 7)  
Pan American International High School at Monroe (District 12)

#### **Brooklyn**

Brooklyn International High School (District 13)  
International High School at Lafayette (District 21)  
International High School at Prospect Heights (District 17)

#### **Manhattan**

International High School at Union Square (District 2)  
Manhattan International High School (District 2)

#### **Queens**

Flushing International High School (District 25)  
International High School for Health Sciences (District 24)  
International High School at LaGuardia Community College (District 21)

### **New Visions**

#### **Bronx**

Alfred E. Smith Career and Technical Education High School (District 7)  
Astor Collegiate Academy (District 11)  
Belmont Preparatory High School (District 10)  
Bronx Academy of Health Careers (District 11)  
Bronx Arena High School (District 8)  
Bronx Engineering and Technology Academy (District 10)  
Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics (District 9)  
Bronx Community High School (District 8)  
Bronx Haven High School (District 7)  
Bronx High School for Law and Community Service (District 10)  
Bronx Latin (District 12)  
Bronx Leadership Academy II High School (District 7)  
Bronx School of Law and Finance (District 10)  
Bronx Theatre High School (District 10)  
East Bronx Academy for the Future (District 12)  
High School for Contemporary Arts (District 11)  
Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy International High School (District 10)  
Marble Hill High School for International Studies (District 10)  
Morris Academy for Collaborative Studies (District 9)  
Mott Hall Bronx High School (District 9)

West Bronx Academy for the Future (District 10)  
World View High School (District 10)  
Young Women's Leadership Academy of the Bronx (District 9)

### **Brooklyn**

Academy for Health Careers (District 17)  
Academy of Innovative Technology (District 19)  
Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (District 17)  
Brooklyn Bridge Academy (District 18)  
Brooklyn Democracy Academy (District 23)  
Brooklyn School for Math and Research (District 32)  
Brooklyn School for Math and Theater (District 17)  
East Brooklyn Community High School (District 18)  
Fort Hamilton High School (District 20)  
Frederick Douglass Academy VII High School (District 23)  
High School for Innovation in Advertising and Media (District 18)  
High School for Public Service: Heroes of Tomorrow (District 17)  
High School for Service and Learning at Erasmus (District 17)  
High School of Telecommunications Art and Technology (District 20)  
High School for Youth and Community Development at Erasmus (District 17)  
Khalil Gibran International Academy (District 15)  
Olympus Academy (District 18)  
World Academy for Total Community Health High School (District 19)  
Young Women's Leadership School of Brooklyn (District 14)

### **Manhattan**

Academy for Software Engineering (District 2)  
Bread and Roses Integrated Arts High School (District 5)  
Business of Sports School (District 2)  
Central Park East High School (District 4)  
Community Health Academy of the Heights (District 6)  
Frank McCourt High School (District 3)  
Frederick Douglass Academy II Secondary School (District 3)  
Heritage School (District 4)  
Innovation Diploma Plus High School (District 3)  
Manhattan Bridges High School (District 2)  
Millennium High School (District 2)  
New Design High School (District 2)  
Quest to Learn (District 2)  
Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change (District 5)  
Young Women's Leadership School (District 4)

### **Queens**

Academy for Careers in Television and Film (District 30)  
Bayside High School (District 26)  
Cambria Heights Academy (District 29)

Civil Leadership Academy (District 24)  
East-West School of International Studies (District 25)  
High School for Community Leadership (District 28)  
North Queens Community High School (District 25)  
Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology (District 27)  
Robert F. Wagner Secondary School for Arts and Technology (District 24)  
Young Women's Leadership School, Queens (District 28)

**Staten Island**

New Dorp High School (District 31)

**Outward Bound**

**Brooklyn**

Brooklyn Secondary School for Collaborative Studies (District 15)  
Expeditionary Learning School for Community Leaders (District 21)  
Kurt Hahn Expeditionary Learning School (District 18)

**Manhattan**

James Baldwin School: A School for Expeditionary Learning (District 2)  
Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School (District 6)

**Queens**

Channel View School for Research (District 27)  
Gaynor McCown Expeditionary Learning School (District 31)  
Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School (District 28)

**Urban Assembly**

**Bronx**

Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice (District 9)  
Urban Assembly Bronx Academy of Letters (District 7)  
Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science (District 7)  
Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation (District 12)

**Brooklyn**

Urban Assembly Institute of Math and Science for Young Women (District 13)  
Urban Assembly School for Collaborative Health Care (District 19)  
Urban Assembly School for Criminal Justice (District 20)  
Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice (District 13)  
Urban Assembly Unison School (District 13)

**Manhattan**

Urban Assembly Academy of Government and Law (District 2)  
Urban Assembly Gateway School for Technology (District 2)  
Urban Assembly Maker Academy (District 2)  
Urban Assembly New York Harbor School (District 2)  
Urban Assembly Institute for New Technologies (District 5)

Urban Assembly School of Business for Young Women (District 2)  
Urban Assembly School of Design and Construction (District 2)  
Urban Assembly School for Emergency Management (District 2)  
Urban Assembly School for Global Commerce (District 5)  
Urban Assembly School for Green Careers (District 3)  
Urban Assembly School for Media Studies (District 3)  
Urban Assembly School for the Performing Arts (District 5)

### **School Quality Reports**

In 2014, DOE replaced the school Progress Report -- the so-called report card developed by the Bloomberg administration, which gave letter grades to every school -- with the School Quality Snapshot and the School Quality Guide. The snapshot is intended for parents and members of the general public; the more detailed guide is aimed more at educators.

The guides for the 2014-15 school year, released in fall 2015, reflect further changes. In particular they try to provide users with a picture of a school's strengths and weaknesses. The school is assessed on criteria aligned to DOE's Framework for Great Schools, indicating how a school performs in such areas as rigorous instruction and family-community ties.

### **School Discipline**

Following the implementation of a new and less harsh discipline code in April 2015, Mayor de Blasio in November unveiled a "roadmap" aimed at easing what he described as "overly punitive" discipline policies while still ensuring that schools are safe. The changes are partly in response to charges that the old discipline policies, which relied heavily on suspending students, disproportionately penalized Black and Latino students and students with disabilities. Many of the changes were proposed by a task force appointed by the mayor.

The new program includes:

- Expanded training for school safety agents and extra training for agents at schools with large numbers of students with disabilities;
- Efforts to better integrate safety agents into their school community;
- Requiring schools to have Crisis De-Escalation Plans to deal with "extreme misbehavior";
- Additional staffing at 20 schools to implement "restorative practices," which use methods such as peer mediation and negotiation to try to get at the causes of misbehavior, determine how the effects of the misbehavior can be addressed and prevent it in the future;
- Identifying best practices to promote social and emotional learning.

The administration also said it would develop a uniform policy on metal detectors in city schools. There currently are 80 campuses that scan students and visitors before they enter the building.

In announcing the program, Mayor de Blasio said that schools had become safer in his two years as mayor. He cited a 29 percent drop in crime in city schools and said more students now feel safe in school than in 2014.<sup>95</sup>

Not everyone agrees. Teachers have complained that school staff has not received training about how to use the less punitive approach to discipline and charge that principals are afraid to suspend students. In a poll taken in January, 62 percent of teachers union school leaders said their schools did not have enough staff to provide services to disruptive students.<sup>96</sup>

Families for Excellent Schools, a pro charter school group that has frequently clashed with the mayor, issued a report charging that violence in city public schools is on the increase. Specifically, it cited the state's School Violence Index, which found a 23 percent increase in violent incidents in city schools from 2013-14 to 2014-15, the mayor's first full school year in office. The city, however, has said crime in schools decreased by 29 percent between 2011 and 2015. The Families for Excellent Schools report said the state's figures differed from the city statistics and said the de Blasio administration was trying to mislead the public.<sup>97</sup> The city and state have long had different methods for compiling a metric for violence in the schools. The city says that its data is more accurate because the state data does not distinguish between serious incidents and minor infractions.<sup>98</sup> In April Families for Excellent Schools and 11 students and parents filed a class action lawsuit against the city, charging that violence in schools was increasing and disproportionately affected specific groups of students, such as those who are Black, Latino, gay or transgender.<sup>99</sup> Later in the spring, Families for Excellent Schools filed a second lawsuit on the issue.<sup>100</sup>

Whether or not violence is up, suspensions are definitely down, continuing the trend of the last several years. The number of suspensions fell by about 9,000, or 17 percent, from 2013-14 to 2014-15, according to DOE statistics. Suspensions peaked at 73,943 in 2008-09 and were down to 44,626 in 2014-15. Arrests by school security officers declined by 27 percent and the number of summonses by 15 percent. Black students and students with disabilities, though, still bear the brunt of the suspensions. Blacks account for 28 percent of all public school students but 52 percent of suspensions, and students with disabilities, who represent 18 percent of city students, got 38 percent of suspensions.<sup>101</sup> The number of suspensions varies widely from school to school, with 10 schools -- out of some 1,700 -- accounting for 41 percent of all suspensions. In March, DOE released preliminary figures for this school year. It found that there were 23,028

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<sup>95</sup> New York City Office of the Mayor, "Mayor de Blasio Announces Roadmap to Reduce Punitive School Discipline and Make Schools Safer," Nov. 2, 2015 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/779-15/mayor-de-blasio-roadmap-reduce-punitive-school-discipline-make-schools-safer>).

<sup>96</sup> Lisa Colangelo and Ben Chapman, "Overhaul of New York City's Suspension Policies Under Fire," *New York Daily News*, April 25, 2016.

<sup>97</sup> Families for Excellent Schools, *Safety Last: New York City's Public Schools Are More Dangerous Than Ever*, February 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Monica Disare and Patrick Wall, "As de Blasio Pushes Fewer Suspensions, Advocacy Group Attacks School Safety Record," *Chalkbeat New York*, Feb. 18, 2016.

<sup>99</sup> Elizabeth A. Harris, New York Education Department is Sued Over Violence in Schools, *New York Times*, April 7, 2016.

<sup>100</sup> Eliza Shapiro, "New York Charter Wars Enter a School Safety Phase," *Politico New York*, May 31, 2016.

<sup>101</sup> Patrick Wall, "School Suspensions Fall Sharply, But Continue to Land Most Heavily on Black Students," *Chalkbeat New York*, Oct. 30, 2015.

suspensions for the first 113 days of the 2015-16 school year, a 22.5 percent decline from the same period in 2014-15.<sup>102</sup>

### **Arts Education**

In an effort to expand and improve arts education in city schools, DOE says it has increased yearly spending on the arts by \$23 million. This includes money for Arts Matter, a program that added a new full-time arts teacher in 113 middle and high schools in 2014-15 and 2015-16. This included 10 new high school teachers, providing instruction in 19 high schools. Almost all -- 98 percent -- of high schools now offer at least one arts discipline and 36 percent offer at least three. Visual arts is the most common field, offered at 74 percent of high schools, followed by music at 46 percent, theater at 26 and dance at 21.<sup>103</sup>

### **Expanding SING**

In 2015-16 more city high school students had an opportunity to work on a musical play than ever before. The city expanded the popular SING musical program that began at Midwood High School in 1947 and gives high school students the opportunity to write and perform an original musical. The city added 10 schools to the program, including four co-located schools that will work to involve other schools on their campuses in SING. The expansion for 2015-16 cost about \$122,000 and was funded partly by a contribution from pop star Taylor Swift.

The schools added this year are (the co-located schools are marked with an asterisk):

#### **Bronx**

- Celia Cruz High School of Music (District 10)\*

#### **Brooklyn**

- Park Slope Collegiate (District 15)\*
- W.H. Maxwell Career and Technical Education High School (District 19)

#### **Manhattan**

- Frederick Douglass Academy (District 5)
- High School of Fashion Industries (District 2)

#### **Queens**

- Bayside High School (District 26)
- Flushing High School (District 25)\*
- John Bowne High School (District 25)

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<sup>102</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Local Law 93 of 2015 -- Biannual Report" ([schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/6FE1AFA7-97FF-4491-9081-DB799789C800/0/March2016LL93BiannualReport33116v2final.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/6FE1AFA7-97FF-4491-9081-DB799789C800/0/March2016LL93BiannualReport33116v2final.pdf)).

<sup>103</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Highlights Commitment to Arts Education: Announces Highest Number of Arts Teachers in a Decade and 22,000 Students Receiving New Arts Instruction at 113 Middle and High Schools," Dec. 16, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Arts+Matters.htm>).

- Martin Van Buren High School (District 26)\*
- Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical High School (District 28)<sup>104</sup>

### **Summer in the City**

This summer high school students who attend Renewal schools -- schools the city has identified as struggling (see page 10) -- will be able to attend special summer programs designed to prepare them for college. Programs include a writing workshop and some college-level classes offered through CUNY's College Now program. Students must be on track to graduate and have to apply to the program. Admission is determined by lottery.

This initiative is part of a broader Summer in the City program announced by the chancellor in March. It also will include STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) enrichment for 9th and 10th graders and visits to cultural institutions. To be admitted to this program, students must have an attendance record of at least 90 percent and not have to attend summer school to make up missed work. Students must apply but admission is determined by lottery.<sup>105</sup>

### **Special Education**

When applying to high school, student with disabilities, meaning those who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) are supposed to be able to apply to any high school and be considered for admission without their disability being taken into account. To accommodate these students, many schools offer team teaching classes with a mix of general population and special needs students and self-contained classes.

The city's selective high schools, though, had proved most resistant to this policy. To address that, DOE in 2012 began setting aside a certain number of seats at these schools for students with disabilities. While change has been slow, the effort appears to be having an effect. A study by education consultant David Rubel found that the number of students with IEPs at 25 top city public high schools has increased to 1,059 since 2012 -- a rise of 96 percent. Despite this, less than 4 percent of students at these schools have IEPs, compared to 17 percent of all city high school students. Further, some critics say the special education students at the top schools tend to be less severely disabled.

There are significant disparities between the schools. Rubel found the NYC Lab School for Collaborative Studies had the highest percentage of special education students among the selective schools, with more than 16 percent. Townsend Harris High School, on the other hand, tripled the number of students with special needs -- but despite that, these students account for

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<sup>104</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces Expansion of SING Program to 10 New High Schools," Dec. 1, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Farina+Announces+Expansion+of+SING+Program+to+10+New+High+School+Campuses.htm>).

<sup>105</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Summer in the City: A New Approach to Summer Learning" (<http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/SpecialPrograms/SummerSchool/default.htm>).



less than 2 percent of the student body. Numbers were almost as low at 12 other schools. Queens Science High School at York College had no students with an IEP.<sup>106</sup>

In his analysis Rubel also found that the number of students in team teaching classes at these school had increased sharply.

### **English Language Learners**

As part of her effort to expand dual language programs, Chancellor Fariña designated 15 schools that already offer this approach as model dual language programs. The schools will receive money for materials and staff will get additional training. Other staff will visit these schools to sample best practices.

Dual language programs include a mix of students proficient in English and those proficient in the other language. The students learn the language they are not proficient in and take academic subjects in both languages, with the goal of every students becoming bilingual.

The high schools that were designated model programs and the language they provide are:

#### **Bronx**

- High School of World Cultures -- Spanish (District 12)

#### **Manhattan**

- High School for Dual Language and Asian Studies -- Chinese (District 2)
- Manhattan Bridge High School -- Spanish (District 2)<sup>107</sup>

### **Students in Temporary Housing**

Some 84,000 children -- or about 8 percent of all New York City public school students -- were in temporary housing at some point during the 2013-14 school year. As defined by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, this means most were either in the city's shelter system or that their family was doubled up in the home of family or friends. The number represents a 25 percent increase from 2010-11 when about 67,000 students were in temporary housing. The largest group -- 48,773 was doubled up with another family or friends, with 28,497 students in the city's shelter system, 6,001 "unsheltered," and 896 classified as "other."

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<sup>106</sup> David Rubel, "Discussion Paper: Can We Hope to See the Next Richard Branson, David Boies, Whoopi Goldberg, Charles Schwab, Steven Spielberg and Wendy Wasserstein in New York City's Top Public High Schools: April 2016 Update" (<http://www.davidrubelconsultant.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/April-2016-Discussion-Paper-Update-1.pdf>).

<sup>107</sup> New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Names 15 Schools Model Dual Language Programs," Dec. 3, 2015 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2015-2016/Chancellor+Farina+Names+15+Schools+Model+Dual+Language+Programs.htm>).

Although the majority of homeless students are in elementary school, almost 18,000 students in grades 9 through 12 were homeless at some point in 2013-14. Students in temporary housing drop out of high school at more than double the rate of students in more stable housing, with one in five homeless students scheduled to graduate in 2013-14 having dropped out. They also are less likely to graduate. For the class of 2014, the graduation rate among homeless students was 47.9 percent, compared to 68.4 for the class as a whole. Outcomes varied widely among districts. The graduation rate for students in temporary housing was highest in District 4 (East Harlem), where 66 percent of them graduated. In District 23 (Brownsville), though, only 14.9 percent of homeless students graduated. "On all educational indicators, homeless students achieved worse outcomes than housed students," a report by the Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness found.<sup>108</sup>

### **Mental Health Issues**

Many New York City students grapple with mental health issues. According to a city report, 73,000 New York public high school students say they feel sad or hopeless every month, which can be a sign of depression. Eight percent of public high school students say they have attempted suicide. That number doubles for students who have been bullied and for gay and lesbian teens.<sup>109</sup>

The de Blasio administration has set a goal of improving mental health in the city. In an effort to help students in need of mental health services, the city will spend \$7 million to create mental health clinics in its Renewal schools. One focus of the community schools program (see page 17) is offering counseling services to students and their families. To provide further help, Chancellor Fariña has lifted a freeze on hiring guidance counselors, and DOE says it has also increased the number of social workers in schools.<sup>110</sup>

The administration has created Thrive NYC, a mental health program. It includes the hiring of 100 school mental health consultants, social workers and counselors who will work with all city schools to help them place students with acute needs in mental health care. Beginning in 2017, the city will assess the needs for mental health services at 52 of the schools it considers high need. Selected middle and high school staff will be taught Youth Mental Health First Aid, aimed at assessing, identifying and helping youth in crisis. School staff will get training in a suicide prevention model, and all full-time school employees will be able to take an on-line training on how to recognize psychological distress and connect students with help to address it.<sup>111</sup> The administration also sees its effort to improve school climate and reduce punitive discipline and police actions in schools (see page 40) as having the potential to have a significant impact on student mental health.

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<sup>108</sup> Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness, *The Atlas of Student Homelessness in New York City*, August 2015.

<sup>109</sup> New York City Office of the Mayor, "Report: Understanding New York City's Mental Health Challenge," Nov. 12, 2015.

<sup>110</sup> Monica Disare, "As de Blasio Tries to Tackle Mental Illness, Students' Mental Health is a Priority," *Chalkbeat New York*, Nov. 12, 2015.

<sup>111</sup> New York City Office of the Mayor, *Thrive NYC: A Roadmap for Mental Health for All*, Nov. 23, 2016.