



Citywide Council On High Schools Annual Report 2016-2017

Michelle Gebrail

President

Queens Representative

Neyda Franco

1st Vice President

Citywide Council on Special Education Appointee

Mona-Lisa Chandler

2nd Vice President

Queens Representative

Lisa Lewis

Recording Secretary

Public Advocate Appointee

Monica Bajraktarevic

Treasurer

Manhattan Representative

Members:

Mohammad Akram

Brooklyn Representative

Marianne Russo

Brooklyn Representative

Constance Asiedu

Bronx Representative

Cynthia Robinson

Bronx Representative

Zoe G. Foundotos

Manhattan Representative

Michael Kraft

Manhattan Representative

Robin Allen

Staten Island Representative

Vacant

Staten Island Representative

Ulan Kuchukov

Citywide Council on Education Language Learner Appointee



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



CCHS Staten Island Representative Robin S. Allen

The Citywide Council on High Schools is deeply saddened by the passing of our council member, Ms. Robin S. Allen.

The council was honored to have Robin as a Staten Island representative from July 2015 to June 2017.

A loving Mother and dedicated Parent Leader, she worked tirelessly to remove all road blocks to student achievement.

A tenacious fighter for Students and Parents rights, and exemplary council member determined to ensure that Students should have the best experience in high school in order to be fully prepared for college and career.

She will be in our hearts, a bright light always shining.

This report is dedicated to her memory.

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 the 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.

Table of Contents

Structure and Powers of the CCHS

Introduction	1
Equity and Excellence	2
Computer Science for All	2
Algebra for All	3
AP for All	3
College Access for All	3
Single Shepherd	4
PROSE Schools	5
SAT and Advanced Placement Results	8
Graduation	9
After High School	10
School Climate and Discipline	10
Admissions	12
Specialized High Schools	15
Diversity	17
Renewal Schools	18
Community Schools	21
English Language Learners	25
Career and Technical Education	26
Special Education	27
Transfer Schools	27
Students in Temporary Housing	28
Restroom Policies	29

INTRODUCTION

This report of the New York Citywide Council on High Schools covers the 2016-17 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, 2016-17 was a quiet year in New York City education. Neither Mayor Bill de Blasio nor Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña introduced any major initiatives aimed at high schools. Instead the Department of Education focused on implementing the Equity and Excellence Initiative announced in 2015. This included working to increase college and career readiness. The administration also announced a significant expansion of its Community School Program, added more programs for English language learners and sought to make the high school admission process more user friendly. 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.

As of the 2016-17 school year, New York City had more than 400 high schools offering some 700 programs.¹ 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. 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 The American Sign Language and English Secondary School in Manhattan. 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 or the International Baccalaureate, 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.

Of students who entered high school in 2012, 70 percent graduated in June four years later, the highest ever rate for New York City, according to the Department of Education.² This continued a steady increase since 2005 when 47 percent of students graduated "on time." Only 51 percent of the graduates--and 37 percent of all students who began high school in 2012--left high school ready for college.³

¹ New York City Department of Education, *2017 New York City High School Directory* (<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/00F2DEB3-4F50-4747-A14E-E53295E078DC/0/2017NYCHSDirectoryCitywideENGLISH.pdf>).

² New York City Department of Education, *New York City Graduation Rates Class of 2016 (2012 Cohort)*. <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/04A151BF-F9E4-4960-8881-E1B07AA57DF8/208343/2016GraduationRatesWeb21017.pdf>

³ *Ibid*

Just as New York City traditional high schools are a diverse group, so are the approximately 328,000⁴ young people who attend them. During the 2014-15 school year, the most recent year for which statistics are available from the New York City Independent Budget Office, about 40 percent of students in city high schools were Hispanic, 29 percent Black, 16 percent Asian and 13 percent White (The remaining students were classified as American Indian, Mixed Race or unknown.) Around 12 percent – or slightly more than 40,000, were English language learners. Almost 18 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, or almost 6 percent, were in temporary housing, including the city shelter system, at some point during the year. Approximately 31 percent were considered over age for the grade they were in.

About 13,799 New York City teenagers attend publicly funded, privately run charter schools, accounting for about 4 percent of students in traditional public and charter schools. This is a lower percentage than for students in lower grades, at least partly because many charter networks started by accepting elementary school students and only recently added middle and high schools.⁵

EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

The 2016-17 school year marked the first full school year for the Equity and Excellence Initiative announced by Mayor de Blasio in September 2015. The plan, eventually expected to cost \$186 million year, includes a number of programs that together are designed to boost the graduation rate to 80 percent and ensure that two thirds of all graduates are college ready by 2026, the mayor said when he announced it.⁶

While the initiative is aimed at students at all grade levels, several of the programs are particularly relevant to high school students: Computer Science for All; Algebra for All, which is intended to ensure that students take more advanced math courses in high school; AP for All; College Access for All; and Single Shepherd.

Computer Science for All: By 2025, every New York City public school student is supposed to receive some computer science training in elementary, middle and high school.⁷ The city started offering some new computer science classes in September 2016, with at least 232 schools at all levels and in all five boroughs giving some computer science classes. For example, 34 high

⁴ New York City Department of Education, "Demographic Snapshot 2011-12 to 2015-16" (http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/20056B95-8351-4E45-B8A1-9901B4B6A93B/0/DemographicSnapshot201112to201516Public_FINAL.xlsx).

⁵ New York City Independent Budget Office, *New York City Public School Indicators: Comparing Characteristics of Traditional Public School & Charter School Students*, November 2016 (<http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/a-snapshot-of-student-demographics-2016.html>).

⁶ 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>).

⁷ New York City Office of the Mayor, "Mayor and Chancellor Kick Off First Day of School with New Equity and Excellence for All Initiative Reaching Over 800 Schools," Sept. 8, 2016 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/716-16/mayor-chancellor-kick-off-first-day-school-new-equity-excellence-all#0>)

schools were on track to offer AP Computer Science Principles and 22 middle and high schools would offer a multi-year Software Engineering Program. Expansion of the program poses an array of challenges, including training for teachers and improving equipment and internet access at many school buildings.⁸

The city hopes to raise \$40 million in private funding for the initiative, largely to train teachers. It hopes the effort will help bring more girls, Latinos and African-Americans into the technology industry and enable graduates of the New York City school system to fill some of the estimated 200,00 technology jobs that will be created in New York City in the next decade.⁹

Algebra for All: The main impact of this program in 2016-17 was in the elementary grades as the city placed specialized 5th grade math teachers in 67 schools. By 2017-18, middle schools in the program must give all 8th graders the opportunity to take algebra, and 9th graders taking algebra will get at least five hours a week of algebra instruction. In addition, all incoming 9th graders who have not completed Algebra 1 will have a chance to complete the class in one year, rather than the two-year sequence some schools offer.¹⁰

AP for All: After years when some high schools offered a wide selection of Advanced Placement (AP) classes and 140 offered none, this effort seeks to provide students at all high schools with access to at least 5 AP offerings by fall 2021. According to the administration, in 2016-17, 63 high schools offered new AP classes, including 31 that had not given any in 2015-16.¹¹ Another 115 AP classes will be offered in fall 2017. Of these, 32 will be at schools that previously offered none of the challenging classes.¹²

College Access for All: This initiative is two-pronged program: one aimed at middle school and one at high school. At the high school level, the idea is to provide resources and other support so that all students graduate with their own college and career plan.

The high school program has a number of components. One hundred schools throughout the city have received additional funding, training and support from a DOE college planning coach. The goal is for every school to create what the administration calls a “school-wide college and career culture.”¹³ January 2017 was the DOE’s first College and Career Month, with students at 250 high schools participating in career events and activities. Students at all high schools have

⁸ Alex Zimmerman, “Over 200 Schools Will Help City Kick Off ‘Computer Science for All’ Next School Year,” *Chalkbeat*, June 1, 2016.

⁹ New York City Office of the Mayor, “\$20 Million in Private Donations Raised for Mayor de Blasio’s Computer Science for All Initiative,” Sept, 22, 2016 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/763-16/-20-million-private-donations-raised-mayor-de-blasio-s-computer-science-all-initiative#/0>).

¹⁰ Alex Zimmerman, “‘Algebra for All’ Will Launch with Online Community and Added Planning Time for Some New York City Teachers,” *Chalkbeat*, May 11, 2016.

¹¹ Jeanmarie Evely, “Record Number of NYC Students Taking College-Level AP Courses, Mayor Says,” *DNAinfo*, Jan. 18, 2017.

¹² Office of the Mayor, City of New York, “Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña Announce 115 More High Schools to Offer Advanced Placement Courses Through Equity and Excellence for All,” June 8, 2017 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/399-17/mayor-de-blasio-chancellor-fari-a-115-more-high-schools-offer-new-advanced#/0>).

¹³ Diane C. Lore, “McKee High School Tapped for City’s College Access Initiative,” *silive*, June 16, 2016.

received college and career resources, and a College Access for All Team will match schools with volunteers, such as alumni and people working in various places throughout the city, who can both visit the school and arrange tours of various worksites.¹⁴

In April, for the first time ever, city high school juniors--about 70,000 students--were able to take the SAT, required for admission to many colleges, for free during the school day. The test usually costs \$45 and is given on a Saturday. The city had tested the free SAT in 2015-16, making it available in 91 schools, and concluded that providing free testing during the school week increased the number of juniors taking the test by almost 4 percent.¹⁵ The city is continuing to offer the PSAT to high school sophomores during the school day, something it has done since 2007.¹⁶ In another cost-saving measure, the city in September announced public school students from low-income families would be able to apply to the City University of New York for free.¹⁷ City officials reported that 36,336 students took advantage of the program eliminating the \$65 fee, saving families \$2,368,470. In the past, fee waivers had been available but only about 6,500 students received them.¹⁸

The city also has begun establishing “student success centers” on some high school campuses, with 12 centers serving 34 individual schools and about 17,000 students, as of May 2017. Aimed at helping students trying to go on to college, the center will offer workshops for students and their families, access to the resources and staff of a community based organization, and one-to-one meetings. Youth leaders—either college students or successful upperclassmen--in each school will work with other students.¹⁹

Single Shepherd: This program aims to provide all students in grades 6 through 12 with a school counselor or social worker who will work with them until they graduate from high school. The program began in 2016-17 in Districts 7 in the South Bronx and 23 in the Oceanhill and Brownsville sections of Brooklyn, pairing more than 100 counselors with 16,000 middle and high school students in those areas, which have some of the lowest performing schools in the city.²⁰

¹⁴ New York City Department of Education, “Chancellor Fariña Announces College Awareness Day,” Jan. 11, 2017 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/College+Awareness+Day.htm>).

¹⁵ New York City Department of Education, “Chancellor Fariña Announces NYC Results on SAT Exams,” Nov. 18, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/NYC+Results+on+SAT+Exams.htm>).

¹⁶ Christina Veiga, “New York City Offers SAT to All High School Juniors, Hoping to Clear a Path to College,” *Chalkbeat*, April 3, 2017.

¹⁷ Elizabeth A. Harris, “CUNY Application Fee to be Waived for Low-Income Students,” *New York Times*, Sept. 26, 2016.

¹⁸ Office of the Mayor, City of New York, “Mayor de Blasio Announces that Five Times More High School Seniors Applied to CUNY for Free,” June 27, 2017 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/440-17/mayor-de-blasio-that-five-times-more-high-school-seniors-applied-cuny-free#/0>).

¹⁹ Carolina Pichardo, “New Student Success Center Encourages Uptown Teens to Plan for College,” *DNAinfo*, May 2, 2017.

²⁰ New York City Office of the Mayor, “Mayor and Chancellor Kick Off First Day of School with New Equity and Excellence for All Initiative Reaching Over 800 Schools,” Sept. 8, 2016 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/716-16/mayor-chancellor-kick-off-first-day-school-new-equity-excellence-all#/0>).

PROSE SCHOOLS

In 2014, the city launched the Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence program, an initiative that would allow schools to make changes that normally would not be allowed under the city's education regulations and the teachers union contract. This might include innovative scheduling or breaking with the standard model for teacher evaluations.

The city said at the time it hopes to have 200 schools in the program²¹ and by 2016-17 had 140.²² The plans must be approved by a panel of DOE representatives, the principals and the teachers union, as well as 65 percent of the unionized staff at the school in question. Programs include scheduling changes to provide time for additional teacher training or parental involvement and earlier starting times to create opportunities for enrichment classes for students.

Following are the schools with high school grades participating in the program and the years they entered it:

Bronx

- **Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship (District 11): 2016**
- Bronx Arena High School (District 8): 2014
- Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics (District 9): 2015
- Bronx Collaborative High School (District 10): 2014
- Bronx Community High School (District 8): 2014
- Bronx Compass High School (District 8): 2014
- Bronx High School for Law and Community Service (District 10): 2014
- Bronx International High School (District 9): 2015
- Bronx Lab School (District 14): 2014
- Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice (District 9): 2015
- Claremont International High School (District 9): 2015
- Community School for Social Justice (District 7): 2014
- East Bronx Academy for the Future (District 12): 2014
- English Language Learners and International Support Preparatory Academy – ELLIS (District 10): 2014
- Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School (District 12): 2014
- International Community High School (District 7): 2015
- Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy International High School--KAPPA (District 10): 2014
- Laboratory School of Finance and Technology (District 7): 2015
- New Directions Secondary School (District 9): 2016

²¹ Jessica Glazer, "In Wake of New Union Contract, 62 Schools Approved to 'Break the Rules,'" *Chalkbeat*, July 2014.

²² New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña, UFT & CSA Announce New PROSE Schools for 2016-2017 School Year," July 13, 2016. (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/Chancellor+Farina+UFT+CSA+Announce+New+Prose+Schools+for+2016-2017+School+Year.htm>)

- Pablo Neruda Academy (District 8): 2015
- Renaissance High School for Musical Theatre and Technology (District 8): 2016
- Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science (District 9): 2015

Brooklyn

- Academy for Young Writers (District 19): 2015
- Brooklyn Democracy Academy (District 23): 2014
- Brooklyn Frontiers High School (District 15): 2015
- Brooklyn Generation (District 18): 2016
- Brooklyn International High School (District 13): 2014
- Brooklyn Latin School (District 14): 2015
- Brooklyn School of Collaborative Studies (District 15): 2014
- Cultural Academy for the Arts and Sciences (District 18): 2015
- East Brooklyn Community High School (District 18): 2014
- **El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice (District 14): 2016**
- Gotham Professional Arts Academy (District 16): 2014
- Green School--An Academy for Environmental Careers (District 14): 2015
- International High School at Lafayette (District 21): 2015
- International High School at Prospect Heights (District 17): 2014
- Kingsborough Early College Secondary School (District 21): 2015
- Kurt Hahn Expeditionary Learning School (District 18): 2014
- Lyons Community School (District 14): 2014
- Nelson Mandela School for Social Justice (District 16): 2015
- Olympus Academy (District 18): 2014
- Origins High School (District 22): 2015
- Spring Creek Community School (District 19): 2015
- Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice (District 13): 2015

Manhattan

- Academy for Software Engineering (District 2): 2014
- Bard High School Early College Manhattan (District 1): 2015
- Beacon High School (District 2): 2014
- City-As-School (District 2): 2014
- Community Health Academy of the Heights (District 6): 2014
- East Side Community School (District 1): 2014
- Essex Street Academy (District 2): 2014
- Facing History School (District 2): 2014
- Frank McCourt Academy (District 3): 2014
- Harvest Collegiate (District 2): 2014
- Humanities Preparatory Academy (District 2): 2014
- Innovation Diploma Plus (District 3): 2014
- Institute for Collaborative Education (District 2): 2014

- James Baldwin School: A School for Expeditionary Learning (District 2): 2014
- Landmark High School (District 2): 2016
- Lower Manhattan Arts Academy (District 2): 2015
- Manhattan Academy for Arts and Language (District 2): 2016
- Manhattan International (District 2): 2014
- NYC ISchool (District 2): 2014
- NYC Lab School for Collaborative Studies (District 2): 2015
- Satellite Academy High School (District 2): 2014
- Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship High School (District 2): 2016
- Urban Academy Laboratory High School (District 2): 2014
- Urban Assembly Maker Academy (District 2): 2015
- Urban Assembly Media High School (District 3): 2015
- Urban Assembly New York Harbor School (District 2): 2015
- Urban Assembly School of Design and Construction (District 2): 2015
- Urban Assembly School for Global Commerce (District 5): 2016
- Urban Assembly School for the Performing Arts (District 5): 2015
- Vanguard High School (District 2): 2014

Queens

- Academy for Careers in Television and Film (District 30): 2014
- Bard High School Early College Queens (District 24): 2015
- Benjamin Franklin High School for Finance and Information Technology (District 29): 2015
- Business Technology Early College High School (District 26): 2015
- **Cambria Heights Academy (District 29): 2016**
- EPIC High School North (District 27): 2015
- Institute for Health Professions at Cambria Heights (District 29): 2015
- International High School at LaGuardia Community College (District 24): 2014
- Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School (District 28): 2015
- Middle College High School at LaGuardia Community College (District 24): 2014
- North Queens Community High School (District 25): 2014
- Flushing International High School (District 25): 2014
- International High School for Health Sciences (District 24): 2014
- Voyages Preparatory High School (District 27): 2015
- Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria (District 30): 2015

Staten Island

- Concord High School (District 31): 2015
- Michael J. Petrides School (District 31): 201

In July 2016, the chancellor announced the creation of PROSE Pathways schools. These are schools that are not yet ready to become full-fledged participants but want to observe current

PROSE schools and attend training. The idea is that this will help the schools create successful applications in the future. The Pathways schools with high school grades are:

Bronx

- Crotona Academy (District 12)
- Felisa Rincon De Gautier Institute for Law and Public Policy (District 8)
- International Community High School (District 7)

Brooklyn

- School for International Studies (District 15)
- Williamsburg Preparatory School (District 14)

Manhattan

- Forsyth Satellite Academy (District 1)

Queens

- Queens Academy High School (District 25)
- Queens High School for the Sciences at York College (District 28)
- Rockaway Park High School for Environmental Sustainability (District 27)
- Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School (District 28)

SAT AND ADVANCED PLACEMENT RESULTS

Students who were seniors in 2015-16 registered SAT scores that were slightly lower than those of the 2014-15 seniors, DOE reported in November 2016. Scores on the critical reading section held steady at 446 out of 800, while the math scores declined from 467 to 466 and the writing score from 442 to 440.²³ Students across the nation registered greater declines from 2014-15 to 2015-16 but nationally students had higher scores: 494 on reading, 508 in math and 482 in writing. The local and national results did not include students who took the new version of the SAT, which was introduced in March 2016.²⁴

2015-16 also saw the largest number of New York City students ever taking and passing AP exams. Many colleges give college credit to students who achieve scores of three or above (on a scale of one to five) on the test, taken after students take an AP course. Some 44,906 New York

²³ New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces NYC Results on SAT Exams," Nov. 18, 2016 (schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/NYC+Results+on+SAT+Exams.htm).

²⁴ Kaitlin Mulhere, "SAT Scores Take a Dip," *Money*, Sept. 27, 2016.

City students took at least one AP test in 2016, up 8 percent from the previous year. The number of students passing also increased by 8 percent.²⁵

The city also cited increased numbers of Black and Latino students taking the exams—a 14 percent increase in the number of Black students and a 10 percent increase in Hispanics. The number of Black and Hispanic students passing at least one test also rose. Despite the rise, Black and Latino students still lag behind their white and Asian counterparts on the AP. In the class of 2016, 55 percent of Asian students and 40 percent of whites took at least one AP test during their four years of high school, compared to 25 percent of Latinos and 21 percent of Blacks. Thirty-eight percent of Asians and 27 percent of whites graduating in 2016 passed at least one AP exam, while only 6 percent of Blacks and 14 percent of Latinos did.²⁶

GRADUATION

Seventy-three percent of students who entered high school in New York in 2012 graduated within four years, receiving their diplomas in either June or August 2016, according to figures released by the city. Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor *Fariña* hailed the results, saying this was the highest graduation rate ever in city public schools.

The rate represented an increase of two percentage points from 2015 and was accompanied by a half percentage point decline in the dropout rate. The graduation rate increased among all racial groups, with the most marked rise among Black and Hispanic students, who saw their graduation rates increase by slightly less than 3 points. Despite the gains, Black and Latino students were still less likely to graduate on time than their Asian and white counterparts. The 2016 rate was 86 percent for Asians, 82 percent for whites, 68 percent for Blacks and 67 percent for Latinos.

There also were disparities among the boroughs. Staten Island registered the highest graduation rate, at 79 percent, while the Bronx came in the lowest at 65 percent. The Bronx did, though, see the greatest increase from 2015 to 2016: three percentage points.²⁷

A study by Measure of America, an arm of the nonprofit Social Science Research Council, revealed large differences in graduation rates based on the admission method used by the student's high school. The nine academically elite high schools that admit students solely on the basis of their scores on the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) saw 97 percent of their students graduate on time in 2015. Graduation rates were above 80 percent at so-called screened schools, which use middle school test scores, grades, attendance and sometimes their own tests; and at audition schools, art schools that require students to perform and/or produce a portfolio. At schools using education option—a selection method designed to ensure the school has students with a range of academic abilities—the graduation rate was 60 percent. Combined

²⁵ New York City Office of the Mayor, “Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña Announce Highest-Ever Number of Students Taking and Passing Advanced Placement Exams,” Jan. 17, 2017 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/026-17/mayor-de-blasio-chancellor-fari-a-highest-ever-number-nyc-students-taking-and#/0>).

²⁶ New York City Department of Education, *NYC AP Results 2016* (<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/CE9139F0-9F3A-4C42-ACB8-74F2D014802F/207131/2016APResultsWebsite11718.pdf>).

²⁷ New York City Office of the Mayor, “Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Fariña Announce Highest Ever Graduation Rate,” Feb. 10, 2017 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/076-17/mayor-de-blasio-chancellor-fari-a-highest-ever-graduation-rate/#/0>).

with race, this results in extreme differences in how likely a student is to graduate high school on time. While 98 percent of Asians at SHSAT high schools graduated on time, only 55 percent of Blacks at education option schools did.²⁸

In 2016, the state Board of Regents eased the graduation requirements for students with disabilities. Under these new rules, students with Individualized Educational Programs can 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 can demonstrate their mastery of that subject to their local superintendent in other ways, such as with schoolwork they did during the course.²⁹ According to the state Board of Regents, this change affected 418 students statewide in 2016, boosting the state graduation rate by 0.2 percent.³⁰

New rules also allow students who receive a 60 on one of the five required Regents to appeal to their districts for the right to graduate. (Passing is 65.) The number of city students who successfully appealed tripled from 2015 to 2016, according to *Chalkbeat*.³¹ The state has also instituted a new Career Development and Occupational Studies credential, which, starting in 2016, enabled students to demonstrate they are ready for employment in lieu of one of the Regents.

AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

More New York City high school graduates are continuing their education than ever before, according to DOE. The department announced in November 2016 that 55 percent of students in the city's class of 2015 had enrolled in a two or four-year college, a vocational program or a public service program. This represents a 2 percent increase from the class of 2014.³²

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND DISCIPLINE

In 2015 the de Blasio administration began taking a number of steps aimed at easing what the Mayor had described as "overly punitive" discipline policies, particularly high suspension rates and police involvement, while still seeking to ensure that schools are safe. In November 2015, he launched the first part of a roadmap to ease harsh discipline and, in July 2016, he announced the second phase of that roadmap. Although most attention focused on ending virtually all suspensions for students in kindergarten through 2nd grade, the roadmap also added more than \$15 million to bring mental health services to 50 additional schools and created pilot programs aimed at students returning from suspensions. The administration also set further requirements

²⁸ Kristen Lewis and Sarah Burd-Sharps, *Who Graduates: New Findings on NYC High School Admissions and Graduation Rates*, Measure of America of the Social Science Research Council, 2017.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ Kate Taylor, "Graduation Rate in New York State Hits a New High: 79.4%," *New York Times*, Feb. 10, 2017.

³¹ Monica Disare, "Number of New York City Students Successfully Appealing Regents Exams Scores in Order to Graduate Triples," *Chalkbeat*, March 10, 2017.

³² Alex Zimmerman, "Record Number of New York City Students are Going to College, Vocational Programs," *Chalkbeat*, Nov 16, 2016.

for reporting data on arrests, summonses and handcuffing in schools, and established a process for removing metal detectors from schools that have them.³³

In April these and other changes incorporated in the city's new discipline code went into effect, adding to changes in the code that had been adopted in 2015. Like those changes many of the news ones are aimed at reducing suspensions. The code now does not allow suspensions for some infractions and tightens the procedures for suspending students.³⁴

Also in April DOE and the police department announced the expansion of their Team Up! Tuesday program, which was launched in more than 350 elementary schools in spring 2016. The program will bring officers from more than 70 police precincts across the city to some 150 high schools in an effort to foster discussion and build relationships between young people and the police.³⁵

The policies on school climate have resulted in a sharp drop in suspensions. In the first half of the 2016-17 school year, suspensions dropped by 7.5 percent from the similar period the previous year, according to a DOE report.³⁶

The administration says that, as these policies have been implemented, schools have become safer. It has called 2016-17 "the safest school year on record" in the city with reports of major crimes in schools declining by 18 percent from the previous year. The police department reported an 8 percent drop in "school-related arrests" and a decline in summonses issued in schools. "The impacts of our investments in school climate and mental health programs are clear: crime is at an all-time low and graduation is at an all-time high," Mayor de Blasio said.³⁷

Not everyone agrees. While student advocates and organizations such as the New York Civil Liberties Union have hailed the changes in discipline, the policy has come under attack from other quarters. Max Eden of the Manhattan Institute concluded that reforms undertaken in 2013-14 and 2014-15 had reduced suspensions but had had a bad effect on school climate. "Teachers report less order and discipline, and students report less mutual respect among their peers, as well as more violence, drug and alcohol use, and gang activity," Eden concluded.³⁸ Eden has

³³ New York City Office of the Mayor, "De Blasio Administration Announces New School Climate Initiatives to Make NYC Schools Safer, Fairer and More Transparent," July 21, 2016 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/628-16/de-blasio-administration-new-school-climate-initiatives-make-nyc-schools-safer-fairer>).

³⁴ Alex Zimmerman, "Today's the Day: Long-Debated Changes to the City's Discipline Code are Now in Effect," *Chalkbeat*, April 19, 2017.

³⁵ New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña and Commissioner O'Neill Announce Expansion of Team Up! Tuesday to 150 High Schools," April 25, 2017 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/TeamUpTuesday.htm>).

³⁶ New York City Department of Education, *Local Law 93 of 2015 (Previously Local Law 6 of 2011) – Biannual Report* (<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/7A5809B0-389F-43A5-A1C6-77E30DC58C76/0/March2017LL93BiannualReport33117final.pdf>).

³⁷ New York City Office of the Mayor, "Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner O'Neill and Chancellor Fariña Announce Safest School Year on Record," Aug. 1, 2017 (<http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/530-17/mayor-de-blasio-commissioner-o-neill-chancellor-fari-a-safest-school-year-record#0>).

³⁸ Max Eden, *School Discipline Reform and Disorder: Evidence from New York City Public Schools, 2012-16*, Manhattan Institute, March 14, 2017.

conceded, however, that there is no clear causal link between those trends and the reduction in suspensions.³⁹

Meanwhile, disparities continue in suspensions. In 2015-16, half of all suspensions went to Black students, who account for 27 percent of New York City students. Students with disabilities were also suspended at a disproportionately high rate. Although they account for 19 percent of public school students, they received almost 39 percent of all suspensions.⁴⁰

Similar disparities exist in school policing, according to figures compiled by the Urban Youth Collaborative and the Center for Popular Democracy. While Black and Latino students make up about 67 percent of the public school population, they accounted for 92 percent of the 1,106 arrests in schools in 2016-17 and 87 percent of the summonses issued. The report did not break out the statistics by grade level.⁴¹

At the same time suspensions declined, the state reported a decline in the number of New York City schools it considers “persistently dangerous.” The four schools on the list—the lowest number ever, according to the city DOE—are elementary schools.⁴²

ADMISSIONS

In an effort to bring the high school selection process into the digital age, the education department in September 2016 unveiled NYC School Finder, an online tool designed for use on mobile phones that to some extent makes the bulky High School Directory accessible on a mobile device. The tool lets students and their families search for high schools by name, location, size and other key information. It also allows searches by keywords, so students could look for school that offers a specific course or sport, and links to maps and to school reviews by InsideSchools.org, an independent non-profit.⁴³

In another effort to improve the often-confusing process that requires all students who wish to attend a New York City public high school, even a neighborhood school, to fill out an application, the department released its 2018 directory in May. This will help give 7th graders and their families an early start on the admissions process.

³⁹ Matt Barnum, “The School Discipline Revolution: How Policy and Rhetoric Outstrip Hard Evidence,” *The 74*, May 2, 2017.

⁴⁰ Alex Zimmerman, “New York City School Suspensions Continue to Plummet. But Stark Disparities Remain,” *Chalkbeat*, October 31, 2016.

⁴¹ --- “The School-to-Prison/School-to-Deportation Pipeline in New York City, Urban Youth Collaborative and the Center for Popular Democracy, September 2017 (http://populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/STPP-infographic_all-pages_092117%20%281%29.pdf).

⁴² New York City Department of Education, “Number of NYC Schools Designated as Persistently Dangerous Hits Record Low,” Aug. 2, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/Number+of+NYC+Schools+Designated+as+Persistently+Dangerous+Hits+Record+Low.htm>).

⁴³ New York City Department of Education, “Chancellor Fariña Announces NYTC School Finder to Make the High School Search Process Easier for Families,” Sept. 12, 2016 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/Chancellor+Farina+Announces+NYC+School+Finder+to+Make+the+High+School+Search+Process+Easier+for+Fami.htm>).

Almost 77,000 8th graders applied to be admitted to a New York City public high school in September 2017. Forty-six percent of them got their first choice and 72 percent got one of their top three choices. Students can put up to 12 schools in order of preference on their applications. Six percent of those applying were admitted to none of the choices, leaving them to vie for space in schools that still have space—often less desirable places.⁴⁴

These results came after a year of increased criticism of the selection process. Echoing reports by other publications, the *New York Times* in May published a lengthy article about “the broken promise of choice.” School choice, Elizabeth A. Harris and Ford Fessenden wrote, “has not delivered on a central promise: to give every student a real chance to attend a good school. Fourteen years into the system, Black and Hispanic students are just as isolated in segregated high schools as they are in elementary schools—a situation that school choice was supposed to ease.” Their article noted that the most successful high schools remain disproportionately white and Asian; that low-income Black and Hispanic students are likely to attend schools with substantially lower graduation rates; and that a student’s middle school plays a large role in determining what high school he or she will attend.⁴⁵

An earlier investigation by *Chalkbeat* found an array of flaws in the process. For example, only 26 of 50 high schools surveyed listed information sessions on the DOE calendar, and even when they know about the sessions, many students have no way of getting to them. The very complexity of the system poses a barrier *Chalkbeat* found, noting, “The system is notoriously difficult to navigate, particularly for students who live in low-income areas and have less help moving through the process. Some schools have geographic priority, some have academic requirements, and others ask students to provide information beyond what is actually needed.”

Perhaps most significantly, *Chalkbeat* and other observers say, by letting some schools screen students, the system almost guarantees that top students will end up in those schools, leading to academic—and racial and economic—segregation. “A small percentage of schools drain off the top students, leaving the majority of schools with very few students entering on grade-level,” *Chalkbeat* reported. Its analysis found that over half the students who took and passed the 8th-grade state math exam in 2015 wound up clustered in less than 8 percent of city high schools. The same was true for those who passed the English exam. Meanwhile, nearly 165 of the city’s roughly 440 high schools had five or fewer 9th-graders who took and passed the state math test in 2015.”⁴⁶

A report by the Independent Budget Office, which looked at data from 2011-2012, found higher performing students were far more likely to opt for screened schools, while their lower performing classmates selected limited unscreened or educational option schools. About 14,000 students in the top third said a screened school was their top choice, while only a little more than

⁴⁴ Elizabeth A. Harris, “Diversity Lags at Students are Matched with City Schools,” *New York Times*, March 8, 2017.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth A. Harris and Ford Fessenden, “The Broken Promise of Choice in New York City Schools,” *New York Times*, May 5, 2017.

⁴⁶ Monica Disare, “The New York Times Calls High School Admissions ‘Broken.’ Here is Chalkbeat’s In-Depth Look at Why That’s True,” *Chalkbeat*, May 5, 2017.

3,000 selected a limited unscreened school. On the other hand, about 7,500 8th graders in the lowest third listed a limited unscreened school as their No. 1 choice.⁴⁷

And while some high schools have empty seats, others admit only a small percentage of their applicants. These schools were considered the most selective, based on the percentage of applicants accepted. (The number of applicants includes all students who put the school on their applications, whether they ranked it first or twelfth.)

School	District	Applicants	Seats	Admissions Rate
Manhattan/Hunter Science High School	3	6,472	108	1.7%
Manhattan Village Academy	2	4,903	100	2.0%
Central Park East High School	4	5,486	115	2.1%
Baruch College Campus High School	2	5,057	111	2.2%
Eleanor Roosevelt High School	2	5,760	125	2.2%
Millennium High School	2	6,398	192	3.0%
Bard High School Early College	1	4,090	172	4.2%
Townsend Harris High School	25	6,213	306	4.9%
Leon M. Goldstein High School for the Sciences	22	4,947	250	5.0%
Beacon High School	2	6,202	350	5.6%

48

Changes to the admission process are slated to take effect for students entering high school in September 2019. The department has said it will eliminate the so-called limited unscreened category—high schools that don’t have academic or artistic requirements but give preference to middle school students who attend an open house, information session or high school fair.⁴⁹ Critics allege that this system appears to favor white and Asian students over Black and Latino ones. For example, they note, attending open houses, some of which can require parents to miss work, can be a burden for some families; some schools do not adequately announce their events; and others do not keep adequate records of who attends what.⁵⁰ In addition, some schools request that students attended open houses fill out surveys or do other tasks, leading to concerns that they may, contrary to DOE rules, use this information to filter students. In particular, some surveys

⁴⁷ --- “Preferences and Outcomes: A Look at New York City’s Public School Choice Process,” New York City Independent Budget Office, October 2016 (<http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/preferences-and-outcomes-a-look-at-new-york-citys-public-high-school-choice-process.pdf>).

⁴⁸ Elizabeth A. Harris, “Couldn’t Get into Yale? 10 New York City High Schools are More Selective,” *New York Times* (based on New York City Department of Education data), March 10, 2017.

⁴⁹ New York City Department of Education, *Equity and Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools*, June 2017 (http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/D0799D8E-D4CD-45EF-A0D5-8F1DB246C2BA/0/diversity_final.pdf).

⁵⁰ Monica Disare, “City to Eliminate High School Admissions Method that Favored Families with Time and Resources,” *Chalkbeat*, June 6, 2017.

asked whether the student had ranked that school number 1 on their application, prompting worries that, certain schools were in defiance of DOE policy barring schools from considering that information in deciding which 8th graders to admit.⁵¹

As part of its diversity plan, DOE also said it would work to further streamline the application process by putting applications on line, providing support on line and creating a “one-stop shop” where students can register for all admissions tests and auditions in one place. To make the process of researching possible high schools less onerous, DOE said in the plan that it would begin holding some high school open houses for 7th graders in the spring, giving them a chance to begin researching schools earlier. The department also said it would try to make the schedule for these open houses more family friendly and provide better information on them.⁵²

In November, DOE announced it was expanding a diversity pilot program that had started at elementary schools to a small number of middle and high schools. These schools are allowed to adjust their admissions policies so that some disadvantaged students, such as students learning English or low-income students, have priority for a certain number of seats at the schools.

The schools with high school grades participating in the program are:

Manhattan

- Central Park East High School (District 4)
- Harvest Collegiate High School (District 2)⁵³

The administration has said it hopes to expand the initiative although has not specified plans for additional high schools. (For more see Diversity, page TK)

Specialized High Schools: The eight academically selective specialized high schools base their admissions decision entirely on a student’s score on the Specialized High School Admission Test (SHSAT). The schools are Bronx High School of Science; Brooklyn Latin School; Brooklyn Technical High School; 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 Technical High School; and Stuyvesant High School. The ninth specialized school, Fiorello H. Laguardia High School of Music & Arts and Performing Arts, does not use the SHSAT, admitting students on the basis of their middle school records, and an audition or portfolio.

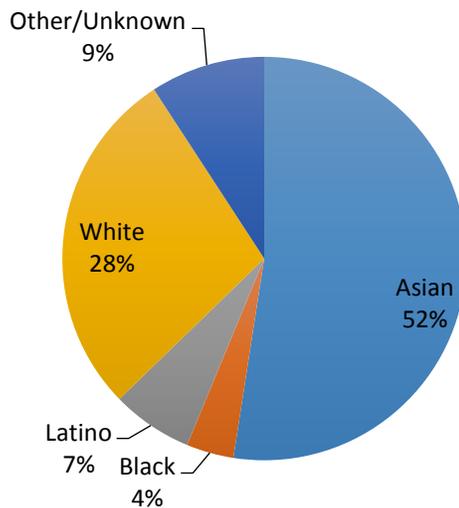
Once again, in 2017, the overwhelming majority of students admitted to the eight schools were Asian or white.

⁵¹ Monica Disare, “In New York City’s Dysfunctional High School Admissions System, Even ‘Unscreened’ School Gave Tools to Sort Students,” *Chalkbeat*, Nov. 7, 2016.

⁵² New York City Department of Education, *Equity and Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools*, June 2017 (http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/D0799D8E-D4CD-45EF-A0D5-8F1DB246C2BA/0/diversity_final.pdf).

⁵³ Kate Taylor, “More City High Schools Join Diversity Initiative,” *New York Times*. Oct. 20, 2016.

Percent of Total Offers to 8 Specialized High Schools



This translated into very small numbers of students in some groups at certain schools. Only one Black student, for example, was offered a seat at Staten Island Tech. Stuyvesant, the most selective of the schools, offered admission to 926 students but only 13 of them are Black.⁵⁴

A number of advocates have called for either eliminating the test or adding additional criteria. The administration has not embraced that but instead has sought to encourage more students to take the SHSAT and to provide test preparation to them. The number of students taking the test in fall 2016 did increase, city data reportedly shows, and Black and Latino students participating in a city-run test prep program did account for almost a third of Black and Latino students admitted. However, the percentage of offers going to Black and Latino students remained virtually unchanged from the previous year, and while the number of Latino students taking the SHSAT increased, the number of Black students doing so declined.⁵⁵

In its diversity plan, DOE said that in fall 2017 it would offer the SHSAT during the school day at 15 middle schools, up from 7 in 2016-17. It also said it would expand the DREAM program, a free afterschool program that prepares students for the SHSAT, and in summer of 2017 would extend the Discovery Program, which enables high-needs students who narrowly miss the cutoff

⁵⁴ Monica Disare, “Only 10 Percent of Offers at New York City’s Specialized High Schools Went to Black and Hispanic Students,” *Chalkbeat*, March 8, 2017.

⁵⁵ Alex Zimmerman, “New York City Expanded Its Efforts to Increase Diversity at Elite Specialized High Schools. So Why Hasn’t the Needle Budged?” *Chalkbeat*, March 10, 2017.

for a specialized high school to get into one. That program will now be provided at all the academic specialized high schools except Stuyvesant.⁵⁶

The city has also made changes in the SHSAT itself, going into effect with the test that students will take in fall 2017. The revised test will be longer and will no longer include a so-called scrambled paragraphs section, where students had to arrange sentences in a logical order. "Changes to the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test make it fairer and more equitable for our students by better reflecting what they actually learn in class," a DOE spokesman told the *Daily News*.⁵⁷

DIVERSITY

Several years after a UCLA report found the New York City schools among the most segregated in the country, the debate over what to do about the racial and economic divides showed no signs of abating. In response to growing concern from some advocates, members of the City Council and others, DOE issued a plan to address the lack of racial, ethnic and income diversity in many city schools. The so-called diversity plan—DOE does not use the word segregation in it—said the administration was committed to diversity, saying, "All students benefit from diverse and inclusive schools and classrooms." Specifically, the plans called for several measures, including:

- Increasing the number of students attending a racially representative school by 50,000 in five years. The department defines a racially representative school as one where Black and Latino students together account for at least 50 percent but no more than 90 percent of total students. Currently about 312,000 students attend such schools.
- Creating a School Diversity Advisory Group to look at relevant city policies and practices and make formal recommendations to the mayor by June 2018.
- Eliminating limited unscreened admissions for high schools (see page TK)
- Increase access to screened high and middle schools for students with disabilities, English language learners and those in temporary housing.

Reaction to the plan was mixed, with some saying it did not go far enough. While praising some aspects of the plan, Richard Kahlneberg of the Century Foundation, an expert on school integration, told the *New York Times* that he wished the city had adopted policies to integrate the specialized high schools.⁵⁸

An analysis of the plan by the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School faulted it for not going far enough. It examined the goals of increasing the number of students at "racially

⁵⁶ New York City Department of Education, *Equity and Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools*, June 2017 (http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D0799D8E-D4CD-45EF-A0D5-8F1DB246C2BA/0/diversity_final.pdf).

⁵⁷ Ben Chapman, "NYC to Alter Disliked Specialized High Schools Admissions Test," *New York Daily News*, Jan. 18, 2017.

⁵⁸ Kate Taylor, "Long-Awaited Plan for Integrating Schools Proves Mostly Small-Bore," *New York Times*, June 6, 2017.

representative” schools by 50,000 and of reducing the number of “economically stratified school by 10 percent.” The study’s authors concluded that meeting these targets would “represent only minimal changes to the system as a whole. No heavy lifting will be needed to meet them. Indeed, if recent demographic shifts that have occurred in our schools merely continue apace for the next five years, the DOE will be able to meet these diversity goals without implementing a single one of the dozen policies they recommend in their new plan.” The authors urged the city to set more ambitious goals and to acknowledge the extent of segregation in the city school system, stating, “Only with such honesty and clarity can we have the necessary conversations and take the required steps to do this work with the urgency it deserves.”⁵⁹

RENEWAL SCHOOLS

DOE continued to grapple with what to do about the city’s lowest performing schools, sticking to its belief that closing such schools should be a policy of last resort. Instead the administration has mounted a \$400 million effort, dubbed Renewal Schools, to turn those schools around. In 2014, the administration identified some 94 low-performing schools—36 of them with high school grades—that it said would have to develop and implement a School Renewal Plan. The schools were all designated community schools meaning they would have to develop a holistic program aimed at meeting children’s medical and emotional needs, as well as academic ones (see below). Each school also would have to add an hour to the school day and provide coaching to teachers. The schools were required to demonstrate significant progress in academics by 2016-17. Those that did not could see leadership or faculty changes, a reorganization, such as being combined with another school, or even closure.

In this area, as in so many others, the de Blasio administration’s plan collided with a state plan, approved in March 2015, that had given low-performing schools one or two years to make “demonstrable improvement” or 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.

After the first year, 37 of the 62 schools on the list had, according to the state’s metrics, improved enough to be removed from the list. Other schools got a bit of a reprieve in spring 2015 when Mary Ellen Elia became state commissioner of education and decided to slow the process of sanctioning schools. In an interview, she said she had seen positive signs in New York’s City Renewal Schools. “If you look at the number of schools that were at risk [of going into receivership] in New York, only one of those schools was unable to make the necessary changes to move forward. So I would say to you that the focus of the Renewal Schools in New York City in my experience has shown that additional resources put into those programs and the supports for the leadership and the teachers has really made a change in the schools,” Elia said.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Nicole Mader and Ana Carla Sant’Anna Costa, *No Heavy Lifting Required: New York City’s Unambitious School ‘Diversity’ Plan*, Center for New York City Affairs, The New School, 2017 (<http://www.centernyc.org/diversity-plan/>).

⁶⁰ Mareesa Nicosia, “Undocumented Students & Turning Schools Around,” *The74*, April 23, 2017.

A city official says that Elia supports its less draconian school turnaround plan. The state did not put any New York City schools in receivership in 2016-27.⁶¹ However, the city did announce in January that it would close six Renewal schools. Two are high schools:

Bronx

- Leadership Institute (District 9)
- Monroe Academy for Visual Arts and Design (District 12)

The city also announced two mergers involving high schools. The schools are:

Brooklyn

- Automotive High School with Frances Perkins Academy (District 14)
- Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School with Brooklyn Academy of Global Finance (District 16)

As of June 2017, the following schools with high school grades remained in the Renewal Schools program:

Bronx

- Bronx Collegiate Academy (District 9)
- Bronx Early College Academy for Teaching and Learning (District 9)
- Bronx High School of Business (District 9)
- Dewitt Clinton High School (District 10)
- Dream Yard Preparatory School (District 9)
- Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology (District 10)
- Holcombe L. Rucker High School (District 8)
- Herbert Lehman High School (District 8)
- Longwood Preparatory Academy (District 8)
- New Explorers High School (District 7)

Brooklyn

- Academy of Urban Planning and Engineering (District 32)
- Boys and Girls High School (District 14)
- Brooklyn Collegiate: A College Board School (District 23)
- Brooklyn Generation School (District 18)
- Cypress Hills Collegiate Preparatory School (District 19)
- Juan Morel Campos Secondary School (District 14)
- Multicultural High School (District 19)

⁶¹ Eliza Shapiro, “Fariña Defends City’s Oft-Criticized Struggling Schools Program,” *Politico*, July 6, 2016.

Manhattan

- Coalition School for Social Change (District 4)
- High School for Health Careers and Sciences (District 6)
- Orchard Collegiate Academy (District 1)
- Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing Arts (District 3)

Queens

- August Martin High School (District 27)
- Flushing High School (District 25)
- John Adams High School (District 27)
- Long Island City High School (District 30)
- Martin Van Buren High School (District 26)
- Pan American International High School (District 24)
- Richmond Hill High School (District 27)

The schools struggle with a number of problems. Many have seen principals leave. Turnover among teaching staff has been high. At August Martin High School in Queens, for example, of the 39 teachers there in 2015-16, only seven returned for the 2016-17 school year. Many middle school children, and their parents, do not want to apply to Renewal Schools. This has driven down enrollment at many of them or forced them to take students with few, if any, other options.⁶²

To some, the continuing struggles at the schools have been seen as clear signs that the program is not working. Others counter that any program that takes on schools facing multiple challenges is destined to have some successes and some failures. “De Blasio had run on a campaign not to close schools, but that was destined to have mixed results on a school-by-school basis,” David Bloomfield, an education professor at Brooklyn College and the CUNY Graduate Center told *Chalkbeat*. “You have dozens of schools [in the Renewal program] and a relative handful have been demonstrably unsuccessful. That’s not surprising.”⁶³

Statistical evidence, particularly for high schools, is inconclusive. A study by the Manhattan Institute, a frequent critic of Mayor de Blasio, found that the Renewal program increased student achievement by an estimated 49 days of extra instruction in reading and 33 days in math, as measured by scores on the state standardized tests. This report, though, looked only at middle and elementary schools, not including high schools, which account for about a third of Renewal Schools.⁶⁴

⁶² Kate Taylor, “After 2 Years, Progress is Hard to See in Some Struggling City Schools,” *New York Times*, July 18, 2016.

⁶³ Alex Zimmerman, “Report: New York City Poised to Close or Merge Nin ‘Renewal’ Schools,” *Chalkbeat*, Jan. 8, 2017.

⁶⁴ Alex Zimmerman, “Conservative Think Tank Finds ‘Meaningful’ Academic Progress at New York City’s Renewal Schools,” *Chalkbeat*, July 11, 2017.

By one calculation, graduation rates at the Renewal high schools increased from 54.5 percent in 2015 to 59.3 percent in 2016. However, a review conducted by Professor Bloomfield for the *New York Post* attributed some of this increase to the change in state rules that went into effect and 2016. It lets students use an appeals process that can allow them to graduate even if their scores on two Regents are as low as 60 (passing is 65). Without that rule change, the analysis found, the increase in the graduation rate would have been far more modest—to 55.1 percent.⁶⁵

Another analysis, this one by Aaron Pallas of Teachers College, Columbia University, compared the Renewal Schools with similar schools not in the program. He concluded that 23 demographically similar schools that were not Renewal Schools started with lower graduations rates than the Renewal schools but experienced greater gains.⁶⁶

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools have been a major part of the de Blasio administration's education policy since the mayor and Chancellor Fariña took office in 2014. They announced the policy their first year in office and in 2015-16, DOE began rolling out the community school program. The effort, which includes all the Renewal Schools (see page TK), has been a key element of the de Blasio administration's effort to improve struggling schools.

Community schools are schools that try to support children and their families by offering programs that address the child's emotional and physical needs as well as academic ones. In New York City, the schools vary in exactly how they do this but they provide additional learning time, work with parents to improve student attendance and have an extra staff member who coordinates the program. The schools involve partnerships between the school, students, parents and community groups and offer services such as health care, vision tests, tutoring, job training, mental health counseling and family counseling. One school provides a washing machine.

In 2016-17, the administration announced a major expansion of the community schools program, saying it would add 69 schools to the program in September 2017. This brings the number of community schools to 215, serving a total of more than 100,000 students. The expansion will cost \$25.5 million a year.

As the city expands the program, experts and advocates differ over how effective it is. Christopher Caruso, executive director for the Office of Community Schools, told *Chalkbeat* that chronic absenteeism had decreased by 7.2 percent at community schools during the first two years of the program and graduation rates increased 4.8 percent.⁶⁷ But the mayor sees the advantages as going beyond that. "The beauty of community schools is they reach the whole child and whole family," de Blasio said at a press conference announcing the expansion. "How many times was a child being hindered

⁶⁵ Yoav Gonen, "Graduation Rates Up at Renewal Schools--but There's a Catch," *New York Post*, April 24, 2017.

⁶⁶ Alex Zimmerman, "Do Struggling Schools in New York's Renewal Turnaround Program Outperform Those Left Out? A New Analysis Suggests No," *Chalkbeat*, June 21, 2017.

⁶⁷ Alex Zimmerman, "New York City Set to Expand 'Community Schools' Program to Include 215 Schools," *Chalkbeat*, May 11, 2017.

academically because they had a mental health problem that was being unaddressed? In a community school, you know from the beginning that mental health professionals are right there, available to all kids.”⁶⁸

Critics, though, state the program has not produced major gains. Charter school proponents, for example sought to compare the results at charters and community schools and found the community school lacking. “There are now roughly an equal number of students in community schools as there are in public charter schools,” said Jeremiah Kittredge, then the CEO of Families for Excellent Schools, a pro-charter advocacy group. “But the results for kids couldn’t be further apart—public charter students are twice as likely to read and do math on grade level. If Mayor de Blasio truly cared about equity for the city’s neediest children, we would be reading about a different type of school expansion today.”⁶⁹

The community schools have been inextricably linked to the whole debate over Renewal Schools and Mayor de Blasio’s effort to keep low-performing schools open and improve them, rather than shutting them as his predecessor, Michael Bloomberg, did. Some say that, even if the community schools succeed, change will not come fast enough to help students who attend poorly performing schools.

National studies of the model also have reached varying conclusions. Several studies, including review of programs in Chicago and Boston, have shown largely positive results. An MDRC study of a community school program not used in New York City found that it improved attendance in some grades and graduation rates but did not improve test scores. Some advocates, though, say that even if test scores do not improve, there is a societal benefit in providing health care, counseling and other services to children.”⁷⁰

More conclusive findings may be on the way. The city is working with the Rand Corp. on a study of how the program has been rolled out with a more comprehensive study expected – though not until 2018 or later.

These are the schools with high school grades that were community schools for the 2016-17 school year:

Bronx

School	District	Community Partner
Antonia Pantoja Preparatory Academy, A College Board School	8	YMCA of Greater New York
Bronx Career and College Preparatory High School	12	Children’s Aid Society

⁶⁸ Nicole Levy and Amy Zimmer, “City Invests \$25.5M to Expand ‘Community’ Schools Program,” *DNAinfo*, May 11, 2017.

⁶⁹ Selim Agar, “NYC Expanding ‘Community Schools’ Program in 2018,” *New York Post*, May 11, 2017.

⁷⁰ Matt Barnus, “Community Schools Are Expanding—But Are They Working? New Study Shows Mixed Results,” *Chalkbeat*, May 2017.

Bronx Collegiate Academy	9	Counseling in Schools
Bronx Early Collee Academy for Teaching and Learning	9	Center for Supportive Schools
Bronx High School of Business	9	Committee for Hispanic Children and Families Inc.
Bronx Studio School for Writers and Artists	8	Global Kinds, Inc.
Dewitt Clinton High School	10	Good Shepherd Services
Dream Yard Preparatory School	9	Counseling in Schools
East Bronx Academy for the Future	12	Phipps Neighborhoods Inc.
Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School	12	Children's Aid Society
Felicia Rincon de Gautier Institute for Law and Public Policy	8	Good Shepherd Services
Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology	10	Fordham University
Foreign Language Academy of Global Studies	7	Center for Supportive Schools
Frederick Douglass Academy III Secondary School	9	Center for Supportive Schools
Herbert H. Lehman High School	8	East Side House, Inc.
High School for Teaching and the Professions	10	Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation
Holcombe L. Rucker School of Community Research	8	Talent Development Secondary—Johns Hopkins University
Jill Chaifetz Transfer High School	7	Bronx Works
Leadership Institute	9	Phipps Neighborhoods Inc.
Longwood Preparatory Academy (formerly Banana Kelly)	8	Replications Inc.
Metropolitan High School	12	Phipps Neighborhoods, Inc.
Morris Academy for Collaborative Studies	9	Center for Supportive Schools
New Explorers High School	7	Sports and Arts n Schools Foundation, Inc.
Peace and Diversity Academy	12	Phipps Neighborhoods Inc.

Brooklyn

School	District	Community Partner
Academy for Environmental Leadership	32	Make the Road
Academy of Urban Planning	32	Make the Road
Academy for Young Writers	19	Pathways to Leadership
Automotive High School	14	Counseling in Schools
Boys and Girls High School	16	Good Shepherd Services
Brooklyn Collegiate: A College Board School	23	Counseling in Schools

Brooklyn Community Arts & Media High School	13	Center for Supportive Schools
Brooklyn Generation High School	18	Urban Arts Partnership
Brooklyn Lab School	19	Henry Street Settlement
Brooklyn School for Math & Research	32	Make the Road
Brownsville Academy High School	17	CAMBA
Bushwick Leaders High School for Academic Excellent	32	Good Shepherd Services
Bushwick School for Social Justice	32	Make the Road
Cypress Hills Collegiate Preparatory School	19	Cypress Hills Local Development Corp.
East Brooklyn Community High School	18	SCO Family of Services
Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School	16	Center for Supportive Schools
Foundations Academy	14	Grand Street Settlement, Inc.
Green School: An Academy for Environmental Careers	14	St. Nicks Alliance
Juan Morel Campos Secondary School	14	Grand Street Settlement, Inc.
Kurt Hahn Expeditionary Learning School	18	Urban Arts Partnership
Multicultural High School	19	Cypress Hills Local Development Corp.
Spring Creek Community School	19	Pathways to Leadership

Manhattan

<u>School</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Community Partner</u>
Broome Street Academy Charter School	Charter	The Door
Coalition School for Social Change	4	Partnership with Children, Inc.
The Heritage School	4	Teachers College
High School for Excellence and Innovation	6	East Side House, Inc.
High School for Health Careers and Sciences	6	Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York
High School for Media and Communications	6	Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York
Orchard Collegiate Academy (formerly Henry School for International Studies)	1	Henry Street Settlement
Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing and Visual Arts	3	Teachers College, Columbia University

Queens

School	District	Community Partner
August Martin High School	27	Child Center of New York, Inc.
Flushing High School	25	Center for Supportive Schools
John Adams High School	27	Global Kids, Inc.
Long Island City High School	30	The Tides Center/Zone 126
Martin Van Buren High School	26	Talent Development Secondary—Johns Hopkins University
Pan American International High School	24	Urban Arts Partnership
Queens Academy High School	27	Children’s Village
Queens High School for Information, Research & Technology (QIRT)	27	New York City Community Learning Schools Initiative
Queens Satellite High School for Opportunity	28	Child Care Center of New York, Inc.
Queens Vocational and Technical High School	24	Sunnyside
Richmond Hill High School	27	South Asian Youth Action, Inc.
Rockaway Collegiate High School	27	Partnership with Children, Inc.

Staten Island

School	District	Community Partner
Curtis High School	31	Children’s Aid Society
Port Richmond High School	31	New York Center for Interpersonal Development

71

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

English language learners account for about 13 percent of New York City public school students and speak about 180 different languages at home.

In 2016-17, Chancellor Fariña continued her program of expanding dual language programs, announcing that 39 new programs would open in fall 2017. Dual language programs take some students who are fluent in English and others who speak another language. The school then provides instruction in both languages, with the goal of having all students be bilingual by the time they leave. The city also announced it would open 29 Transitional Bilingual Education

⁷¹ City Of New York, *The New York City Schools Community Schools Initiative* (<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/communityschools/index.page>)

programs in September. In these programs, students learn English but continue to take other academic courses in their home language until they become proficient. Overall there will be 507 bilingual programs in the city by September 2017.

These are the high schools that will get new programs. (DL indicate dual language; TBE transitional bilingual Education).

Bronx

- In-Tech Academy (District 10): Spanish TBE

Brooklyn

- EBC High School for Public Service (District 32): Spanish TBE
- John Dewey High School (District 21): Spanish TBE
- Khalil Gibran International Academy (District 15): Arabic TBE
- Multicultural High School (District 19): Spanish DL

Manhattan

- College Academy (District 6): Spanish DL
- Gregorio Luperon High School for Science and Mathematics (District 6): Spanish DL
- High School for Health Careers and Science (District 6): Spanish DL
- High School for Law and Public Service (District 6): Spanish DL

Queens

- Forest Hills High School (District 28): Spanish DL
- Hillcrest High School (District 28): Bengali TBE
- Queens High School for Information, Research and Technology (District 27): Spanish TBE⁷²

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Reflecting the national interest in career and technical education, even for students planning to attend college, DOE in September 2016 announced it would spend an additional \$113 million on CTE programs. The city now has 47 CTE high schools, meaning everyone in the school, is in a CTE program. In addition, many schools host one or more CTE programs along with more traditional academic programs. New York's School of Cooperative Technical Education offers half-day programs in 17 career areas. The other half of the day students can attend their regular high school or a high school equivalency program.

⁷² New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Fariña Announces Citywide Bilingual Expansion, Bringing 68 New Programs to Schools This Fall," Feb. 28, 2017 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/BilingualExpansion.htm>).

Students in CTE programs take the regular Regents academic program but also take course work, much of it hands-on, in their career area and get some experience working in their chosen field.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

As the State Board of Regents has taken steps to remove some barriers to students with disabilities getting a high school diploma (see page TK), the city has moved to make it easier for these students to get in to high school. High schools now “set aside” some seats for students with disabilities and disclose the number of such seats in the high school directory.

While this has increased the number of students with disabilities at many schools, particularly some screened schools, parents have complained that it can be difficult to determine whether a particular school will be appropriate for their child, whether, for example, a school has ramps for a student who uses a wheelchair. In response, the city has compiled building accessibility profiles, available on line on every high school. So, for example one can go to the profile for School of the Future in Manhattan and learn that, while the auditorium is accessible to someone in a wheelchair, the stage is not.

TRANSFER SCHOOLS

New York City currently runs about 50 so-called transfer schools to serve students who would be unlikely to graduate from a traditional high school because they have not amassed enough credits and have fallen behind their age group. These schools, which have a total of some 13,000 students, tend to be small and, often in conjunction with community groups such as Good Shepherd Services, offer counseling and other services as well as academics.⁷³

Although the schools have won national praise for reducing the dropout rate and helping students graduate, DOE has been concerned that some of them have been too selective in determining who to admit. In response, the department in the spring issued new rules barring the schools from testing students before they are admitted and from reviewing applicants’ attendance or suspension records. The schools also will not be allowed to admit students for a probationary period and will have to submit more data to the city on who they allow in and who they reject.

The transfer schools, which essentially run their own admissions processes, have said they need discretion over who they admit to ensure that the incoming students are really committed to their educations. “There’s a perception when you’re on the outside of it that [transfer schools are] just looking for students who can graduate,” Michael Rothman of Eskolta, an organization that works with transfer schools, told *Chalkbeat*. “But it’s much more that. We’re looking for students who can re-engage.”⁷⁴

⁷³ Kate Taylor, New York Schools for Off-Track Students May Face Stricter Rules, *New York Times*, July 16, 2017.

⁷⁴ Alex Zimmerman, “New York City’s Transfer High Schools Getting New Admissions Rules, Extra Oversight,” *Chalkbeat*, July 5, 2017.

STUDENTS IN TEMPORARY HOUSING

Almost 6 percent of New York City high school students were in temporary housing at some point during the 2014-15 school year. This included students whose families doubled up with another family or with friends as well as those in the city shelter system.⁷⁵ Seven percent of 9th graders were homeless, with the percentage declining throughout high school. By 12th grade, only 4 percent of students were classified as homeless. According to the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness, the spike in 9th and 10th grade followed by a drop in 11th and 12th is “reflective of homeless students being held back and dropping out of school.”

While only 9 percent of all high school students transferred during the 2014-15 school year, 19 percent of students in temporary housing did.⁷⁶ Almost two thirds of students at all grade levels living in shelters were chronically absent in 2013-14.⁷⁷ For high school students, 85 percent of students in permanent housing attended school on an average day in 2013-14 and almost as many “doubled up” students did. For high school students in shelters, though, the rate was 71 percent. A report by the Independent Budget Offices said some of the absenteeism might be due to students and their families having to attend appointments with other agencies, such as the Human Resources Administration.

The atmosphere in the shelters also can pose problems. “The majority of parents interviewed for the IBO study described the shelter environment as uncomfortable places for their children and detrimental to their children’s ability to function well in school. Parents felt that this discomfort in the shelter could cause their children to arrive at school distressed,” the report noted.

The absenteeism and transfer rates may contribute to lower levels of academic performance among students in shelters. More homeless students were retained in a grade than students in permanent housing. Thirteen percent of all high school students had to repeat a grade in 2014-15, but 22 percent of those living in the shelter system did. (The rates for students in permanent housing and those doubled up were about the same.)

The institute found the dropout rate for students in permanent housing and those who were in shelters for all four years of high school were about the same, but the dropout rate for students who were homeless for four years and not in a shelter was more than twice as high as for the other students—15 percent as opposed to 6 percent. Overall, in the class of 2015, 70.5 percent of student graduated in four years. For homeless students, the rate was 53 percent⁷⁸

The de Blasio administration has previously announced efforts to improve social services for children in shelters, hire attendance specialists to work with staff in some shelters and hold

⁷⁵ New York City Independent Budget Office, *New York City Public School Indicators: Comparing Characteristics of Traditional Public School & Charter School Students*, November 2016 (<http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/a-snapshot-of-student-demographics-2016.html>).

⁷⁶ Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness, *On the Map: The Atlas of Student Homelessness in New York City*, August 2016.

⁷⁷ Liz Papas, *Not Reaching the Door: Homeless Students Face Many Hurdles on the Way to School*, New York City Independent Budget Office, October 2016.

⁷⁸ Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness, op. cit.

workshops to help families in shelters with the high school applications process. In an interview in June, Chancellor Fariña said improving services for homeless students would be one of her top priorities for 2017-2018. She said this would require a coordinated effort among a number of city agencies.⁷⁹

RESTROOM POLICIES

Amid a national debate over gender identity and bathroom use in schools, Chancellor Fariña announced that New York City would embark on an initiative to have a single-stall restroom in all public schools by January 2018. To accomplish this, staff in all schools will identify an existing single stall bathroom that it can convert for student use.

The initiative builds upon the city's already stated policy of allowing all students to use the restroom that reflects their gender identity, rather than the gender on their birth certificate. Under the policy, all of the restrooms in high schools will have to comply with a new city law requiring that schools serving grades 6 through 12 provide free menstrual hygiene products to their students. In her announcement, the chancellor said the single-stall restrooms would serve not only transgender and gender nonconforming students but would also “support the privacy needs of student ... with medical conditions and disabilities.”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ben Chapman, “Carmen Fariña to Take on NYC Student Segregation, Homelessness,” *New York Daily News*, June 26, 2017.

⁸⁰ New York City Department of Education, “Chancellor Fariña Announces Single-Stall Student Restroom Initiative,” May 2, 2017 (<http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/NewsandSpeeches/2016-2017/Farina+Announces+Single+Stall+Student+Restrooms+Initiative.htm>).