Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 1401-2020	**Version:**	*	**Name:**	Repeal the 1971 Hecht-Calandra Act and transfer control of admissions to NYC's specialized high schools to the City. (A.10731/S.8847)
Type:	Resolution			**Status:**	Filed (End of Session)
				In control:	Committee on Education
On agenda:	8/27/2020				
Enactment date:				**Enactment #:**	
Title:	Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.10731/S.8847, which would repeal the 1971 Hecht-Calandra Act and transfer control of admissions to New York City's specialized high schools to the City.				
Sponsors:					
Indexes:					
Attachments:	1. Res. No. 1401, 2. August 27, 2020 - Stated Meeting Agenda with Links to Files, 3. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 8-27-20, 4. Minutes of the Stated Meeting - August 27, 2020				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
8/27/2020	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
8/27/2020	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
12/31/2021	*	City Council	Filed (End of Session)	

Res. No. 1401

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.10731/S.8847, which would repeal the 1971 Hecht-Calandra Act and transfer control of admissions to New York City's specialized high schools to the City.

By Council Members Powers, Barron and Lander

Whereas, The New York City ("NYC" or "City") Department of Education (DOE) school district is the largest public school system in the United States (U.S.), serving 1.1 million students in more than 1,800 schools across the five boroughs; and

Whereas, Of those 1,800 schools, there are nine Specialized High Schools supporting the education needs of students who excel academically and/or artistically, including the Bronx High School of Science; the Brooklyn Latin School; the Brooklyn Technical High School; High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College of New York; High School of American Studies at Lehman College; Queens High School for the Sciences at York College; Staten Island Technical High School; Stuyvesant High School; and

Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts ("LaGuardia"); and

Whereas, LaGuardia is considered to be one of the most prestigious performing art schools in the U.S., while the other eight schools rank among the top 10 high schools in the state of New York ("State"), according to the U.S. News' 2019 rankings; and

Whereas, Apart from LaGuardia, which bases admission on an audition and a review of a student's academic records, admission to the Specialized High Schools is determined by a student's performance on a single standardized exam, known as the Specialized High School Admissions Test ("SHSAT"); and

Whereas, In 1971, the State Legislature passed the Hecht-Calandra Act, which made the SHSAT the single metric that can be used to admit students to the then four Specialized High Schools in NYC; and

Whereas, The Hecht-Calandra Act effectively prevents the City from making decisions about admissions to its Specialized High Schools; and

Whereas, No other public school district in the U.S. uses a single measure entrance exam; and

Whereas, Many studies have shown that racial bias in standardized testing shows up in multiples ways; and

Whereas, While Black and Latinx students comprise 70 percent of the City's public school population and 45 percent of all students who took the SHSAT in 2020, only 11 percent of students admitted to the Specialized High Schools were Black or Latinx; and

Whereas, At Stuyvesant High School, the City's most selective public high school, out of 766 students accepted, only 10 were Black and 20 Latinx; and

Whereas, These numbers continue a long trend of low Black and Latinx enrollment at the City's Specialized High Schools; and

Whereas, Despite the fact that the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision made integrating public schools a nationwide objective, NYC public schools remain among the most segregated in the country; and

Whereas, A.10731, sponsored by State Assembly Member Walter Mosley, and S.8847, sponsored by State Senator Julia Salazar, would repeal the 1971 Hecht-Calandra Act, which required that NYC Specialized High Schools utilize the SHSAT as the sole criterion for admission; and

Whereas, This law would remove the state mandate as to how the City must determine admissions to NYC's Specialized High Schools; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, A.10731/S.08847, which would repeal the 1971 Hecht-Calandra Act and transfer control of admissions to New York City's specialized high schools to the City.

LS #15772
8/12/2020
CGR