



Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 1254-2020, **Version:** \*

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Res. No. 1254

Resolution calling on the New York City Department of Education to create 10 new rigorous, high quality Specialized High Schools for grades 9 through 12, distributed across all five boroughs.

By Council Members Ampry-Samuel and Kallos

Whereas, The New York City (NYC) Department of Education (DOE) manages NYC's public school system, which educates over 1,100,000 students who attend more than 1,800 schools, including over 400 high schools; and

Whereas, The DOE's 400 high schools include nine Specialized High Schools (SHS), which educate academically and/or artistically gifted students and are among the most high performing and sought-after public high schools in NYC; and

Whereas, One SHS, Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, admits students on the basis of a portfolio and audition in a talent area, while the other eight admit students based solely on their score on the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT); and

Whereas, According to an April 2019 report by the Manhattan Institute (MI), the eight test-based SHS have the highest student attendance (96%), SAT scores (1429 combined verbal and math) and college-readiness rate (99%); and

Whereas, The MI report also found SHS have higher graduation rates, 98.7% in 2017-18, compared to the overall City graduation rate of 82.8% that year; and

Whereas, Further, SHS graduates are more likely to be enrolled in college six months after graduation, with approximately 91% of SHS graduating seniors enrolled in a postsecondary program within six months of graduation in 2018, compared to an average of 64% for DOE high schools overall that year, according to the

MI report; and

Whereas, The SHS have produced notable alumni, including Nobel Laureates, Rhodes Scholars and Pulitzer Prize winners, as well as members of congress and leaders of industry; and

Whereas, However, the current student enrollment at the SHS does not reflect the diversity of the City's students overall; and

Whereas, Although approximately 67% of DOE students are Black and Latino, for the 2019-20 school year, Black and Latino students were offered only 10.5% of the seats at the eight test-based SHS; and

Whereas, The current number of SHS is inadequate to serve the number of NYC students who deserve the opportunity to pursue a more academically-demanding high school education; and

Whereas, Of the eight test-based SHS, there is just one each in Staten Island and Queens, and two each in Manhattan, Bronx and Brooklyn, with both Bronx schools located in District 10 in the north Bronx, and both Brooklyn schools located in north Brooklyn in Districts 13 and 14; and

Whereas, The low number and clustered locations of the existing SHS has created deserts, particularly in Black and Latino communities, making it more difficult for students from those neighborhoods to access them; and

Whereas, The DOE has an obligation to provide every NYC student with an equal opportunity to access the quality education provided by SHS regardless of where they live; and

Whereas, While New York State Education Law mandates that admissions to schools designated as SHS must be based on the SHSAT, the power to create or designate additional SHS lies with the DOE; and

Whereas, Creating additional SHS, particularly in neighborhoods currently underserved by the SHS system, would give more students the opportunity to qualify for SHS and foster greater equity in the NYC school system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of

Education to create 10 new rigorous, high quality Specialized High Schools for grades 9 through 12, distributed across all five boroughs.

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JA  
12/17/19