



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1713

Resolution calling on the New York City Department of Education to establish asynchronous learning programs at all Specialized High Schools and allow all New York City high school students to audit asynchronous learning program courses at Specialized High Schools provided that there is no undue burden imposed on teachers.

By Council Members Barron, Louis and Yeger

Whereas, The New York City (NYC) Department of Education (DOE) educates over 1.1 million students who attend more than 1,800 schools, including over 400 high schools and nine Specialized High Schools (SHS); and

Whereas, Pursuant to a 1971 New York State (NYS) law known as the Hecht-Calandra Act, student admission to SHS is decided solely and exclusively on their Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) scores, except for the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, which requires an audition; and

Whereas, These eight test-based high schools are NYC's most prestigious and sought after public high schools, as evidenced by DOE's admissions data; and

Whereas, According to DOE's 2021 SHS admission data, while about 23,500 eighth graders took the SHSAT during school year 2020-21, only 4,262 of these students received an offer based on their test performance; and

Whereas, According to DOE's SHS admissions data, Black and Latino students are significantly underrepresented at SHS, as they make up almost 70 percent of the City school system and over 40 percent of all students who took the SHSAT, but received just 9 percent of offers for the 2021-22 school year; and

Whereas, SHS offer opportunities to take advanced courses and earn college credit through their ample

range of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in every subject, including an emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and

Whereas, Some SHS offer courses that go beyond AP (post-AP), such as courses like multivariable calculus, genetics, and organic chemistry, which are offered at the Bronx High School for Science and Technology; and

Whereas, SHS also provide access to College Now at The City College of New York, which is a program that allows qualified NYC public high school students to enroll in courses, such as psychology, sociology, cultural diversity, and more, and earn college credit while accessing academic enrichment workshops and programs; and

Whereas, Students attending SHS have access to many language courses and diverse electives, including Latin, poetry, film, horticulture, science fiction, international relations, gastronomy, cultural anthropology, and more; and

Whereas, In 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the Equity and Excellence Agenda, which revealed that nearly 40,000 NYC high school students were enrolled in schools that did not offer any AP courses; and

Whereas, According to the DOE's AP for All initiative, one of eight initiatives included in the Equity and Excellence Agenda, the goal was for students at all 400 NYC high schools to have access to at least five AP classes by Fall 2021; and

Whereas, According to the de Blasio administration's most recent update in 2017, during the 2015-16 school year, as part of the AP for All initiative, 63 high schools offered new AP courses, and participation and performance gains were largest for Black and Latino students; and

Whereas, According to College Board, in NYC high schools that do offer AP courses, there are wide disparities in participation and performance for Black and Latino students, as well as English language learners and students with disabilities; and

Whereas, Enrolling in AP courses gives students the opportunity to earn college credit, which can raise

students' GPA and yield a better class ranking and a more competitive college application; and

Whereas, Research shows that the rigor of AP courses and exams better prepares students for college, and students who take AP courses and exams are more likely to graduate college on time; and

Whereas, Even with the expansion of AP courses across all NYC high schools, many non-SHS do not offer the comprehensive variety of AP, Post-AP, STEM and College Now courses and diverse electives that are accessible at SHS; and

Whereas, Asynchronous learning programs, which offer flexibility by allowing students to complete coursework at their own pace, can be accessed and downloaded on any remote device at any time of day to accommodate the schedules of non-SHS students; and

Whereas, Asynchronous learning programs at SHS could serve as a way to allow all NYC high school students access to remote and self-paced AP, Post-AP, STEM and College Now courses and diverse electives; and

Whereas, Asynchronous learning programs provide immediate, automated feedback and allow students to review and edit any incorrect coursework submitted, therefore, any undue burden of grading additional assignments would not be imposed on teachers; and

Whereas, Establishing and allowing all NYC high school students access to asynchronous learning programs at SHS, could provide a more equitable learning experience for each student and greater opportunity to excel academically; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York City Department of Education to establish asynchronous learning programs at all Specialized High Schools and allow all New York City high school students to audit asynchronous learning program courses at Specialized High Schools, provided that there is no undue burden imposed on teachers.

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