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Int. No. 546

By Council Members Feliz, Ung, Dinowitz, Louis, Brewer and Morano

A Local Law in relation to requiring the department of education to create a plan to provide specialized high schools exam preparation to all middle school students

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Universal specialized high schools admissions test preparation plan. a. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Department. The term “department” means the department of education.

Dream program. The term “dream program” means the department of education Saturday and summer academic program that prepares eligible seventh grade New York City public school students to take the specialized high schools admissions test in the eighth grade.

School. The term “school” means a school of the city school district of the city of New York.

Student. The term “student” means a pupil attending a school.

b. No later than 180 days after the effective date of this local law, the department shall submit to the speaker of the council, and post conspicuously on the department’s website, a report regarding its efforts to implement a universal specialized high schools admissions test preparation plan for all middle school students in the next two years. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

1. For each middle school, whether the school: (i) offers the dream program; (ii) does not offer the dream program; (ii) the total number of students that participated in the dream program, disaggregated by race or ethnicity, gender, special education status, and English language status; and (iii) the average scores for the state of New York English language arts and mathematics tests, disaggregated by grades 7 and 8 for the prior

academic year;

2. A description of the steps the department will take to expand the dream program to provide automatic access to all seventh grade students that wish to partake in such program;

3. For each school, a list of specialized high schools admissions test preparation programs that are offered in schools, disaggregated by: (i) those that are free of charge; (ii) those that have a cost associated with such program; and (iii) what time of year such program is offered. The department shall also include, to the extent such information is available, how many students participated in such programs and which school such students attend;

5. A description of steps the department will take to ensure that all students have access to test preparation programs that are free of charge;

6. A description of the steps the department will take to ensure that every seventh and eighth grade student will have the necessary preparation materials to take the specialized high schools admissions test, including making such preparation materials available in the designated citywide languages as defined in section 23-1101 of the administrative code of the city of New York and shall include an opt-out to enable a student to not have to take the specialized high schools admissions test;

7. A cost estimate for implementing such preparation plan; and

8. Barriers, if any, to the department's ability to implement a universal specialized high schools admissions test preparation plan.

c. No later than December 1, 2023, the department shall develop a student survey to assess the general awareness and preparedness of students to take the specialized high schools admissions test. The department shall make such survey available to all students taking the specialized high schools admissions test. The department shall ensure that each such student is advised that such survey is not mandatory or required as part of such student's academic career. In addition, such survey shall include questions, that may be completed in full or in part, at the discretion of the student respondent, including race, ethnicity, gender, first language and

family income. The department shall make the results of such survey available to the speaker of the council and posted on its website no later than 60 days following the administration of such survey. The department shall use such survey to assess students regarding the following:

1. Whether such student attended a public school, private school or charter school prior to admittance to a specialized high school;

2. Whether such student took test preparation in advance of taking the specialized high schools admissions test, whether such preparation was administered by the department of education and if such preparation was not administered by the department, then how such student prepared;

3. Whether such student took practice exams and how many;

4. How such student was made aware of the specialized high schools admissions test;

5. How prepared such student felt in taking the specialized high schools admissions test; and

6. Any other such questions the department may designate.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately and is deemed repealed upon submission of the report required pursuant to section one of this local law.

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