



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NYC Parents are “Extremely Concerned” about Unfair Changes to Screened Schools Admissions

Over 92% of parents surveyed by Parent Leaders for Accelerated Curriculum and Education (PLACE NYC) are “Extremely or Very Concerned” about possible changes to school admissions in the wake of the newly announced DOE grading policy which reduces all final End of Year grades to “meets standards” or “needs improvement”.

Chancellor Carranza told school leaders in April that one should “never waste a good crisis” when discussing policy for promotion and graduation. Many parents fear that means the Chancellor will use the pandemic as cover to remove highly coveted screened schools and programs. Nine in ten parents surveyed believe next year’s admission process will be “less fair” according to a survey.

Parents unhappy with the grading policy and resulting impact on admissions tried to attend a virtual PEP (Panel for Educational Policy) meeting on April 29 to address the Chancellor directly but the platform crashed due to the high volume. “I have no faith in the DOE making fair admission policy for this coming up high school admission for all the students! I am extremely concerned.” said a parent.

NYC middle and high school admissions normally use three factors for screened academic programs—final grades, state tests, and attendance. Some schools also administer their own school-specific assessments. Last week’s decision to use a binary non-number final grade (Meets Standards/Needs Improvement) for students in K through 8th grade, coupled with the cancellation of State Tests and the previous decision to not use attendance data, means that schools currently have 0 of 3 of the most common metrics used for admissions.

A clear majority of parents surveyed want schools to continue using the three most common metrics in some way. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of parents would like report card grades to be used. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of parents surveyed want state test scores to be included in admissions decisions. Sixty percent (60%) of parents surveyed felt attendance prior to school closure should remain a factor. Furthermore, parents want screened schools in NYC to continue the way they are: the majority (56%) of parents wants admissions criteria to be decided by each

school; followed by the district (26%). One in six (17%) surveyed said admission criteria should be decided by the DOE citywide.

The uncertainty of the upcoming middle and high school admissions has added to the already stressed lives of families dealing with their children's remote learning and personal hardships. For the following academic school year, NYC parents clearly want the DOE to obtain parent input on admission policy using—online surveys (40%); public forums (31%), and working with parent advocacy groups (29%), although one parent noted “the DOE is too influenced by certain advocacy groups more than others.”

The DOE has many options to approximate the normal 3-metric admissions rubric and offer families the stability of processes that parents are familiar with during these stressful uncertain times. PLACE NYC recommends the DOE take the following course of action for the 2020 middle and high school application process:

- Seek parent input to shape admissions policy
- Preserve school and district independence on admissions criteria
- Use prior year's state test scores (2019) or encourage the state to administer state tests (2020) when schools reopen
- Use the marking period grades earned before remote learning
- Use attendance prior to school closure
- Provide a clear notice of fall 2020 screened admissions to parents no later than the end of May

PLACE NYC compiled these findings from over 1,000 survey responses. Respondents were public school families throughout the five boroughs and 23 school districts, of which nearly 70% have a child applying to middle or high school in the fall.

About PLACE NYC (<https://www.placenyc.org>)

PLACE advocates for a rigorous curriculum for all students in all schools, more G&T programs with a focus on neighborhoods currently lacking programs, additional Specialized High Schools to accommodate the overwhelming demand for rigorous academics, and increase awareness and preparation for the availability of SHSAT. PLACE NYC is the creator of Friends of Accelerated Curriculum and Education in NYC. (Facebook - Friends of Accelerated Curriculum and Education in NYC) with over 800 members and growing consisting of parents and supporters of accelerated curricula and accelerated education.

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