

NYCDOE's Response to NYSED's May 31st Letter Regarding SIG

Question #4:

Provide information about changes that will be made to the admissions process at the proposed Turnaround schools and/or district enrollment policies in response to concerns that SED has raised to NYCDOE regarding disproportionate numbers of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students that are performing below grade level being admitted to these schools. The requested additional information should show that the replacement schools will newly enroll a more nearly comparable percentage of high needs students as the community school or citywide district average. While SED is fully aware that NYCDOE operates a choice system for its high schools, we also believe that NYCDOE through the mixture of the type of seats it allocates to schools, the way in which it assigns Over The Counter (OTC) students, and the way in which it allocates funds to turnaround schools has the capacity to delimit the degree to which a school's entering class is disproportionately comprised of high need students.

Overview

Developing a choice-based system for enrolling students to schools has been a cornerstone of New York City's Children First Reform efforts. Each year, NYC manages admissions processes for approximately 300,000 students from pre-K to high school. Year after year, these admissions processes consistently match the overwhelming majority of students to their top choices. For example, for the past 5 years, the high schools admissions process has matched over 80% of students to one of their top five choices. This past November, the Brookings Institution issued a report heralding New York City's school-choice system as the most effective of any of the nation's largest school districts. The report cited evidence that New York City's portfolio reforms had increased – and made more equitable – access to high-quality educational options.

But we acknowledge that there is still more work to do. Over the past 18 months, NYC has been working with the New York State Education Department to address its concerns about situations where our choice-based system may be leading to an over-concentration of students with disabilities, English language learners, and/or students that are performing below proficiency¹ in certain schools. Since implementing a choice system in New York City, we have continued to refine our admissions policies and processes to balance student demand while ensuring that all schools are able to succeed with the mix of students they enroll. Three recent citywide reform efforts are emblematic of the work we are doing to ensure that schools are serving an appropriate mix of students and have the right resources to do so.

- **“Over the Counter” Reform**

Each summer, the Office of Student Enrollment opens temporary registration centers across the city to assist families with placement and hardship transfers during the peak enrollment period. Approximately 15,000 new or returning students are placed during peak OTC. Placements are made based on projected seat availability, as determined by a school's projected 10/31 enrollment. The goal of peak OTC is to find appropriate placements for students, while helping each school achieve its targeted register.

Last summer, in an effort to increase high-quality options available for new students and minimize impact of OTC placements at struggling schools, additional seats were added to every high school's OTC projection. As a result, we increased student access to diverse high school programs across the city and we minimized the impact of OTC placements at low performing schools.

- 797 placements were made at 54 high schools that were initially projected for no OTC placements.
- 269 schools received more OTC placements than they were originally projected to receive. This resulted in an additional 2,880 OTC placements in these schools.

Additionally, as a result of the addition of OTC seats across the city, the number of OTC placements at Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) high schools was reduced. We made significantly fewer OTC placements at PLA schools this

¹ We are defining “students that are performing below proficiency” as students scoring Level 1 or Level 2 in NY State ELA and Math assessments.

year compared to last year, especially within the high needs categories of Overage, ELL and Students with Disabilities (Special Class & ICT). PLA schools (regardless of whether they were in a SIG model or not) received significantly fewer harder-to-serve students through the OTC process in 2011, when compared to 2010. In 2010, 1,936 students in one or more of these subgroups were placed at PLA schools via the OTC process. In 2011, only 1,421 students in one or more of these subgroups received an OTC placement at a PLA school. NYC is seeking to augment this work in the 2012-2013 school year.

- **Increasing Access through “de-screening” programs**

NYC has also begun to alter the composition of seats for students in the High School Admissions Process by de-screening seats in lower demand programs. Typically, schools that have screened programs are allowed to rank students who meet that program’s admissions criteria and only those students who are ranked may be matched to that school. However, this has historically led to situations where students who may be just slightly under the admissions criteria are denied access to a high-quality seat, while the school’s seat goes unfilled.

As a pilot program this year, the DOE began de-screening seats in programs that were not filling their seat targets in order to provide more access to students. The work of de-screening approximately 20 programs resulted in the placement of more than 800 students into academically screened seats that that would have otherwise gone unfilled. This created more available seats for OTC students at a wider range of schools. Next year, NYC is looking to further expand this pilot to ensure that students have a greater level of access to historically screened seats.

- **Fair Student Funding Resources**

In order to support all schools to meet the challenges of instructing hard-to-serve students, NYC has made some modifications to its Fair Student Funding formula. Within this funding formula, additional “weights” are provided to schools to serve students with particular needs. This includes weights for Academic Intervention Services (AIS), English Language Learners (ELL), and Special Education Services. Therefore, schools with large populations of students who are eligible for these services are already receiving a greater proportion of funds. However, this year, NYC revised the methodology for these weights to provide additional financial support to traditional high schools serving overage under-credited (OAUC) students. In the past, only Transfer Schools had received additional FSF funding for serving OAUC students. This shift in the funding formula is an acknowledgement that all schools serving OAUC students deserve additional resources to do so. With this additional weighting, many of our new replacement high schools will have additional funds to ensure that they are prepared to support the needs of their students who have fallen behind in terms of credit accumulation.

Conclusion

As described above, NYC through improvements to its enrollment processes continues to refine and expand upon a school-choice system that is an exemplar that districts nationwide seek to replicate. We recognize that our system is not perfect, and seek to make continuous revisions both to the enrollment processes themselves and to the school funding formulas, where necessary, to alleviate any unintended ill effects. We look forward to working with NYSED to continue to discuss these issues and develop solutions that meet our mutual goal of increased student achievement.

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Analysis of 24 Schools Proposed for Closure and Replacement

NYCDOE has conducted an analysis comparing the demographics of the 24 schools applying for the Turnaround model to their district (if a middle school) and borough (if a high school). In schools where the student populations are greater than one standard deviation from the district/borough average, we have highlighted that in the charts below.

In order to determine whether these schools are enrolling students who are further behind academically than their district or borough peers, we analyzed the 2011-2012 state test scores of all of the students in these schools and compared that number to their respective borough or district average. For the high schools, we compared the average combined 8th grade ELA and Math score for all of the students in the school to their borough’s average. For the middle schools, we compared the average combined 4th grade ELA and Math score for all of the students in the school to their district’s average. In terms of student performance, 16 of 17 high schools undergoing Turnaround

serve a population of students that is similar to the rest of the schools in their respective borough. For the middle schools, 1 of 7 serves a population of students that is similar to the rest of the schools in the district.

Chart 1: State Test Performance of Students Prior to Enrollment at 17 High Schools Proposed for Closure and Replacement Compared to Borough Average

DBN	School	School	Borough
		8th Grade Math/ELA	8th Grade Math/ELA
27Q400	AUGUST MARTIN HIGH SCHOOL	2.46	2.85
14K610	AUTOMOTIVE HIGH SCHOOL	2.42	2.62
07X600	ALFRED E SMITH CAREER-TECH HIGH SCH	2.35	2.53
08X405	HERBERT H LEHMAN HIGH SCHOOL	2.60	2.53
02M625	HS OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION ARTS	2.54	2.79
30Q450	LONG ISLAND CITY HIGH SCHOOL	2.72	2.85
27Q480	JOHN ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL	2.54	2.85
08X530	BANANA KELLY HIGH SCHOOL	2.38	2.53
05M685	Bread & Roses Integrated Arts High School	2.38	2.79
10X438	FORDHAM LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	2.45	2.53
27Q475	RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL	2.56	2.85
22K495	SHEEPSHEAD BAY HIGH SCHOOL	2.50	2.62
30Q445	WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT HIGH SCHOOL	2.72	2.85
21K540	JOHN DEWEY HIGH SCHOOL	2.78	2.62
09X412	BRONX HIGH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS	2.36	2.53
25Q460	FLUSHING HIGH SCHOOL	2.64	2.85
24Q455	NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL	2.54	2.85

Chart 2: State Test Performance of Students Prior to Enrollment at 7 Middle Schools Proposed for Closure and Replacement Compared to District Average

DBN	School	School	District
		4th Grade Math/ELA	4th Grade Math/ELA
09X022	JHS 22 JORDAN L MOTT	2.63	2.75
09X339	IS 339	2.54	2.75

10X080	JHS 80 MOSHOLU PARKWAY	2.53	2.83
10X391	MS 391	2.48	2.83
11X142	JHS 142 JOHN PHILIP SOUSA	2.67	2.91
14K126	JOHN ERICSSON MIDDLE SCHOOL 126	2.54	2.89
19K166	JHS 166 GEORGE GERSHWIN	2.42	2.85

In order to assess the concentration of students with disabilities, we compared the current percentage of students with IEPs at each school to the percentage from their respective borough or district. In regards to this subgroup, 15 of 17 high schools undergoing Turnaround serve a population of students that is similar to the rest of the schools in their respective borough. For the middle schools, 4 of 7 serve a population of students that is similar to the rest of the schools in the district.

Chart 3: % SWD at 17 High Schools Proposed for Closure and Replacement Compared to Borough Average

DBN	School	School	Borough
		% SWD	% SWD
27Q400	AUGUST MARTIN HIGH SCHOOL	19%	12%
14K610	AUTOMOTIVE HIGH SCHOOL	25%	16%
07X600	ALFRED E SMITH CAREER-TECH HIGH SCH	24%	17%
08X405	HERBERT H LEHMAN HIGH SCHOOL	21%	17%
02M625	HS OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION ARTS	18%	14%
30Q450	LONG ISLAND CITY HIGH SCHOOL	13%	12%
27Q480	JOHN ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL	13%	12%
08X530	BANANA KELLY HIGH SCHOOL	21%	17%
05M685	Bread & Roses Integrated Arts High School	20%	14%
10X438	FORDHAM LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	21%	17%
27Q475	RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL	14%	12%
22K495	SHEEPSHEAD BAY HIGH SCHOOL	13%	16%
30Q445	WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT HIGH SCHOOL	12%	12%
21K540	JOHN DEWEY HIGH SCHOOL	9%	16%
09X412	BRONX HIGH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS	22%	17%
25Q460	FLUSHING HIGH SCHOOL	12%	12%
24Q455	NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL	10%	12%

Chart 4: % SWD at 7 Middle Schools Proposed for Closure and Replacement Compared to District Average

DBN	School	School	District
		% SWD	% SWD
09X022	JHS 22 JORDAN L MOTT	17%	20%
09X339	IS 339	25%	20%
10X080	JHS 80 MOSHOLU PARKWAY	22%	20%

10X391	MS 391	26%	20%
11X142	JHS 142 JOHN PHILIP SOUSA	21%	18%
14K126	JOHN ERICSSON MIDDLE SCHOOL 126	35%	21%
19K166	JHS 166 GEORGE GERSHWIN	29%	15%

Finally, we compared the current percentage of students identified as English Language Learners at each school to the percentage from their respective borough or district. In regards to this subgroup, 16 of 17 high schools undergoing Turnaround serve a population of students that is similar to the rest of the schools in their respective borough. For the middle schools, 6 of 7 serve a population of students that is similar to the rest of the schools in the district.

Chart 5: % ELL at 17 High Schools Proposed for Closure and Replacement Compared to Borough Average

DBN	School	School	Borough
		% ELL	% ELL
27Q400	AUGUST MARTIN HIGH SCHOOL	4%	13%
14K610	AUTOMOTIVE HIGH SCHOOL	5%	10%
07X600	ALFRED E SMITH CAREER-TECH HIGH SCH	10%	17%
08X405	HERBERT H LEHMAN HIGH SCHOOL	10%	17%
02M625	HS OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION ARTS	11%	14%
30Q450	LONG ISLAND CITY HIGH SCHOOL	14%	13%
27Q480	JOHN ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL	16%	13%
08X530	BANANA KELLY HIGH SCHOOL	16%	17%
05M685	Bread & Roses Integrated Arts High School	17%	14%
10X438	FORDHAM LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	17%	17%
27Q475	RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL	17%	13%
22K495	SHEEPSHEAD BAY HIGH SCHOOL	19%	10%
30Q445	WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT HIGH SCHOOL	19%	13%
21K540	JOHN DEWEY HIGH SCHOOL	20%	10%
09X412	BRONX HIGH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS	21%	17%
25Q460	FLUSHING HIGH SCHOOL	22%	13%
24Q455	NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL	32%	13%

Chart 6: % ELL at 7 Middle Schools Proposed for Closure and Replacement Compared to District Average

DBN	School	School	District
		% ELL	% ELL
09X022	JHS 22 JORDAN L MOTT	37%	25%
09X339	IS 339	32%	25%
10X080	JHS 80 MOSHOLU PARKWAY	30%	25%
10X391	MS 391	30%	25%
11X142	JHS 142 JOHN PHILIP SOUSA	5%	9%

14K126	JOHN ERICSSON MIDDLE SCHOOL 126	20%	16%
19K166	JHS 166 GEORGE GERSHWIN	6%	11%

As shown above, over-concentration of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students that are performing below proficiency is not systematically occurring across the 24 schools proposed for closure and replacement. In 13 of the 24, the student population of the schools is within one standard deviation of the borough or district average in all the subgroups.

DOE is committed to working with all the schools described above, especially those with the highest enrollments of special needs students, to help manage their enrollments and to ensure that they are equipped to accommodate the academic needs of their students.

To that end, NYCDOE is committing to implement a number of interventions at these 24 schools whenever during the SIG grant implementation period concentrations of subgroups greater than one standard deviation from the Community School District average (for middle schools) or borough average (for high schools) occur.

- **Reducing OTC Enrollment**

In schools that serve a percentage of students in a subgroup that is greater than one standard deviation from the district or borough-wide average (as applicable) for that subgroup, NYCDOE will aggressively pursue reducing the OTC enrollment at those schools as consistent with applicable state or federal statutes and regulations, including but not limited to Title VI, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the IDEA. The Department will do this through limiting OTC placements at the 24 schools, advising all OTC students of their school choices, including schools not proposed to implement the Turnaround model, and OTC reform (described below).

- **OTC Reform**

As discussed earlier, NYCDOE in the process of making additional seats available citywide to accommodate over-the-counter placements, which will lessen the concentration of over-the-counter students at any one school. For the schools noted above which exceed one standard deviation in a subgroup, we will analyze the percentage of their current new admits who are students with disabilities, English language learners, and students that are performing below proficiency and take action to better balance new admissions. The NYCDOE will monitor the school's OTC admits to avoid exacerbating this concentration even further.

- **New School Student Recruitment Support**

We know based on the track record of our existing new schools that new schools have the potential and ability to attract many more students to them. We believe that these new schools which the DOE has proposed to open have created new programs that will attract significant numbers of students of different types who might not have been drawn to the closing school. In addition, we will continue to support these schools and every new school with recruitment through admissions fairs and other marketing efforts.

- **New Screened Programs**

NYCDOE has been able to successfully develop a number of programs and schools that provide students with opportunities to aggressively pursue college level coursework while in high school. To draw a more diverse population of students, the NYCDOE will create new selective programs beginning in the 2013-14 school year in any of the 24 schools that as of BEDS day 2012 has an enrollment of Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and/or students that are performing below proficiency that is greater than one standard deviation from the Community School District average (for middle schools) or borough average (for high schools)

- **Instructional Support**

Ultimately, regardless of the population of students enrolled at any single school, the NYCDOE is committed to ensuring that all schools have the appropriate instructional support and services to serve all of their students. This includes ELLs, students with disabilities and students that are performing below proficiency.