**Community Education Council 24**

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**New York City Department of Education**

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***Resolution No. 148***

***For the creation of New Specialized High Schools in Queens***

WHEREAS, New York City has nine public high schools which are designated at Specialized High Schools (the “SHS”): the Bronx High School of Science (“Bronx Science”); the Brooklyn Latin School; Brooklyn Technical High School (“Brooklyn Tech”); High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College of New York; High School of American Studies at Lehman College; Queens High School for the Sciences at York College; Staten Island Technical High School; Stuyvesant High School (“Stuyvesant”); and La Guardia High School.

WHEREAS, except for La Guardia, admission to the SHS is gained by the students taking the Specialized High School Admissions Test (“SHSAT”)[[1]](#footnote-1). Offers to SHS are made based on a student’s score and the student’s ranked order of preference, but do not consider geographic priorities that may exist for certain non-Specialized High Schools, including borough priorities or zoned schools.

WHEREAS the three largest SHSAT-based SHS are Brooklyn Tech, Stuyvesant, and Bronx Science with 12,199 9-12 students out of 15,732 (77.5%).

WHEREAS, according to the New York City Department of Education’s website, *“in a typical year, approximately 28,000 students take the SHSAT, and about 5,000 of those students receive an offer*”, evidencing a significant interest for the SHS and an insufficient number of seats with 5.6x applicant per seat.

WHEREAS, recognizing the appeal and the performance of SHS, Mayor Adams has repeatedly stated his support for SHS. As Brooklyn Borough President, Mr. Adams said he was *“expanding on [his] existing call for new borough-based specialized high schools by recommending five such schools be created, one in each borough, with admissions considerations that include the SHSAT and academic portfolio standards such as class rank and state test scores*”[[2]](#footnote-2), and again reiterated his position during the democratic primary and the mayoral campaign in 2021.

WHEREAS students who reside in the borough of Queens represent the largest percentage of 9th graders admitted in almost all the test based SHS (except for Staten Island Tech). The percentage is 36% overall for all offers made and 38% for the three largest SHS[[3]](#footnote-3), with the full breakdown per school provided in **Appendix A**.

WHEREAS approximately 55% of the students in SHS are economically disadvantaged; the numbers are broken down by school in **Appendix B**.

WHEREAS there is only one SHS located in Queens, Queens High School for the Sciences at York College (“QHSS at York”), with 511 students currently enrolled from 9th to 12th grade, and only 116 seats offered for 9th grade admissions in the fall of 2022 – representing only 3% of the SHS seats for 9th grade admissions and for 9-12 students, as illustrated in **Appendix C**. In addition to being small, the school is also difficult to access via public transportation given its location in Jamaica, Queens.

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2021, the Citywide Council on High School voted on and passed a resolution opposing the removal of borough priorities for high school admissions. This resolution highlighted the shortfall of high school seats in Queens, which translates in severely overcrowded high schools and forces 12,394 students to commute to a different borough to attend high school[[4]](#footnote-4).

WHEREAS, that same resolution highlighted that Queens is a “transportation desert”, with many students’ homes not located near public train stations, and certain neighborhoods solely accessible by bus.

WHEREAS Queens’ students attending SHS in other boroughs experience very long commutes – in some instances close to two hours each way. The commutes often require multiple transfers on buses and subways. Many families must drive their children to a train station where the students continue their commute on public transit. **Appendix D** provides some color on the commutes experienced by Queens’ students to Bronx Science, Stuyvesant and Brooklyn Tech based on interviews with families conducted by the CCHS.

WHEREAS, private bus services have been in existence to address this lack of transportation, but they come at a very high cost. For instance, Citi Bus, a private company, transports a student from Jamaica Estates, Queens to Bronx Science and back at a cost of $4,850/year, imposing an enormous financial hardship on families, especially those with several children in SHS.

WHEREAS the length of the commute to SHS forces students to wake up as early as 5AM to catch a 6AM bus, resulting in a lack of sleep which is detrimental for teenagers. Similarly, the long commute back from school is a deterrent for students when considering a participation in after-school activities such as sports teams and extracurriculars and clubs.

WHEREAS CCHS understand siting and building new high schools in Queens is a complex and lengthy process. In addition to the lack of available sites, several projects experienced local opposition and NIMBYism, as explained by Senator John Liu at the CCHS meeting held on November 18, 2021.

WHEREAS, a new school building, Q472, is currently in construction in Woodside (District 30), at 51-30 Northern Boulevard, Queens and is currently scheduled to open for the 2025-2026 school year. The building has approximately 3,079 seats[[5]](#footnote-5) and will include a small D75 program. Another new high school, Gotham Tech High School (30Q417) is being considered to move into the new building once completed.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that additional SHS should be created in every borough of New York City, fulfilling one of Mayor Adams’ campaign promise.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that acceptance into a SHS, in addition to scores on the SHSAT, will rely on supplemental metrics which may include Grade Point Average, Graduation from an Intermediary School at a predetermined high rank (e.g. top 5% rank of a class), and State ELA and Math test scores.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that all families with 7th Grade students enrolled in a DOE school receive abundant and timely notification of the SHSAT and that all 7th Graders who wish to take the SHSAT be prepared for the exam with proper and sufficient guidance and teaching in addition to regular coursework.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the NYC DOE must prioritize the creation of several SHS in Queens to address the fact that the borough of Queens is blatantly underserved in terms of seats available, causing disproportionate hardship to the high school students residing in Queens and currently attending SHS in other boroughs. Several SHS are needed in Queens given the geography of the borough and limited public transportation options, as QHHS is difficult to access from Western Queens and from Southeastern Queens.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that a new SHS be sited in the new Q472 building on Northern Boulevard, with a planned opening at full capacity to serve high schoolers (9-12) as early as 2025-2026. Q472’s location on Northern Boulevard, near multiple public transportation options, make it an ideal space to house a new SHS serving Western Queens. Prior to the building opening in the fall of 2025, the new SHS could be incubated in a collocated space, starting with a 9th grade class as early as fall of 2022.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the NYC DOE explores options for an expansion of QHHS at York, including by moving the school to a larger building.

**Appendix A** – Percentage and numbers of students residing in Queens in the test-based SHS, for 2018-19 (updated information was requested from the Office of Student Enrollment)



**Appendix B**: Percentage of economically disadvantaged students in test based SHS for 2020-21

Table

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*Source: https://data.nysed.gov/*

**Appendix C**: Availability of SHS seats per borough

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*Source: Myschools, November 2021*



*Source: MySchools, November 2021*

**Appendix D**: Selected interviews with Queens families of SHS students commuting from Queens to Bronx Science, Stuyvesant and Brooklyn Tech

Family #1:

* Two children at Bronx Science, one of whom has graduated
* Living in Fresh Meadows, Queens, where there is no subway
* Child attending Bronx Science takes a private bus, cost is > $4,500 for the year
* Bus pickup is between 6 and 6.30AM, the ride takes between 1h and 1h15min
* Both children started doing extracurriculars and sports but dropped after a few months, because they got home very late and then had a lot of homework after that

Family #2:

* One child, Freshman in Bronx Science
* Living in Astoria
* Child takes a private bus which picks up at 6.55AM, cost is $4,850
* Commute via public transportation would be an hour with subway change
* In the evening, there are 3 “late buses” for children attending Small Group Instruction (SGI), clubs and sports – but those buses make fewer stops, requiring a mile walk from the drop off point

Family #3:

* Twins at Bronx Science
* Living in Astoria
* Children take the private bus, for which the cost is over $9,000 / year for the family
* One hour to go, almost 1h30 to come back given traffic
* Length of commute limits their ability to participate in extracurricular activities
* Visited the York College SHS but was an even longer commute from Astoria

Family #4

* Two children: one at Bronx Science and one at Brooklyn Tech
* Living in Jackson Heights
* For Bronx Science:
  + Paid for the bus the first year but pandemic hit and company did not refund families; following year was remote, and now the child is commuting by public transportation (2 subways, takes 1h30, including a 15-minute walk between home and the train station).
  + Child participates in after school clubs and feels comfortable getting home by train, but parents are concerned about safety walking from the station while it is dark
  + Price of the new bus service is prohibitive for the family
* Child in Brooklyn Tech:
  + Takes the subway, with a change. Only one subway option, sometimes the family pays for an Uber when service is disrupted.
  + After school options are limited (track rather than teams as teams have late practice)
* Would have loved to have a strong STEM school option in Queens

Family #5:

* Sophomore in Bronx Science
* Living in Whitestone, Queens
* Child has ADHD and high anxiety and is not comfortable with the bus option and stress induced by bus delays
* A parent drives the child to school and back every day, significant cost of fuel and tolls but no other choice. Takes between 25 and 45 minutes but must travel before 7AM
* Have unsuccessfully attempted to get an IEP and applied for smaller bus service
* Looked at York College but school was small and far from their home too

Family #6:

* Junior at Bronx Science
* Living in Jackson Heights
* Citibus (private bus), leaves at 6.45am, takes 30 min to an hour depending on traffic; 45 min to an hour at night, but later bus drops off in Astoria and the child must then take the subway to get home, totaling 1h30
* Alternative is 2-3 transfers and 1:30hr on the subway
* Child is on a sports team in the fall and gets home after 7PM on a good day – then has about 3 hours of homework / night and is very tired
* Would have loved a SHS in Queens

Family #7

* Two children currently attending Stuyvesant
* Living in Little Neck, where there is no subway
* Children take an MTA bus to the LIRR station, and finally the subway to get to school. The commute takes 1h20min but if the MTA bus is late, they can miss the LIRR train. If the children start school early, then a parent must drive them to the LIRR station at 6:20AM
* There is a private bus which would cost $4,000/child but the family cannot afford it. The bus also takes 1h30 given the traffic
* The after-school commute takes an additional 30 minutes because the LIRR train is less frequent. The children get home around 5:30 or 6PM if they do not have afterschool.
* Both have afterschool activities (clubs and sports) several days a week and typically get home at 7:30PM; they typically finish their homework around 11PM but the homework load is lighter since COVID. Pre-COVID, the first child finished around 1AM because of the late start due to the commute.

The family considered the SHS at York College, but the commute is inconvenient also and the children would have had to take multiple buses to get there.

Voted and approved by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enroll-grade-by-grade/specialized-high-schools> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://amsterdamnews.com/news/2018/07/02/bp-eric-adams-states-his-shsat-position/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Source: DOE office of enrollment, data for school year* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *CCHS Resolution 20212022-02* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [*http://www.nycsca.org/Community/New-School-Sites*](http://www.nycsca.org/Community/New-School-Sites) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)