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Ghada Amin Maya Rozenblat- ELL Rep
Jona Isufi Joyce Xie
Li Ping Jiang Kevin Zhao- BBP Appointee

Resolution 5 (SY22-23)

Resolution Requesting District 20 Implement Academic Screened Middle School Programs

Resolution Vote

1. Steve Stowe -
2. Jennifer Hu -
3. Elizabeth Chan -
4. Vito LaBella -
5. Marie Brugueras -
6. Ghada Amin -
7. Jona Isufi -
8. Li Ping Jiang -
9. Maya Rozenblat -
10. Joyce Xie -
11. Kevin Zhao -

Co-Sponsors: Stephen Stowe, Vito LaBella

WHEREAS, within the New York City school governance framework, Community Education Council's (CEC) are the State-designated representatives of parents with children in grades PK - 8¹. Elected CEC members are the only publicly-elected PK - 8 parent representatives in the NYC school governance framework.

WHEREAS, in public elections held in the spring of 2021, District 20 voters cast the 2nd highest number of votes and had the 2nd highest number of voters among all CEC's in the City (Appendix 1). The high voter turnout and the resulting makeup of the CEC in District 20 is in large part due to the dissatisfaction many families in the District felt toward admission policy reforms made under the former administration of Mayor Bill DeBlasio. The election established a clear mandate for the current CEC to seek reversal of those policy changes.

WHEREAS, on September 29th, the Department of Education (DOE) published middle and high school admissions policy for students applying for SY 22 - 23. This policy reads (emphasis added):

"The middle school application will open on October 26th, and the deadline to apply is December 1st. Students will receive offers in April. **Superintendents will partner with school communities' leadership, staff, and parents to thoughtfully determine if and where middle school screened programs should exist based on instructional and community needs.** Where screening is allowed, students would be ranked based on a composite of their course grades from fourth grade. **The number of academically screened schools will be limited and based on the needs of the community.** Screens will be determined by the start of the Middle School Admissions process on October 26th"².

¹ New York State Education Law - Title II, Article 52A, Section 2590-E; <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/2590-E>

² New York City Department of Education, "Chancellor Banks Announces Admissions Process Built on Community Feedback", September 29, 2022

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/news/announcements/contentdetails/2022/09/29/chancellor-banks-announces-admissions-process-built-on-community-feedback>

WHEREAS, on a conference call with CCEC Presidents on October 8, Chancellor David Banks and Deputy Chancellor Dr. Desmond Blackburn expressed their intention that parent voices should be heard in the decision of whether to utilize academic screens at Middle Schools.

WHEREAS, in District 20 the process has begun with Middle School Principal's required to engage with their School Leadership Team's (SLT's) to solicit feedback on whether to resume the use of academic screening at their middle schools. Not required but suggested was to engage with the school Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's) for additional feedback. Following these feedback sessions, Middle School Principal's are to recommend whether or not to implement academic screen programs at their respective schools. If recommended, the Principal is to provide a proposal supporting the use of academic screens and how the educational program for students admitted under this method will be differentiated and implemented. This is due to the Superintendent by October 14th. After this, the Superintendent will decide which Middle School's will be allowed to resume the use of academic screens.

WHEREAS, a process based on soliciting feedback primarily from families currently at Middle Schools is inherently biased as any incumbent family will seek to preserve a system under which they have benefited.

WHEREAS, the primary stakeholders in the decision on whether to change future Middle School admissions are families who have not yet entered the process. In other words, families with children currently in Elementary Schools must be the primary parent voices heard in this process. Chancellor Banks signaled support for this premise in the conference call on October 8th, stating that families whose children would be entering Middle School in the next 1 - 2 years should be heard in the decision-making process.

WHEREAS, school administration and staff are key partners in the education of our children. They possess expertise and experience that parents do not and should be granted wide latitude to implement approved policy. However, parents are the ultimate and sole "customer" in the public education system. In addition, SLT's are often led by the school staff with the Principal typically exercising a highly influential role. Parents - not school staff - should be the primary voice guiding high level policy direction, including the decision on whether to resume academic screens at Middle Schools. Implementation and execution is then entrusted to the District, the Principal and school staff.

WHEREAS, when the CEC in District 20 was initially notified regarding the engagement plan, a pledge was made that CEC liaison members and the CEC President would be invited to school engagement sessions. However, CEC members have generally not been notified or invited to engagement sessions as of the writing of this resolution.

WHEREAS, under the current lottery-based system of admission, District 20 families fared the worst in the entire City in attaining acceptance to their most preferred Middle School programs. Specifically, only 84% of District 20 families were matched to one of their top 5 ranked Middle School programs, 10 percentage points below the City figure of 94% (Appendix 2). This likely reflects a large number of families in the District all ranking the same, small number of reputable Middle School programs very high. The data showing how District 20 families ranked schools has been requested from the Office of Student Enrollment but is not available at this time.

WHEREAS, the District rightfully seeks to promote academic offerings at all Middle Schools throughout the District. There are many unique offerings at District 20 Middle Schools. However, there is a certain type of academic program sought by many families in the District which is based on the use of academic metrics to screen students for admission. Families request such Middle School programs for a variety of reasons. These include the benefits of ability grouping both for more productive learning and teaching, the predictability and certainty such programs offer within a large and at times confusing system, and ensuring that a Middle School

educational program will prepare their children for the most academically competitive high schools and colleges.

WHEREAS, defining the programming and learning goals of such screened programs is best left to Principals, Teachers and education experts. Some suggested considerations could be academic coursework that exceeds the requirements of the State Regents curriculum, coursework that is on par with high school Advanced Placement (AP) classes, a curriculum that is designed in partnership with the NYC Specialized High Schools, or offering subject-matter specializations in areas beyond core academic subjects.

WHEREAS, there is an argument against academic screens which posits that students already achieving the highest level proficiency of core academic standards (as measured by attaining a “4” on the State ELA or Math exams) should be thought of as having already “made it” and the system is then free to focus its resources elsewhere. This resolution strongly disagrees with this proposition. Like the i-Ready and Acadience assessments utilized during the school year, State test scores should be used not as an end point but a starting point to determine each student’s current level of ability and tailor educational offerings accordingly. As an example, prior to the elimination of academic screens, students entering District 20’s academically screened IS 187 Christa McAuliffe were already highly proficient in core Math and ELA subject matter. From 2013 to 2019, an average 94% of each 6th grade cohort scored a “4” on the State Math exam and an average 81% scored a “4” on ELA. The purpose of such schools is to enable students who have already achieved high proficiency of core State academic standards to move further ahead in their learning with teachers and staff able to deliver programming which goes beyond teaching core concepts. By simple definition, there are more hours in the school day and more days in the year to deliver this type of advanced programming if all students are at a similar ability level.

WHEREAS, there is concern that utilizing programs based on academic screens will foster division within members of the District 20 education community. However, these concerns will exist anywhere in a pluralistic society and are unavoidable given the sheer diversity represented within humanity. Rather than eliminate programs that benefit families and attempt to ignore the fact that differences will always exist in our society, the focus should instead be on addressing the negative side effects of such differences, if and where they exist. There are numerous ways to promote positive interaction between different cohorts of students including mixed non-core classes and extracurricular activities. With talented and committed teachers and staff, District 20 schools are well positioned to manage the dynamics that emerge around these differences.

WHEREAS, to determine the amount of academically screened seats, it would be ideal to start with the number of students showing high proficiency of core academic material. This year the District is only allowed to utilize course grades from 4th grade for the selection of students into academically screened programs. We have requested but do not yet have the data showing the numbers of students and distribution of 4th grade grades within District 20.

WHEREAS, historically the District has maintained one stand-alone academically screened Middle School (IS 187) offering approximately 300 seats per grade. The District has also offered District-wide academically screened admission programs to many Middle Schools, albeit not always in a fully transparent manner. Based on discussions with District staff, this resulted in at least 600 District-wide Middle School seats per grade (inclusive of IS 187) and was likely more.

WHEREAS, an additional consideration is the number of academically screened seats which would need to be added in order to ensure District 20 families were placed at one of their Top 5 choices at the same rate as the City average. With only 3,119 students achieving a Top 5 placement out of 3,709 applicants (placement rate 84%), we would need an additional 380 seats which families ranked as a Top 5 choice for the District’s placement rate to equal the City rate of 94% (Appendix 2). In the absence of data on how families ranked

schools, this resolution assumes that all 300 seats at IS 187 were ranked as Top 5 choices by the majority of parents³, meaning that an additional 380 seats would result in 680 academically screened seats.

WHEREAS, for the Spring 2022 State exams, District 20 reported 1,392 4th grade students achieving a “4” on the State Math exam and 1,034 4th grade students achieving a “4” on the State ELA exam. As previously stated, this resolution believes that any student demonstrating highest proficiency at core subject matter should be considered for academically advanced programs. Utilizing a simple rounded average of the number of students scoring a “4” on Math and ELA results in an upward bound estimate of approximately 1,200 academically screened seats.

WHEREAS, responsibility for the final decision on the use of academic screens in Middle School admissions rests with the Superintendent.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Community Education Council of District 20 calls upon District 20 Superintendent Dr. David Pretto to:

- Implement a more parent-focused engagement process including:
 - Centering the voices of parents at Elementary Schools
 - Including CEC members in engagement sessions

Time is of the essence as Middle School admissions are scheduled to open to parents on October 26th

- Honor the expressed will of the voters in the Spring 2021 CEC elections by reinstating Middle School academic screens in District 20.
 - Target between 600 and 1,200 academically screened seats for 6th grade admission, inclusive of the 300 seats at IS 187.
 - The strength of the 2021 election mandate alone justifies at least 600 seats which was the rough number historically offered by the 3 largest academically screened Middle Schools.
 - The number could increase closer to the upward bound of 1,200 depending on the strength of parent engagement during October 2022.
- Structure the number and location of new screened seats by considering the number and school locations of 4th grade students scoring a “4” on their Math and ELA State Exams in 2022. In areas in which there is a high concentration of such students, create more seats at local zoned Middle Schools. This will help ensure that District-wide applicants do not “crowd-out” zoned applicants.
- Publish transparent standards for admission at each program, including the number of seats, applicants, average grade of the accepted students, program specifics and school leadership.

³ For the past 2 admission cycles, IS 187 has not utilized academic screens in admission. Nonetheless, we believe a large number of families continue to rank the school highly reflecting the historical reputation and District-wide admission status.

Appendix 1

| DISTRICTS | Votes Cast | Voters |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| DISTRICT 02 | 12,914 | 4,694 |
| DISTRICT 20 | 10,235 | 3,348 |
| DISTRICT 25 | 5,424 | 1,861 |
| DISTRICT 26 | 5,107 | 1,812 |
| DISTRICT 03 | 5,021 | 1,774 |
| DISTRICT 15 | 4,985 | 1,648 |
| DISTRICT 28 | 3,774 | 1,370 |
| DISTRICT 31 | 3,697 | 1,499 |
| DISTRICT 30 | 3,566 | 1,249 |
| DISTRICT 21 | 3,405 | 1,211 |
| DISTRICT 24 | 3,309 | 1,183 |
| DISTRICT 22 | 2,851 | 979 |
| DISTRICT 10 | 2,845 | 1,045 |
| DISTRICT 01 | 2,620 | 828 |
| DISTRICT 09 | 2,287 | 796 |
| DISTRICT 14 | 1,713 | 582 |
| DISTRICT 27 | 1,326 | 510 |
| DISTRICT 13 | 1,321 | 477 |
| DISTRICT 11 | 1,225 | 441 |
| DISTRICT 07 | 1,072 | 415 |
| DISTRICT 06 | 1,025 | 385 |
| DISTRICT 29 | 1,016 | 357 |
| DISTRICT 04 | 974 | 316 |
| DISTRICT 05 | 866 | 324 |
| DISTRICT 08 | 747 | 307 |
| DISTRICT 23 | 747 | 236 |
| DISTRICT 17 | 704 | 259 |
| DISTRICT 18 | 646 | 250 |
| DISTRICT 32 | 519 | 198 |
| DISTRICT 12 | 478 | 184 |
| DISTRICT 19 | 428 | 157 |
| DISTRICT 16 | 417 | 152 |

Source: Department of Education, Elections Working Group, Excel spreadsheet “Votes and Voters by District and School Oct 2021”

Appendix 2

**Fall 2022 Main Round Middle School Admissions: Summary of Matches
by Choice Number - District Level**

| Residential District | Total Applicants | Average Demand of Application Choice | Number of Matches to Choice | | | | Percent of Matches to Choice | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | # Matches to Choice 1-3 | # Matches to Choice 1-5 | # Matches to Choice 1-10 | # Matches to Choice 1-12 | % Matches to Choice 1-3 | % Matches to Choice 1-5 | % Matches to Choice 1-10 | % Matches to Choice 1-12 |
| 20 | 3,709 | 10.5 | 2,750 | 3,119 | 3,406 | 3,421 | 74% | 84% | 92% | 92% |
| 2 | 2,195 | 8.7 | 1,815 | 2,034 | 2,147 | 2,147 | 83% | 93% | 98% | 98% |
| 31 | 4,057 | 7.5 | 3,378 | 3,517 | 3,574 | 3,575 | 83% | 87% | 88% | 88% |
| 15 | 2,268 | 9.5 | 1,899 | 2,071 | 2,202 | 2,205 | 84% | 91% | 97% | 97% |
| 30 | 2,447 | 6.3 | 2,116 | 2,206 | 2,250 | 2,252 | 86% | 90% | 92% | 92% |
| Unknown | 101 | 7.3 | 90 | 91 | 93 | 93 | 89% | 90% | 92% | 92% |
| 21 | 2,203 | 7.4 | 1,991 | 2,074 | 2,126 | 2,128 | 90% | 94% | 97% | 97% |
| 24 | 4,072 | 6.2 | 3,694 | 3,809 | 3,853 | 3,854 | 91% | 94% | 95% | 95% |
| 1 | 512 | 7.1 | 465 | 490 | 495 | 496 | 91% | 96% | 97% | 97% |
| Total | 57,958 | 6.7 | 52,894 | 54,676 | 55,554 | 55,584 | 91% | 94% | 96% | 96% |
| 26 | 1,684 | 6.3 | 1,537 | 1,594 | 1,611 | 1,611 | 91% | 95% | 96% | 96% |
| 22 | 2,368 | 6.4 | 2,173 | 2,253 | 2,284 | 2,288 | 92% | 95% | 96% | 97% |
| 13 | 792 | 7.7 | 729 | 764 | 778 | 778 | 92% | 96% | 98% | 98% |
| 28 | 2,276 | 5.1 | 2,124 | 2,182 | 2,194 | 2,194 | 93% | 96% | 96% | 96% |
| 27 | 2,999 | 4.7 | 2,810 | 2,853 | 2,864 | 2,865 | 94% | 95% | 95% | 96% |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 29 | 2,038 | 4.3 | 1,913 | 1,952 | 1,959 | 1,959 | 94% | 96% | 96% | 96% |
| 25 | 2,528 | 4.7 | 2,387 | 2,448 | 2,458 | 2,458 | 94% | 97% | 97% | 97% |
| 17 | 1,054 | 5.8 | 999 | 1,023 | 1,028 | 1,028 | 95% | 97% | 98% | 98% |
| 5 | 737 | 5.7 | 699 | 712 | 716 | 716 | 95% | 97% | 97% | 97% |
| 10 | 3,260 | 10.1 | 3,116 | 3,153 | 3,156 | 3,156 | 96% | 97% | 97% | 97% |
| 3 | 988 | 7.6 | 948 | 971 | 977 | 977 | 96% | 98% | 99% | 99% |
| 9 | 2,160 | 5.0 | 2,077 | 2,088 | 2,089 | 2,089 | 96% | 97% | 97% | 97% |
| 14 | 812 | 5.6 | 782 | 798 | 805 | 805 | 96% | 98% | 99% | 99% |
| 16 | 464 | 4.9 | 447 | 452 | 457 | 457 | 96% | 97% | 98% | 98% |
| 18 | 847 | 4.6 | 817 | 829 | 831 | 831 | 96% | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| 12 | 1,360 | 4.1 | 1,314 | 1,318 | 1,320 | 1,320 | 97% | 97% | 97% | 97% |
| 7 | 917 | 5.7 | 893 | 895 | 895 | 895 | 97% | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| 4 | 612 | 5.3 | 596 | 604 | 604 | 604 | 97% | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| 6 | 1,259 | 4.3 | 1,227 | 1,241 | 1,242 | 1,242 | 97% | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| 11 | 2,676 | 4.7 | 2,615 | 2,633 | 2,634 | 2,634 | 98% | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| 19 | 1,514 | 3.1 | 1,485 | 1,490 | 1,490 | 1,490 | 98% | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| 23 | 643 | 3.9 | 632 | 632 | 633 | 633 | 98% | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| 32 | 677 | 4.5 | 667 | 668 | 669 | 669 | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| 8 | 1,729 | 3.5 | 1,709 | 1,712 | 1,714 | 1,714 | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% |

Source: Department of Education, Office of Student Enrollment, Excel Spreadsheet, “Final MS Admissions Summary 2022”