

Dear Families,

As we navigate these uncertain times together as a City, I remain in awe of the commitment and compassion you all bring to your daily lives. Since March, our school system has adapted in ways that were once unimaginable. Now, in our last two months of the school year, we are still learning and growing every day, and we could not do this without you: our families and our students.

As we adjust to this new reality, we know parents all over the City are eager to learn more about how COVID-19 may impact their children's education and schools in the fall. We are making every effort to prepare and plan for these challenges, including our recently announced plans for remote summer learning to keep students on track academically, and ensuring we have the social and emotional support in place to help students address trauma they may be facing. Nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our students and school communities, and it continues to be our north star.

As we look to next year, we know another aspect of school in the fall is top of mind for many families and students: admissions for middle and high school. From the beginning, I've been clear that we will not let things that are out of students' control affect this process, and the global pandemic we are all facing is certainly out of students' control. At the State level, tests have been suspended. At the City level, we have taken steps to ensure equity by freezing attendance as a factor and developing a grading policy that maintains clear expectations and accounts for the hardship students may be experiencing during this crisis. Taken together, these necessary changes will mean we will need to adjust the admissions process for next year, especially for schools that use selective admissions, or "screens" as part of their admissions process.

I want to be clear and make a commitment to you: we have not yet made any decisions on this policy, and will not do so without hearing first from you, our students and families. We will collaborate with DOE students and families in developing a policy that meets this moment. And when a policy is decided upon, I can promise you that we will ensure it is fair, transparent, and sensitive to the many ways in which our City's children are experiencing this pandemic.

To help us in this task, I am hopeful you will contribute your voice and your ideas. Enclosed with this letter, we are announcing new engagements that will allow us to hear from parents like you, students, school leaders, and advocates from across the City on the topic of admissions. We will hold meetings in every borough to hear your perspectives and ideas on how you think students should be admitted to schools for fall 2021. We want to hear from you!

We welcome all members of our school communities to participate, and we look forward to hearing from you. I am so inspired by each of you every single day, and I am confident that even in the midst of this pandemic, we will learn so much from you and the rich experiences and perspectives that you will bring to these conversations. I look forward to continuing our work together for all 1.1 million public school children.

In unity,



Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor

What are screened schools?

At many schools, there are more families applying than there are seats available. In order to determine which students get an offer to that school, some schools use a “screened” admissions method. These schools look at a student’s academic record and/or other information about a child to give the student a rank. In general, students are admitted to these schools in rank order, which means that the highest ranked student gets an offer first, followed by the second ranked student, and so on.

More information about admissions methods can be found online in the ‘Admissions Methods’ sections of our [middle school](#) and [high school](#) admissions guides.

How many screened schools are there across the City?

- There are approximately 400 high schools. ~125 (30%) of them screen for a portion of their seats. ~75 (18%) screen for all of their seats.
- There are approximately 500 middle schools. ~195 (41%) of them screen for a portion of their seats. ~110 (23%) screen for all of their seats.

Which students participate in the admissions process?

Students in New York City must apply to middle and high schools they wish to attend. Each year, 5th graders apply for middle school and 8th graders apply for high school. They list up to 12 programs on their application and receive an offer in the spring.

What does COVID19 have to do with admissions?

Due to COVID19, the primary academic information that schools use to rank students is unavailable:

- The State suspended all elementary & intermediate level State testing for the remainder of the school year.
- DOE suspended the use of attendance for the 2020-21 admissions cycle.
- Grading policies have adapted and elementary and middle school students are no longer graded on the same scale as they previously were.

The DOE is determining how to adjust admissions to screened programs since this information is not available. That is the purpose of this new series of engagement with parents and students across the City.

What’s next?

The DOE is engaging with parents, school leaders, students, and other stakeholders to collect ideas and perspectives on this issue. All parents and students are invited to join virtual borough-based meetings with Executive Superintendents:

- **Bronx** with Executive Superintendent Ross Porter on **Wednesday May 27th** (6pm-8pm)
- **Queens** with Executive Superintendents Muñiz-Sarduy and Spencer on **Thursday May 28th** (6pm-8pm)
- **Staten Island** with Executive Superintendent Lodico on **Friday May 29th** (6pm-8pm)
- **Manhattan** with Executive Superintendent Rosales on **Monday June 1st** (6pm-8pm)
- **Brooklyn** with Executive Superintendents Watts and Freeman on **Tuesday June 2nd** (6pm-8pm)

For more information on how to participate, visit schools.nyc.gov/AdmissionsEngagement.

Additionally, the DOE is hearing from parent leaders across the city through meetings with the Chancellor’s Parent Advisory Council, CEC presidents, Presidents’ councils, and other parent advocacy groups.