IBO Review of the SHSAT Admissions Process

June 18, 2024 – At the request of Brendan Rose, a graduate student at Columbia Journalism School, the New York City Independent Budget Office is publishing its report analyzing the Specialized High Schools admissions process and how admissions results differ by disability status.

In New York City, 8th grade students apply to enroll in high school. Nine of New York City's 400 high schools are Specialized High Schools, and eight of those schools determine admissions through the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT). All New York City 8th graders are eligible to take the SHSAT, regardless of their current enrollment in a public, private, or charter school, or if they are home schooled.

To read our findings, click here.

The report's findings include:

- In the 2021-2022 school year, while one third of 8th grade students in traditional public and charter schools took the exam, only 4.6% of 8th graders enrolled.

- Of the 4,280 students in traditional public and charter schools who were offered admission in the 2021-2022 school year, 63% received an offer to their first choice-school and 23% received an offer to their second-choice school.

- In the 2021-2022 school year, 8th grade traditional public and charter school students with disabilities were three times less likely to take the SHSAT than their peers without disabilities.

- Students with disabilities received offers of admission eleven times less often (0.6%, compared with 6.7%) and they enrolled nearly twelve times less than their peers without disabilities (0.5%, compared with 5.8%).

New York City Independent Budget Office
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