STATE OF NEW YORK

8847

IN SENATE

July 29, 2020

Introduced by Sens. SALAZAR, JACKSON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to admission to the specialized high schools in the city of New York

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Legislative findings. Since the enactment of the Hecht-Calandra Act in 1971, the New York city school district has not been able to make decisions about admissions to its specialized high schools. Instead, as a result of the Hecht-Calandra Act, the city school district has been required to base admission decisions to its specialized high schools on only one criterion for admission - a student's performance on a single standardized exam. As a result of the use of this criterion, known as the specialized high school admissions test (SHSAT), the student population of the specialized high schools does not reflect the diversity of the City's population. Whereas the overall percentage of Black and Latino students in the city's public schools is approximately sixty-seven percent, Black and Latino students only represent nine percent of the population of the specialized schools. This disparity hurts Black and Latino students and it also harms the students who attend the specialized high schools, who do not reap the intellectual, emotional and social benefits from learning in a more diverse environment. Furthermore, the city school district is alone in its reliance on a single metric to make admission decisions. Universities across the country consider multiple factors when selecting their incoming student body; selective institutions do not rely on the results of a single exam. It is time for the city school district to follow suit and for admissions to no longer be based on the procedures prescribed in the Hecht-Calandra Act. This legislation will allow the city school district to develop its own admissions criteria for specialized high schools, as it develops admissions criteria for other schools within the district, and ensure that high-performing and talented students across all five boroughs have the opportunity to attend its specialized high schools.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD13454-02-0

§ 2. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 1 of section 2590-h of the education law, as amended by chapter 345 of the laws of 2009, is amended to read as follows:

(b) all specialized [~~senior~~] high schools. The [~~special~~] **specialized** high schools shall include the [~~present~~] schools known as[~~:~~] The Bronx High School of Science, Stuyvesant High School, Brooklyn Technical High School, Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music [~~and the Arts in the borough of Manhattan~~] **& Art and Performing Arts**, and such [~~further~~] **additional** schools [~~which the city board may designate~~] **as may be designated by the chancellor** from time to time[~~. The special schools shall be permitted to maintain a discovery program in accordance with the law in effect on the date preceding the effective date of this section; admissions to the special schools shall be conducted in accordance with the law in effect on the date preceding the effective date of this section~~];

§ 3. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 1 of section 2590-h of the education law, as amended by chapter 720 of the laws of 1996, is amended to read as follows:

(b) all specialized [~~senior~~] high schools. The [~~special~~] **specialized** high schools shall include the [~~present~~] schools known as[~~:~~] The Bronx High School of Science, Stuyvesant High School, Brooklyn Technical High School, Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music [~~and the Arts in the borough of Manhattan~~] **& Art and Performing Arts**, and such [~~further~~] **additional** schools [~~which the city board may designate~~] **as may be designated by the chancellor** from time to time[~~. The special schools shall be permitted to maintain a discovery program in accordance with the law in effect on the date preceding the effective date of this section; admissions to the special schools shall be conducted in accordance with the law in effect on the date preceding the effective date of this section~~];

§ 4. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2022, provided that the amendments to paragraph (b) of subdivision 1 of section 2590-h of the education law made by section two of this act shall be subject to the expiration and reversion of such section pursuant to subdivision 12 of section 17 of chapter 345 of the laws of 2009, as amended, when upon such date the provisions of section three of this act shall take effect.