

For More Information:

Email: AVaishampayan@nyul.org

Phone: 212-926-8000 ext. 145

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***New York Urban League Calls for Opening of
Specialized High School Application Process***

New York, New York – September 27, 2012 - The New York Urban League (NYUL) supports the NACCP Legal Defense Fund's efforts to challenge the sole criterion that is utilized for admission into specialized high schools. This year 28,000 young New Yorkers competed for the opportunity to attend Bronx High School of Science, Brooklyn Technical High School, Stuyvesant High School, and five other public high schools that are among the best schools in New York City. Admittance to these schools is a life altering event that positively changes the educational trajectory of a student. In a city where nearly half of high schools do not graduate, admission to these highly competitive high schools bring an almost certain guarantee of high school graduation. In addition, graduates of these schools most often go on to Ivy League or other top tier colleges. But unfortunately, the Department of Education's policy is keeping too many students from being able to access this opportunity.

Sole reliance upon the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) for admittance to one of New York City's prestigious Specialized High Schools undercuts fair admission practices for these exceptional institutions. For decades, admission to these eight Specialized High School has been based upon a singular 150 minute test, with student's grades, academic achievements and other extracurricular accomplishments being completely disregarded. Exclusive utilization of the SHSAT brings to light several grim details. Due to the inherent inequality promoted by this biased standardized test, Hispanic and African American Student's are admitted at startlingly low rates, thus depriving deserving students of these ethnicities the opportunity to excel academically. Of the 967 students admitted to Stuyvesant High School for the 2012-2013 academic school year, only 32 students were Latino and 19 were African American. The Specialized High Schools admissions standards, in their current form, are depriving students of an equal opportunity to display their merit and excel at the high school level. We urge DOE to work with the State Department of Education and advocates to develop a more just and equitable admissions policy.

About the NYUL

The mission of the New York Urban League (NYUL) is to enable African Americans and other underserved communities to secure a first class education, economic self-reliance and equal respect of their civil rights through programs, services and advocacy. Over the last two years, the League has had an aggressive campaign to increase its visibility throughout New York City and deliver programs that reinforce confidence in the New York Urban League brand. Today, the League directly serves approximately 15,000 residents annually through our employment, education and empowerment services. The NYUL serves Queens, Staten Island, Brooklyn, Bronx, and Manhattan.

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