

The New York City Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ) has signed on to this Title VI complaint because our members strongly believe that it's time to broaden the criteria by which students are selected for the Specialized High Schools in New York City.

The discriminatory effect of using the score on only one 2.5 hour multiple choice test, leaving many highly qualified Black and Latino young people without the opportunity of attending these schools, has been documented.

When only 5% of African Americans and 6.7% of Latinos that apply are offered seats in the eight Specialized High Schools, something is terribly wrong; especially given that 77% of students in the school system are African American and Latino. This must be rectified.

Not only is it discriminatory to base admissions on only one test score, it is not academically sound. A high score only means that on that particular day, at that particular time, a student tested very well. Most selective schools and colleges across the country use multiple criteria, including letters of recommendation, grades, community service and extracurricular activities, and more in making their admissions decisions. There is no reason for NYC not to do the same.

CEJ looks forward to working together with other organizations and the NYC Department of Education to develop an admissions policy based on multiple measures. We don't want to see another year of missed opportunity go by.

Ronnette Summers, parent leader, New York City Coalition for Educational Justice