



The Education Trust

CONTACT:

Blair Mann
202-293-1217, x. 373
bmann@edtrust.org

Statement from The Education Trust in support of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and others' complaint against New York City's specialized high schools admission process

WASHINGTON (November 29, 2012) — Study after study confirms that a rigorous high school curriculum is the surest predictor of success in college. Even so, New York City is denying thousands of Latino and African-American students access to rigorous high schools. In doing so, it's not just damaging the futures of these young people, but it's doing long-term damage to the future of what is arguably the world's most important city.

We commend the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, its co-counsel and the nearly one dozen organizational complainants for filing a complaint against the New York City Department of Education about the admission policies at its specialized high schools. And we applaud the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights for taking the complaint seriously and moving quickly to investigate.

New York's renowned specialized high schools provide the best secondary education — and college preparation — the city's public education system has to offer. For almost 80 years, these high schools have launched countless New Yorkers on the path to success — success that has bolstered the fortunes of the city, the state, the nation and, indeed, the world. Despite this remarkable history, the selective high schools and the city have failed — and failed dreadfully — the city's large population of black and brown young people. Unless corrected, that failure could do untold, far-reaching damage.

The admissions process for these schools, which relies solely on the New York City Specialized High Schools Admissions Test, has the effect of rationing opportunity for success and undercutting the life chances of the city's African-American and Latino students, who are dramatically underrepresented at the high schools offering the best opportunities, as the data in the following chart indicates.

	% Black Students	% Latino Students	% White Students	% Asian Students	Total Enrollment
All NYC Public High Schools	29.7	38.9	13.2	17.4	274,298
Bronx High School of Science	3.5	7.2	25.4	63.5	3,013
Brooklyn Technical High School	10.2	7.9	21.3	60.3	5,332
Stuyvesant High School	1.2	2.4	23.7	72.1	3,297

Source: "School Demographics Snapshot," NYC Department of Education. <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/F318E6F9-5787-403E-8ABD-139656D7A06E/0/DemographicSnapshot2012Public.xlsx>.

An admissions process with these results is on its face unfair and has to change dramatically — and soon. The New York City Department of Education can transform the process into a more fair system that simultaneously upholds high standards. Failure to change and open opportunity for students of color will cripple not just the chances for success of these students, but for the city as a whole.

We urge the New York City Department of Education to cooperate promptly and fully with the Department of Education and to quickly develop an admissions policy that will expand opportunity for the black and Latino youth in New York and in doing so, help to promote diversity and secure for all of its citizens a more vibrant, fair and prosperous future.

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The Education Trust is a non-profit advocacy organization that promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels, pre-kindergarten through college. Its goal is to close the gaps in opportunity and achievement that consign far too many young people — especially those from low-income families or who are black, Latino or American Indian — to lives on the margins of the American mainstream.