



ASIAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND

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**Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Statement On
U.S. Department Of Education Office Of Civil Rights Complaint
of the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice, et al.
Regarding New York City Specialized High Schools**

The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) shares complainants' concerns about the educational soundness of conducting admissions for New York City's Specialized High Schools solely on the basis of the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT). There are several problems with this approach.

First, the New York City Department of Education has not conducted a study to ensure that the SHSAT actually tests skills necessary for mastering the curriculum and learning standards at the Specialized High Schools. Using a test that has no confirmed predictive validity undermines confidence in the admissions policy.

In addition, educational experts agree that no single test should be used to make crucial education decisions. Instead, using multiple measures of achievement (including grades, tests related to actual middle school content, and other academic criteria) would be more accurate predictors of success at the Specialized High Schools. Compared to the current, single high stakes test approach, multiple measures are likely to favor accomplished, high achieving students (including some Asian Americans) who work hard and have strong track records of academic success. The multiple measures approach also helps capture students who may miss out because they happen not to perform well on a particular test, despite being academically qualified.

Furthermore, even if the NYC DOE were to properly validate the SHSAT, insofar as low-income students are less likely to have access to formal test preparation courses, transitioning to admissions based on multiple measures of achievement would advance both equity and diversity at our Specialized High Schools. As such, AALDEF supports the use of multiple measures correlating with future academic success for admissions to New York City's Specialized High Schools.