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**Statement in Support of Administrative Filing with U.S. Dept of Education Office of Civil Rights
David R. Jones, President and CEO, Community Service Society of New York**

The Community Service Society of New York is strongly committed to clearing pathways to educational advancement for all New Yorkers. We join today's filing against the New York City Department of Education because its admissions practices for New York City's elite Specialized High Schools do just the opposite: they set up barriers that keep Black and Latino youngsters out. Entry to the Specialized High Schools – Stuyvesant, Bronx Science and Brooklyn Tech the biggest and best known among them – is based on a single test and nothing else. Not only has the test never been validated either as predicting success in high school or showing proficiency in any subject, but relying solely on a test means that our kids' scholastic and creative achievements count for nothing.

No one can explain why the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) screens out six times as many Black youngsters and five times as many Latino youngsters as whites. It's a quandary worth exploring, but in the near term it's beside the point. The true shame is that this testing regime produces discriminatory outcomes, and has for years. When the end result is that only 1% of all Stuyvesant students are African American and only 3% Latino, we have a problem that can't wait.

The Department of Education has attempted to address the almost total segregation of its elite schools by increasing access to test cramming services. But encouraging students to spend weeks and months furiously studying – with or without a coach – for a test that has never been validated is wrong-headed and clearly hasn't worked. We shouldn't be pushing our children further into the world of pressurized high-stakes testing environment without a very good reason for doing so, and the Department of Education hasn't given us one.

A Specialized High School degree can be the key to a brilliant future. We should be ensuring that this key is duplicated for as many deserving children as we can instead of hiding the key under the SHSAT mat. The Department of Education must implement admissions policies and practices that fairly evaluate children, giving real opportunity to all. This administrative action should encourage them to do so. We welcome dialogue and serious efforts to fix this shameful problem.

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The [Community Service Society of New York](http://www.cssny.org) draws on a 169-year history of excellence in addressing the root causes of economic disparity. We respond to urgent, contemporary challenges through applied research, advocacy, litigation, and innovative program models that strengthen and benefit all New Yorkers.