

Scholastic Merit Fund

The Idea of what is true Merit...Ability is to be acquir'd or greatly increas'd by true Learning; and should indeed be the great Aim and End of all Learning.

- Benjamin Franklin, 1749

The Scholastic Merit Fund is a 501c-4 organization, made up of concerned alumni and parents, dedicated to maintaining high academic standards and providing equal access in admissions and enrollment in New York City schools.

The organization supports high standards in education from elementary school through graduate school and believes that admission to selective academic institutions and programs should rely on student academic ability.

The Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) is an objective measure that should remain intact to maintain high standards and ensure an objective and unbiased enrollment process.

All students should have full access to classes, programs and materials in order to compete and succeed on a level playing field. We believe all students have the ability to surpass all metrics of academic achievement given the proper educational foundation.

Strategies for Increasing Access to the Specialized High Schools:

- 1. Increase Seats & Schools.**
 - 3 of the newer Specialized High Schools only admit about 140 students each year compared to 1,900 at Brooklyn Tech.
- 2. Expand DREAM Program.**
 - Assure no students are on a waitlist, begin the program in 5th grade, offer financial assistance option for affordable private enrichment program and auto enroll students who score a 3 or higher on State Assessment tests.
- 3. Expand Seats to Create a Specialized HS Opportunities Program.**
 - Target students with high economic needs and include financial assistance.
- 4. Fund Directly to High Needs Schools For Afterschool SHS Prep Programs.**
- 5. Automatically Register Level 3 & Level 4 NYS Assessment Test takers for the SHSAT.**
 - Qualifying students, including those in charter schools, may opt out with parent permission.
- 6. Create Gifted & Talented schools in every district and no-test required honors classes in every grade.**
- 7. Build Foundation to support after-school enrichment starting in 3rd Grade for high needs students.**
- 8. Innovate Testing Methods: have a pre-exam and a super score, offer test during the week & randomize the content of the exam to make it less predictable.**
- 9. Increase parental and student awareness of the admission process and rigorous programming at the Specialized HS's through public/private outreach & workshops.**