

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance of Greater N.Y. (CACAGNY)
紐約同源會

December 19, 2020

CACAGNY to De Blasio: the Problem is not Screened Schools!

On Friday December 18, 2020, Mayor De Blasio and Chancellor Carranza announced plans to remove admission screening in middle schools, and give principals the authority to remove admission screening in high schools. Lotteries will be used.

Families have been fleeing NYC public schools for years. Ever the racist Anti-Racist, Carranza calls it “White flight,” but that’s a typical smear. It is Blacks who lead the pack in fleeing from district public schools, seeking rigorous education in public charters like Success Academy.

The Department of Education’s on-again off-again fiascos with in-person instruction since the pandemic only made things worse. Catholic schools have had in-person instruction since school started this fall, with students happy, no drama, no hysterics. Charter schools, by contrast, hummed along with remote instruction, quietly delivering education at near pre-pandemic levels to eager students. Carranza offers many excuses for his failures, most of them boiling down, in one way or another, to 250 years of slavery and Jim Crow.

Families have no use for excuses. They just want schools to deliver rigorous education. That’s why Chalkbeat reports enrollment drops of critical proportions in NYC’s public schools. That’s why 74 Million reports principals facing budget shortfalls in the order of hundreds of thousands of dollars due to disappearing students, including schools in Brooklyn’s District 15, Carranza’s prized showcase of “integration” success. That’s why Catholic schools are seeing, for the first time in years, admission waiting lists, in the order of months. And that’s why neighboring suburban schools are hurriedly adding as many as 50% more seats. This is what quality flight looks like.

Does it take a doctorate in education to understand that when the problem is that schools keep dumbing down rigorous education, removing screened school admissions is not the solution? It’s like your house is on fire and you shoot the dog. NYC needs schools to deliver rigorous education, more of them and in more neighborhoods. The rest – screened admissions, geographic preferences – are just noise.

New York City is a large school district. It is almost as big the next two largest school districts – Los Angeles and Chicago – combined. There is room for many kinds of schools, for its many kinds of students. There is room for different test-only schools for students who excel under different tests. There is room for different screened schools for students who excel under different screens. There is room for neighborhood schools for students who want to stay in their neighborhoods. There is no justification to impose a single, totalizing, totalitarian system on everyone. If you don’t understand such basic diversity, this big, diverse city is not for you.

And if you don’t understand that families – of all races – desperately want to put their kids in schools that deliver rigorous education, just remind yourself where you, Mayor, and your Education Chancellor put your own kids in school when they were of school age.

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*Founded in 1895 in San Francisco, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance is the oldest Chinese American civil rights organization in the United States.
CACAGNY is its New York Chapter. www.CACAGNY.org*

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