



**Booker T. Washington Middle School 54
Parent Teacher Association**

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Dear Parents,

We are writing to inform you about an informational meeting regarding the changes proposed to the Specialized High School admissions process that will impact **current 6th graders and 7th graders at Booker T on Dec. 11.**

As you may be aware, NYC Department of Education (DOE) plans to reform the admissions process to the city's Specialized High Schools, currently determined solely on the basis of a student's performance on the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). The Mayor proposes replacing the SHSAT with a rubric that uses state tests and grades to rank the top 7% from each of the city's middle schools. The mayor's first step will be to expand the Discovery Program that sets aside seats for high performing disadvantaged students, which he can do without a vote from the state legislature that governs the SHSAT. **Click [here](#) to read about the DOE proposal to expand the Discovery Program and replace the SHSAT.**

Booker T Washington sends more kids to Specialized High Schools than any other school in NYC except for two (Christa McAuliffe and Mark Twain). Approximately 150 students from our recent graduating classes are accepted to specialized high schools. With the proposed changes, this number would drop to about 20.

Christa McAuliffe Middle School PTA in Brooklyn, which sends over 200 of its students to specialized high schools, has voted unanimously to file a federal lawsuit against the DOE's increase of the Discovery Program which they view as a "thinly veiled attempt at racial discrimination" as it excludes Asian-American students. Click [here](#) for news coverage about Christa McAuliffe's lawsuit.

Additional information about the mayor's plan has been drafted by the Alumni Association of specialized high school **Brooklyn Tech** and can be found in this [Summary](#) (PDF) or this [Full report](#) (PDF Brooklyn Tech Alumni Association website)

As you can imagine, at Booker T, our PTA is carefully evaluating this issue alongside our peers throughout the city. Booker T is planning its own High School Admissions information session on **December 11th during our PTA meeting** for which we have invited our local representatives including Assembly members Gottfried, Rosenthal and O'Donnell, Council Members Rosenthal and Levine, Borough President Brewer, and State Senators Hoylman, Serrano, Benjamin and Jackson to discuss these changes to our

school community. We encourage individual constituents to reach out to them directly about participating in that meeting. Our District 3 Superintendent Ilene Altschul will attend as well as members of our Community Education Council.

And we encourage you to attend this event so as to be able to have a more informed opinion.

WHO: Booker T Families

WHAT: Specialized High School Admissions Changes

WHERE: Booker T. Washington/MS54

WHEN: December 11 at 7pm

For any further questions or clarifications, please reach out to the PTA at co-presidents@ms54pta.org

Sincerely,
The PTA Exec Board