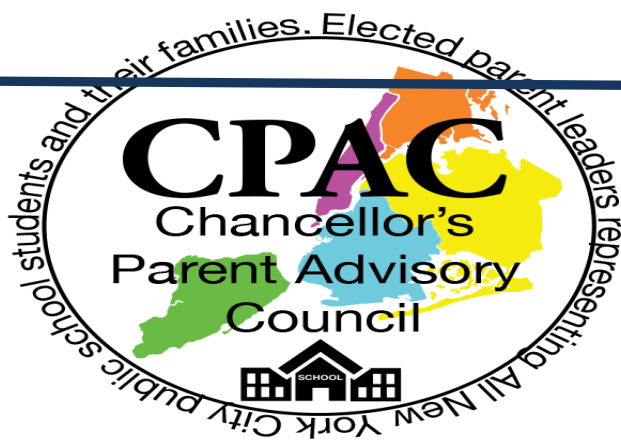


Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

Tweed Courthouse *52 Chamber Street, New York 10007



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October 14, 2021

Chancellor Meisha Ross Porter
Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse
52 Chambers Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chancellor Porter,

We are writing to you to express our opposition to the planned removal of all geographic priorities in high school admissions in Queens. Eliminating the borough priority for Queens high schools will **UNDERMINE** student achievement and quality of life for Queens students, **producing even more overcrowding and/or forcing more students to undertake 2-3 hour daily commutes with few benefits for Queens students.** As we will outline below, Queens is already in an untenable situation because the DOE has failed to build enough high schools in the borough, creating severe overcrowding in our high schools and already forcing 12,394 students to undertake lengthy commutes (often 2-3 hours per day) in crowded subways and buses to attend high school in another borough because there are NO available seats in Queens. While this clearly undermines academic achievement, the pandemic has shown that the DOE is currently putting these students' health and even lives at risk. We don't need to add to these figures.

Queens high schools are by far the most overcrowded schools in NYC. Using data from the latest [Blue Book](#), Queens High Schools are operating at 112% of capacity. Enrollment in our high schools exceeds targeted capacity by 8,849 seats. (Please see attached Exhibit A.) Queens high schools are so overcrowded that nearly one-quarter of them, in particular our large high schools, must operate in shifts. Another 12,394 Queens students must commute to other boroughs to attend high school because there is not sufficient space in Queens for these students. That is, there are 89,634 high school students who reside in Queens but only 77,240 high school seats in Queens overcrowded high schools. (Please see attached Exhibit B.) These 12,394 high school students have NO CHOICE – they must undertake the 2-3 hour daily commute to another borough to attend high school.

Queens needs 21,243 high school seats (8,849 plus 12,394) to accommodate Queens students, well above the 6,685 the SCA cites in its current 5-year capital plan. The Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC), the Queens High School Presidents' Council, and Queens PEP members have urged the DOE and SCA to build more high schools in Queens for at least a decade, but the SCA has been exceedingly slow. It's current five-year plan calls for the construction of just 4 high schools with 6,685 seats to be completed by September 2028, meeting less than one-third of the current need and ignoring the current construction boom in Queens. Little wonder that most Queens high schools are restricted to Queens students. There is little room to absorb students from other boroughs. Currently, 96%* of students who attend Queens high school reside in Queens.

Queens high school students also faces some of the longest commutes (1-2 hours daily) simply to attend school **within** the borough. Requiring students to attend high school outside the borough can lengthen commuting time significantly, to 2-3 hours daily. Queens is a transportation desert. Many of our students' homes and many of our high schools are located far from subway lines, meaning significant portions of students' commutes require excruciatingly slow bus rides.

If geographic restrictions are lifted on Queens high schools, every Manhattan student who hops on a subway for 15 minutes to attend a high school in Long Island City or Astoria may force a Queens student to commute 2-3 hours/day to attend school in Manhattan, Brooklyn, or the Bronx. Such lengthy commutes may impact students' attendance; academics; ability to complete homework; physical and mental health; and ability to participate in afterschool programming, clubs, and sports. The pandemic has made clear that forcing students into overcrowded high schools and overcrowded subway and bus lines may put their health and even lives at risk. Have we learned nothing from the past year?

Queens students gain few benefits from eliminating the geographic priorities for Queens high schools, but many students will face severe costs. Geographic priorities for Queens high schools should not be lifted until AFTER the DOE and SCA build the desperately needed 21,243 additional high school seats in Queens.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss this topic with you further.

The Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

Approved at the October 14, 2021 CPAC meeting

Cc: First Deputy Chancellor Donald Conyers, Deputy Chancellor of Early Education and Enrollment Josh Wallack, Chief Strategy Officer Edie Sharp, Deputy Chancellor Adrienne Austin, Chief Academic Officer Linda Chen, Deputy Chancellor of School Planning and Development Karin Goldmark

*NYC Department of Education, Office of School Planning, Queens High School Data Summary, 2021-2022 Strategic Planning Data Consideration, p. 7.

Exhibit A

Enrollment and Targeted Capacity for Queens High Schools									
		Enrollment	Targeted Capacity	Utilization Rate		Enrollment	Targeted Capacity	Utilization Rate	
24Q236	International High School for Health Sciences	291	292	100%	28Q167	Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School	824	833	99%
24Q264	Academy of Finance and Enterprise	677	365	185%	28Q284	York Early College Academy	639	581	110%
24Q267	High School of Applied Communication	408	345	118%	28Q310	Queens Collegiate: A College Board School	672	746	90%
24Q293	Civic Leadership Academy	646	565	114%	28Q325	Hillside Arts & Letters Academy	452	473	96%
24Q296	Pan American International High School	433	447	97%	28Q328	High School for Community Leadership	456	429	106%
24Q299	Bard High School Early College Queens	637	632	101%	28Q338	Queens Satellite High School for Opportunity	214	237	90%
24Q455	Newtown High School	1657	1960	85%	28Q350	Jamaica Gateway to the Sciences	483	546	88%
24Q485	Grover Cleveland High School	1683	1870	90%	28Q440	Forest Hills High School	3705	2018	184%
24Q520	Middle College High School at LaGuardia Community	507	366	139%	28Q505	Hillcrest High School	3091	2626	118%
24Q530	International High School at LaGuardia Community C	519	304	171%	28Q620	Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education Hi	2224	1747	127%
24Q550	High School for Arts and Business	778	531	147%	28Q680	Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School	694	658	105%
24Q560	Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Secondary School for Arts an	653	649	101%	28Q686	Queens Metropolitan High School	1144	871	131%
24Q585	Maspeth High School	1232	902	137%	28Q687	Queens High School for the Sciences at York Colleg	480	372	129%
24Q600	Queens Vocational and Technical High School	1461	1228	119%	28Q690	High School for Law Enforcement and Public Safety	395	895	44%
24Q610	Aviation Career & Technical Education High School	2064	1664	124%	28Q896	Young Women's Leadership School, Queens	560	499	112%
24Q744	VOYAGES Preparatory	240	275	87%	29Q243	Institute for Health Professions at Cambria Height	449	469	96%
25Q240	Veritas Academy	608	375	162%	29Q248	Queens Preparatory Academy	277	468	59%
25Q241	Queens High School for Language Studies	447	407	110%	29Q259	Pathways College Preparatory School: A College Boa	585	709	83%
25Q252	Queens School of Inquiry, The	597	509	117%	29Q265	Excelsior Preparatory High School	422	521	81%
25Q263	Flushing International High School	449	493	91%	29Q272	George Washington Carver High School for the Scien	390	680	57%
25Q281	East-West School of International Studies	666	594	112%	29Q283	Preparatory Academy for Writers: A College Board S	557	561	99%
25Q285	World Journalism Preparatory: A College Board Scho	606	687	88%	29Q313	Benjamin Franklin High School for Finance & Inform	413	476	87%
25Q425	John Bowne High School	3432	2326	148%	29Q326	Cambria Heights Academy	370	378	98%
25Q460	Flushing High School	1483	1196	124%	29Q327	Eagle Academy for Young Men III	421	575	73%
25Q525	Townsend Harris High School	1219	895	136%	29Q492	Mathematics, Science Research and Technology Magne	401	556	72%
25Q540	Queens Academy High School	393	276	142%	29Q498	Humanities & Arts Magnet High School	372	667	56%
25Q670	Robert F. Kennedy Community High School	675	515	131%	30Q258	Energy Tech High School	512	633	81%
25Q792	North Queens Community High School	162	222	73%	30Q286	Young Women's Leadership School, Astoria	578	539	107%
26Q315	Business Technology Early College High School	552	638	87%	30Q301	Academy for Careers in Television and Film	548	548	100%
26Q415	Benjamin N. Cardozo High School	3432	2429	141%	30Q445	William Cullen Bryant High School	2287	2503	91%
26Q430	Francis Lewis High School	4468	2196	203%	30Q450	Long Island City High School	2204	2108	105%
26Q435	Martin Van Buren High School	1151	1657	69%	30Q501	Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School	851	748	114%
26Q495	Bayside High School	2865	2144	134%	30Q502	Information Technology High School	976	751	130%
26Q566	Queens High School of Teaching, Liberal Arts and t	1012	1053	96%	30Q555	Newcomers High School	792	693	114%
27Q260	Frederick Douglass Academy VI High School	321	503	64%	30Q575	Academy of American Studies	1025	626	164%
27Q261	Voyages Prep - South Queens	317	283	112%	30Q580	Baccalaureate School for Global Education	557	437	127%
27Q262	Channel View School for Research	1077	1179	91%					
27Q302	Queens High School for Information, Research, and	481	362	133%					
27Q308	Robert H. Goddard High School of Communication Art	614	602	102%					
27Q309	Academy of Medical Technology: A College Board Sch	671	688	98%					
27Q314	Epic High School - South	412	308	134%					
27Q323	Scholars' Academy	1311	1301	101%					
27Q324	Rockaway Park High School for Environmental Sustai	288	593	49%					
27Q334	Epic High School - North	444	324	137%					
27Q351	Rockaway Collegiate High School	327	479	68%					
27Q400	August Martin High School	374	664	56%					
27Q475	Richmond Hill High School	1613	1647	98%					
27Q480	John Adams High School	2492	2131	117%					
27Q650	High School for Construction Trades, Engineering a	1093	861	127%					
Total						80958	72109	112%	
						Enrollment Exceed Capacity by:	8849		

Source: Enrollment, Capacity & Utilization Report, Target Calculation, 2019 – 2020 School Year (Blue Book), NYCDOE NYCSA, Part II, A.

Exhibit B

NYC High School Enrollment by Borough of Residence, 2019-2020

Residential Borough	Where Residents Are Enrolled					Total Res.
	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island	
Bronx	53,489	694	16,839	400	19	71,441
Brooklyn	375	80,427	10,805	2,138	658	94,403
Manhattan	2,465	1,182	28,648	372	25	32,692
Queens	1,866	5,681	7,768	74,307	12	89,634
Staten Island	12	696	606	23	17,800	19,137
Total Seats	58,207	88,680	64,666	77,240	18,514	307,307

Please note the difference in total number of seats in Queens high schools in this data (77,240) vs the data above (80,958). We assume this difference is due to the treatment of 6-8 graders in 6-12 and 7-12 high schools and the treatment of transfer high schools.

Source: Office of Student Enrollment Data backing up charts (p. 7 for Manhattan, Queens, and the Bronx, p. 8 for Brooklyn, and p. 6 for Staten Island) in Borough High School Planning Documents, 2021-2022 Strategic Planning Considerations, from the Office of Strategic Planning, Spring 2021