



Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

Tweed Courthouse *52 Chamber Street, New York 10007/Email: InfoCPACNYC@gmail.com

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April 20, 2023

Chancellor David Banks
Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse
52 Chambers Street
New York, New York 10007

RE: Re-Imagining the High School Experience and How to Assess It

Dear Chancellor Banks,

At the February CCHS Townhall, you discussed your efforts to re-imagine the high school experience and challenged parents to provide feedback on what should be included and how this experience should be assessed. CPAC has already worked extensively on these questions. As an example, in February 2020, we sent Chancellor Carranza a letter which we believe gets to the heart of the matter, asking **What is a High School Education?** We are attaching this letter in its entirety as we believe it touches on most of the key questions that need to be discussed and addressed. We also believe that NYC Public Schools, formerly DOE, need to invest in our current high schools, creating positive learning environments that engage students through a variety of means (challenging and supportive academic instruction, robust and meaningful implementation of IEPs, worthwhile internship and apprenticeship opportunities, and strong after-school programming) that prepare all students for a variety of post-graduation pathways.

The NYC Public Schools need to either enlarge our high schools so that they can offer coursework to meet the needs of a diverse student body or rethink how it offers high school classes, reserving one day a week (or more) for students to travel to other high schools and facilities so that all students have access to all classes and experiences, regardless of the outcome of the high school lottery.

- All students should have access to a full college prep program, including AP/IB/College Now options, higher level math and science courses, and foreign language (Please refer to the last page of the attached letter which outlines the high school coursework that colleges expect to see on transcripts, which many of our high schools fail to offer).
- All students should have access to all CTE programs, both to explore interests and obtain industry certificates and licenses.
- Every borough should have STEAM centers.

NYC Public Schools need to take a deep dive into how the needs of our high school students with IEPs are being met. We outlined these issues in our [February 2023 letter to you urging the re-establishment of the High School Special Education Task Force](#). NYC Public Schools need to ensure that all students feel welcome and supported in their classrooms.

Our high schools need to expand after-school programming and be opened fully in the summer, offering our students [summer bridge programs](#); remedial support; enrichment opportunities for all students; after-school clubs, sports, and activities; and assistance with college applications. Not only does this re-imagining of high schools make strong academic sense, but it would provide a safe place for our students after school and during summer months and provide opportunities for students to develop soft skills necessary for the workplace.

In your discussion at the CCHS, you also requested feedback on how to assess high school performance. We assume you are referring to the NYSED's current review of graduation requirements. We support offering students a variety of methods to assess their mastery of academic and CTE programming. While we believe that the NYSED should continue to offer some standardized measure (similar to the Regents) to high school students as one means of assessment, we support an expansion of project-based assessment tasks (PBATs) to every high school and subject so students have the opportunity to take a deep dive into a subject and show practical mastery of material. We also support the use of other assessments as well (scores on SAT, ACT, AP and IB exams and grades from College Now courses). Wherever possible, we also believe that students in CTE programs should have the opportunity to earn industry certificates and licenses. In ALL cases, however, we again call on NYC Public Schools to provide all students with the supports and encouragement they need to retake these assessments so they can either pass the assessment or work to improve their score to obtain an honors designation.

Lastly, we believe this is just the beginning of the conversation on high schools. [We again urge you to create Borough Level High School Partnerships](#) to bring together high school stakeholders at the borough level to hold regular discussions on high school issues and work toward re-imagining the NYC high school experience.

With great appreciation,

The Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

Approved by the membership at its April 20, 2023 meeting

Cc: First Deputy Chancellor Daniel Weisberg, Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning Carlyne Quintana



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Website: www.cpacnyc.com
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February 13, 2020

Chancellor Richard Carranza
Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse
52 Chambers Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chancellor Carranza,

As the DOE continues its efforts to ensure that every New York City student has access to a high quality high school education, we believe that it is important to step back and ask a simple question. **What is a high school education?** What curriculum, supports, after-school programming and facilities should every high school provide to challenge, support, or motivate students to excel, graduate, and continue on a path toward college and career? If we truly believe in diverse high schools that should meet the needs of all our students, and if we truly wish to move away from the current bifurcated system, then we need to know what every high school should guarantee to provide to all high school students regardless of zip code and lottery placement. We believe this question is critical to discussions involving the DOE's diversity effort, its review of fair student funding, and its plan to create 40 new and restructured schools (with a focus on high schools) with grants funds from XQ and the Robin Hood Foundation. Answers to these questions will also help address two issues currently perplexing the DOE: how much does the DOE need to budget to offer a high school education to students and how many students does a school need to have to support this budget -- that is, when is a high school too small to have a diverse population and still meet the needs of all its students?

The CPAC High School Committee would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to begin a discussion on "What is a high school education." We have attached a list of specific questions to assist in directing our conversation, but these are some of the key topics:

- Curriculum
 - Course offerings
 - Supports
 - Facilities
- Counselors
- After School Programs

We believe this conversation is a critical element for improving education in NYC, and some of the answers may require "out-of-the-box" thinking by the DOE, including sharing facilities or teachers, or offering afterschool or weekend programming.

We look forward to meeting with you later in February or early March. We can be reached at CPACHSCommittee@gmail.com.

The CPAC High School Committee

Approved by the CPAC membership at the January 9, 2020 CPAC meeting

Cc: First Deputy Chancellor Cheryl Watson-Harris, Chief Academic Officer Linda P. Chen, Deputy Chief Academic Officer Lawrence Pendergast, Superintendent Donald Conyers

Key Questions Regarding “What is a High School Education?”

1. Curriculum

A. Should every high school offer a curriculum that prepares students for college?

1. For students interested in attending college, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) outlines the following coursework as required to meet the admissions criteria at a majority of colleges (please see attached for more detail):

English	4 years
Math	4 years (ending in calculus, statistics specifically not mentioned)
Laboratory Science	3-4 years (biology, chemistry, physics)
Social Sciences	2 years
Foreign Language	2-4 years
Arts	1 year (required at some colleges)

Students without these courses may be required to take these classes in college, in some cases as remedial work, at the students' own expense.

2. Should every child who wishes to take these courses be guaranteed a seat?
3. Should seniors be prevented from taking a full schedule of classes? Who should decide, the parents or the principal?

B. What basic facilities should all schools have to ensure that all students can obtain a high school diploma?

1. A fully stocked, operating science lab so students can meet their science requirements?
2. Libraries with librarians?
3. A gym and/or field to ensure that students can meet their gym requirement?
4. An auditorium and/or fully stocked arts room to allow students to obtain an Arts endorsement?
5. Rooms set aside for PT, OT, and speech services for our special needs high school students?

C. Should all high schools offer the Advanced Regents Diploma?

1. Should all high schools provide the academic coursework so that every child who wishes can obtain an Advanced Regents Diploma, including foreign language?
2. Should every child who wishes the Advanced Regents Diploma be guaranteed a seat in a class?
3. Should every child have access to an Arts or CTE endorsement?

D. What is the role of CTE and Arts courses?

1. Should every high school provide CTE programs? An Arts program?
2. Should students be allowed access to CTE or Arts programs at other schools?

E. Should all schools provide additional after-school supports for students?

1. All high schools have struggling students who need additional support. And all students may have questions for their teacher regarding that day's lesson or an assignment. Should time be allotted after school and teachers paid to provide students with these supports?
2. Students who barely pass Regents exams should be encouraged to retake the tests to improve their score to show mastery of the subject. Students who wish to obtain an honors diploma may wish to retake a Regents to improve their score. Both sets of students may require additional support outside their normal school day. Should all schools provide supports for these students?

F. Should all schools offer honors/AP/IB or college-equivalent programming?

1. What honors/AP/IB/college equivalent courses should every high school provide?
2. Should every child who wishes to take an honors/AP/IB or college-equivalent course be guaranteed a seat?

G. Is there a role in the curriculum for civics? What does it take to be a good citizen?

1. Government: Who are students' representatives at the city, state, and federal levels and what do they do? How do adults sign up to vote and why should citizens vote?
2. Financial Literacy: How to balance a check book, the importance of saving (and saving early) for retirement, savings instruments (including stocks and bonds), how mortgages work.
3. Information Literacy: What is the difference between fact and opinion? How to judge a reputable news source.

H. Should all high schools provide all required services for all special education students?

1. Should every school or campus have a school-based support team to evaluate high school students, assist with crises, and help with IEP meeting?
2. How do we ensure that all high school teachers, including general education high school teachers, support their special needs students?
3. What does SETSS mean in high school?
4. Should all high schools provide PT, OT, and speech services?
5. Should all high schools be accessible?

I. Should all high schools be required to support ELL students?

1. What should this support look like in high school?

2. Counselors

- A. How many high school students should each guidance counselor support?
- B. How many high school students should each college counselor support?

3. Extra-curricular activities, including sports and clubs

Extra-curricular activities are crucial for many high school students, providing them other avenues to socialize and build self-esteem, develop new skills, and explore new interests. Many students are motivated to attend high school because of these extracurricular activities, and they are crucial for college applications.

A. Should all high schools have sports teams?

1. Who should determine whether a school has a sports team, the school or PSAL?
2. Should all high schools have gyms? Field space? or guaranteed access to them at nearby schools or through the Parks Department?
3. Should all students be allowed to join a sports team, even if it is not offered at their school? (That is, give students the ability to join teams at other schools or have PSAL create borough- or district-teams in addition to school teams?)

B. Should all schools offer performance opportunities for students?

1. Should all schools offer students the opportunity to perform and work behind the scenes in school plays? Orchestras? Choral groups? Dance performances?
2. Should all high schools have auditoriums? Or guaranteed access to them at other schools?

C. Should schools offer clubs? (Robotics, Speech and Debate, Model UN, etc)

D. When thinking of funding after school activities, who should pay for

1. Teacher oversight (please note, PSAL currently pays teachers who oversee sports programs)?
2. Competition fees, gym rentals, and other incidentals?
3. Uniforms?

These questions get to the heart of determining what a high school education and high school experience are. There are likely many more questions that need be added to this list, but we believe it is critical that the DOE begin to answer them as it works to create more equitable and diverse high schools.

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

Admission Expectations at a Majority of Colleges

English	4 years *
Math	4 years **
Laboratory Science	3-4 years ***
Social Sciences	2 years ****
Foreign Language	2-4 years *****
Arts	1 year *****

* "This includes courses in which you study writing and courses in which you read literature."

** "Sign up for four full years of math classes. Students who take math in each year of high school are far more successful in college than students taking only three years. Never skip a year of math in high school because you will lose your momentum. Your math classes should include at least four of the following six classes, taken in this order: Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II and/or Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, Calculus." Please note that Statistics is NOT mentioned in NACAC's list.

*** "You will have the strongest background if you have taken at least one year each of biology, chemistry, and physics."

**** 2 years minimum. Most high school students take World History and US History. Other coursework can include Government, Sociology, Geography, and/or Psychology

***** "More and more colleges are requiring a minimum of two years of language study while in high school."

***** "A small number of colleges require one year of visual or performing arts prior to admission."

Source: <https://www.nacacfacts.org/learn/prep/high-school-classes-required-for-college-admission/>