

Reflection #3. EdCast 141 Diversifying New York City's Specialized High Schools &  
EdCast 142 What's So Special about a Specialized High School? Alumni Groups  
Speak

Lourdes Tayas

NYACK COLLEGE

Reflection #3

(1) Approximately 30,000 students a year applied for this specialized high schools with only 6,000 are admitted. With entrance determined solely by scores on an exam, known as Specialized High School Admissions Test or SHSAT. The student body of this school is 10% Latinx and Black. This population is far from representative of 70% Latinx and Black students who attend New York City Public Schools. In Brooklyn Tech, 67% is Asian-American.

(2) The lack of diversity and the grossly underrepresentation of Black and Latinx students at these specialized schools are the reasons for the new proposal of Mayor De Blasio and School Chancellor. The new proposal is to eliminate the one-time SHSAT test and replaced it with picking up top 7% top GPA at each middle school across the city. Among the reasons for this disproportionality as mentioned by the panelist is the information gap. That despite all publicity around these schools, significant group of Latino and Black parents don't know about the schools. They don't disseminate information to the students until about two months before the exam. The students don't have enough time to prepare. Students are not prepared with enough gifted and talented program at the K-8 level. So, by the time they get to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, they're just not competitive.

Another reason for lack of diversification at these schools today is the change of educational system. According to the panelist twenty or thirty years ago, Black Latino students were predominant at these school. But deteriorated due to lack of educational opportunities. Educational opportunities, according to the panelists, is that for middle schools decades ago, they have neighborhood programs. These programs help Black and Latino students to prepare them

and to advance, put them with accelerated programs. But those programs no longer exist today. There is also a problem with test preparation that makes a huge difference.

Achievement gap is the persistent disparity in academic achievement between minority and disadvantaged students and the white counterparts, white counterparts. While opportunity gap refers to the fact that the arbitrary circumstances in which people are born—such as their race, ethnicity, ZIP code, and socioeconomic status- determine their opportunities in life, rather than all people having the chance to achieve to the best of their potential.

(3) I agree with Mayor De Blasio's proposal to base the criteria for admission on the top 7% of student's GPA in the middle school instead of an exam. With this, it will encourage more students to pay attention to their school activities all-year round, try to compete and aims to become among the 7% versus focusing only on a single exam. By opening the opportunity to all high school across the boroughs, this will ensure a fair representation from every race, every color, and every style of learnings. This will become a perfect picture for diversity. I believe, this is the fairest way for Black and Latinx students, in fact to all students, to have an equal access to resources, super- teachers, be equally trained and compete with STEM-focused learning and be challenged, as well at these specialized high schools.

4) According to the panelists, these schools are preparing students to focus on STEM program that is needed to compete for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Gives an opportunity to students to challenge and advance with strong science and math backgrounds. These schools provide with higher level coursework and higher level of education, that will allow them to advance and compete in highly technological changing society. Furthermore, according to the panelist, most of the students at these schools are predominantly from a low-income, immigrant families, whose otherwise would not receive and experience this finest education would it not be for these specialized high

## Swk 770 SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

schools. These schools, according to the panelist, transforms these students and prepare them for huge careers and in some way at the end, gives back to the society.