



High School Admissions:

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The Basics:

Q: Does my 8th grade child have to apply to a high school?

A: Yes, if your child wishes to attend a New York City Public High School. Every public school 8th grader receives a High School application from their guidance counselor in the fall. High school applications are also distributed to New York City private and parochial schools. Even if a student knows where he/she wishes to attend, he/she must apply by submitting a High School Application to become part of the admissions process.

Q: When do students apply to high school?

A: The high school admissions process begins in the early fall for 8th graders and 9th graders who are either entering high school or wish to consider another school for 10th grade. High School applications are due back to guidance counselors in early December. We encourage students to start learning about high schools and the admissions process as early as 6th grade. For a complete high school admissions calendar, please visit the [calendar of events](#).

Q: Where do I get a High School Directory?

A: Students at New York City public schools will receive a High School Directory at the end of 7th grade. Students can also get a High School Directory through Admissions [events](#) and at [Borough Enrollment Offices](#).

Q: Can my child go to the school that his/her older sibling attends?

A: There is no priority given to siblings in the high school admissions process, with the exception of some [Charter Schools](#).

Q: How do different schools evaluate my child during the application process?

A: Schools evaluate students differently based on the admissions method of the program.

Admissions Method	Evaluation Type
Audition	Audition (May also include attendance, grades, and test scores)
Educational Option (Ed. Opt.)	English Language Arts standardized test scores
Limited Unscreened	Attendance at a school Information Session or Open House event
Screened	7 th grade report card grades, standardized test scores, attendance, punctuality (May also include interview, essay, or additional diagnostic test score, or other criteria)
Test	Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) only
Unscreened	None. Students who apply are selected randomly
Zoned	None. Priority to students who live in the geographic zoned area of the high school

For more specific information about admissions methods, see the [website](#) or consult Section 1 of the High School Directory.

Q: How do I know if a school can provide services for my child who has special needs?

A: There are a variety of schools meeting the needs of students with special needs. Meet with your child’s guidance counselor to discuss the many programs available to meet the needs of your child. The High School Directory also identifies services available to students with special needs.

Q: How do I decide which school(s) to apply to?

A: As you evaluate high school programs, we recommend that you consider the following questions:

- Where is the school located? What is the [travel time](#)?
- What are the admissions priorities and selection criteria for the school?
- How many students attend the school?
- What academic programs are offered?
- What extracurricular activities, clubs and sports are offered?
- Is a test or audition required to gain admission?
- What opportunities are there for parental involvement and engagement?
- What after-school academic support is available to students?
- Does the school provide any assistance in transitioning students into high school?
- What types of services are available to English Language Learners (ELLs) at the school?

Q: What can I do if my child is new to New York City?

A: For more information about new student registration and the documents required for registration, please visit our New Students [website](#).

Q: How do I apply to New York City public schools if I am in a private or parochial school?

A: Students interested in applying to New York City public schools should speak with their guidance counselor at their middle school. High School applications and materials will be available through the guidance counselors in the fall of 8th grade.

Q: How can I get more information about high school programs and the high school admissions process?

A: There are a wide variety of ways to learn more about high school programs and the high school admissions process:

- For general information about the high school admissions process, please visit the High School Admissions [website](#).
- Consult the High School Directory, available in print format at admissions [events](#) and [Borough Enrollment Offices](#) or [online](#).
- Attend Citywide and Borough High School Fairs. For dates, see the admissions [calendar](#).
- Attend school Information Sessions and Open House events. Please contact individual schools for details.
- Attend our *Making Choices* workshops for middle school students and parents in the [summer](#) and fall.
- Discuss your options and questions with your school guidance counselor.

Types of High Schools:

Q: What are zoned schools and how can I find one in my neighborhood?

A: Zoned schools give priority to students who apply and live in the geographic zoned area of the high school. Not every borough has zoned programs, but you can check online to see if there are any offered in your geographical area:

1. Visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/Directory>
2. From the dropdown menu named "Borough," select your borough.
3. Next, from the dropdown menu named "Program Selection Method," select "Zoned."
4. Then click on "Search Directory." If there are zoned programs in your borough, they will be listed here.

Q: What are screened schools and how do I apply?

A: Screened programs evaluate applicants selectively based on their academic grades, standardized test scores, attendance and punctuality. Some screened programs also evaluate applicants using writing samples, interviews, group activities, diagnostic tests, academic portfolios, or online activities. Activities required for screened programs are listed under “Selection Criteria” under each program in the High School Directory.

Q: My child excels in one of the performing arts areas. What would you recommend?

A: There are many schools and programs that focus on each area of the performing arts. They can be found in the High School Directory. You can also search for specific schools and programs [online](#). Most of the performing arts schools require that students demonstrate proficiency in the specific area of the program through an audition and/or portfolio. To learn more, attend the Information Sessions and Open House events at the schools and visit their websites.

Q: How should my child prepare for an audition?

A: Students with interest in the arts have an array of high school choices dedicated to cultivating artistic talent. To gain admission to audition schools, in addition to demonstrating your academic aptitude, you must also exhibit strong artistic skills in the form of an audition and/or portfolio. For information on preparing for specific auditions in the visual arts, drama/theater, music, and dance, please refer to this [handout](#).

Q: What do Career and Technical Education programs offer?

A: Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools and programs integrate academic study with workforce skills in specific careers. Students receive instruction in an industry-related area and have the opportunity to graduate from high school with industry-specific competencies and skills that lead to post-secondary education, further industry training and/or entry into the workforce. CTE programs of study differ from industry to industry but share common elements, including:

- High standards for graduation
- A cohesive sequence of academic courses paired with CTE courses and integrated content as appropriate, arming students with core academic knowledge and specific technical skills
- Specific mechanisms that connect the entire high school program to a related industry and post-secondary pathway
- Graduation with a recognized credential or certificate and explicit post-secondary opportunities

Students enroll in CTE programs because they wish to learn “hands-on” career skills while earning a Regents Diploma in order to prepare for college, other higher education studies or the work force. In addition to school laboratory settings, students have the opportunity to take part in internships, receive mentoring, and participate in job shadowing and other industry-based, real-life experiences.

Specialized High Schools:

Q: Which schools are the Specialized High Schools?

A: There are nine Specialized High Schools:

- Bronx High School of Science
- The Brooklyn Latin School
- Brooklyn Technical High School
- High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College
- High School of American Studies at Lehman College
- Queens High School for the Sciences at York College
- Staten Island Technical High School
- Stuyvesant High School
- Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts

Q: Who can take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) and/or audition for the programs/studios at LaGuardia?

A: All 8th graders (and first-time 9th graders) who are New York City residents are eligible to take the SHSAT and/or audition. In September of the 8th or 9th grade, your child should inform his/her guidance counselor of his/her decision so that an admission ticket can be issued for the appropriate test and/or audition(s).

Q: How can my child get into a Specialized High School?

A: For eight of the Specialized High Schools, students are required to take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). The SHSAT is the only requirement for admission. Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts requires students to audition for the programs/studios they apply to but does not require the SHSAT.

Q: What is the content of the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT)?

The Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) is a written test consisting of two sections:

- Verbal, including:
 - Scrambled Paragraphs: students are asked to arrange five sentences in logical order to create the best paragraph
 - Logical Reasoning: students read the information provided and choose the best answer to each question
 - Reading: students analyze and interpret passages by answering questions
- Mathematics, including:
 - Word problems and computational questions
 - Problems in arithmetic, algebra, probability, statistics and geometry

Q: How can a student prepare for auditions or the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT)?

Your child should ask his/her guidance counselor for a copy of the Specialized High Schools Student Handbook which includes two sample tests. In addition, the Handbook describes audition requirements for LaGuardia's six studios. You may also access the Specialized Handbook [online](#). When you are an 8th or 9th grader, your guidance counselor will provide more specific information about the SHSAT. In the meantime, use the following suggestions to help prepare for the test:

- Keep up with schoolwork. It is the best possible preparation.
- Continue reading books and articles because reading helps increase vocabulary, comprehension, and general knowledge.
- Practice taking the sample tests that are in the Specialized High Schools Student Handbook.
- Check your answers and read the explanations of the correct answers in the Handbook.
- Research study guides, test preparation services, and tutoring opportunities.
- Discuss additional opportunities for test preparation with your school guidance counselor.