

# Community Education Council for District One



## "Diversity in Admissions" Plans

**Diversity is essential to ensuring equity** in the allocation of resources and opportunities, making it crucial to **assess whether a proposed student assignment policy advances equity and achieves integration**. The policy must also be measured in terms of its effect on the assignment area in which it is to be implemented. For example, in District 1 the attendance boundary for Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade schools is [district-wide](#). It is worth noting that recent research indicates that schools make substantial and lasting improvements when reforms are district-wide, rather than centered on individual schools.<sup>1</sup> Informed by years of [outreach](#) to and [participation](#) from District 1 school community members on the issues of school [equity](#) and [student assignment](#), the CEC for District 1 suggests evaluating any DOE or individual school proposal with the following questions in mind<sup>2</sup>?

1. What is the **research basis for the proposed policy**? Is there data to support the policy?
2. What is the **impact of the policy on the affected attendance boundary demographics** (whether district, borough or city-wide)?
  - a. What are the demographics of the district by subgroup? (English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities, Students in Temporary Housing, Economically Disadvantaged students, Latino, African American, White, and Asian students)
  - b. What are the demographics of the proposed policy? At the individual school? At the district level?
  - c. What effect will the proposed enrollment plan have on the demographics of the district?
3. What is the policy's **impact on resource allocation/allocation of educational opportunities** in the district?
  - a. Research has shown that schools educating children living in poverty, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities need more resources. Thus if an enrollment policy at one school increases the cost burden on another by increasing the population of high needs students, this policy will necessarily promote resource inequity
  - b. Research on segregation and tracking<sup>3</sup> has also shown that schools with the highest proportion of students who tend to score low on standardized tests tend to have lower expectations for those students' abilities, and consequently provide more limited access to higher level learning. Thus, a policy that increases the proportion of lower scoring children in some schools will also increase inequity in educational opportunities.
  - c. Does the proposed policy increase equity of access? E.g., are some subgroups of children, such as low-income children, required to travel further as a result of implementation of the enrollment policy?
4. **Is the policy scalable?** Can it be replicated district-wide, borough-wide or city-wide (as per the

policy's intended attendance area)?

5. Does the policy ensure **equal access to information**? Do all parents of all backgrounds have equal access to information in order to make an informed decision about enrollment?
6. **Is the policy fully transparent**? Are all aspects of the enrollment policy understood by all parents?
7. **Does the policy positively affect current disparate impacts and provide information to create more equitable district-wide resource allocation, achievement, and enrollment**?
8. Will the policy help **alleviate overcrowding and eliminate under-enrollment** of facilities?
9. Does the policy ensure that all schools in the attendance area (district-wide, for example) are **meeting the educational needs** of its diverse learners?
10. **Is the policy family-friendly**? Are current students grandfathered in, providing educational continuity and stability, siblings given preference, and adequate transportation provided to ensure a successful implementation of the proposed policy?
11. Does the **policy demonstrate adequate support by community members**: parents, teachers, administrators, and local residents?
12. **How will the success of the proposed policy be measured**?
13. What are the **unintended consequences of the proposed policy** and can they be alleviated or, if not, comfortably borne out?

The District's Socio-Economic Status (SES) work group of the [Socio-Economic Integration Pilot Program grant](#) worked over the course of this year to issue recommendations for a choice-based, SES-conscious student assignment plan. Presented at a March [forum](#) and as [written recommendations to an enrollment expert](#), the group examined integration programs and District 1 [enrollment data](#) to propose an admission policy that would ensure that schools district-wide have an equal distribution (within +/- 5%) of students identified as at-risk, utilizing a multifaceted definition of Socio-Economic Status that includes factors such as household income, parental educational attainment, English Language Learner status, Special Education status, and temporary housing status. The group also recommended that the district implement a family-friendly registration and application process that would honor parents' choices. These recommendations, which the CEC supports, satisfy the questions asked above.

(1) <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2016/02/16-educational-success-london-boroughs-ladd-fiske>; Kirp, D. (2013). *Improbable Scholars: The Rebirth of a Great American School System and a Strategy for America's Schools*. Oxford Scholarship Online. Retrieved January 20, 2016, from <http://0-www.oxfordscholarship.com/libraries.colorado.edu/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199987498.001.0001/acprof-9780199987498>;

(2) The CEC focuses on Pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> grades, given that is our charge under NYS law.; (3) Reardon, S.F. (2015). School Segregation and Racial Academic Achievement Gaps. (CEPA Working Paper No.15-12). Retrieved on June 27, 2016 from Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis: <http://cepa.stanford.edu/wp15-12>; Daniel, L. (2007). Research summary:

Heterogeneous grouping. Retrieved on June 27, 2016 from

<http://www.nmsa.org/Research/ResearchSummaries/HeterogeneousGrouping/tabid/1264/Default.aspx>