Middle and High School Admissions for Students with Disabilities

October 7, 2026

1

KAREN HERRERA AND KIM MADDEN

Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

What is Advocates for Children?

AFC is an independent agency that protects the rights of all NYC students

Our Services:

- Helpline: **1-866-427-6033** (Mon-Thurs, 10am – 4pm)
- Free legal services to low-income families
- Guides and resources: www.advocatesforchildren.org
- Workshops and trainings
- Policy Advocacy and Impact Litigation

Check For Updates on our website

3

Today's Workshop

- How to apply
- Types of Program: Middle, HS, Charter
- Learning about schools
- Questions & Answers

School application facts

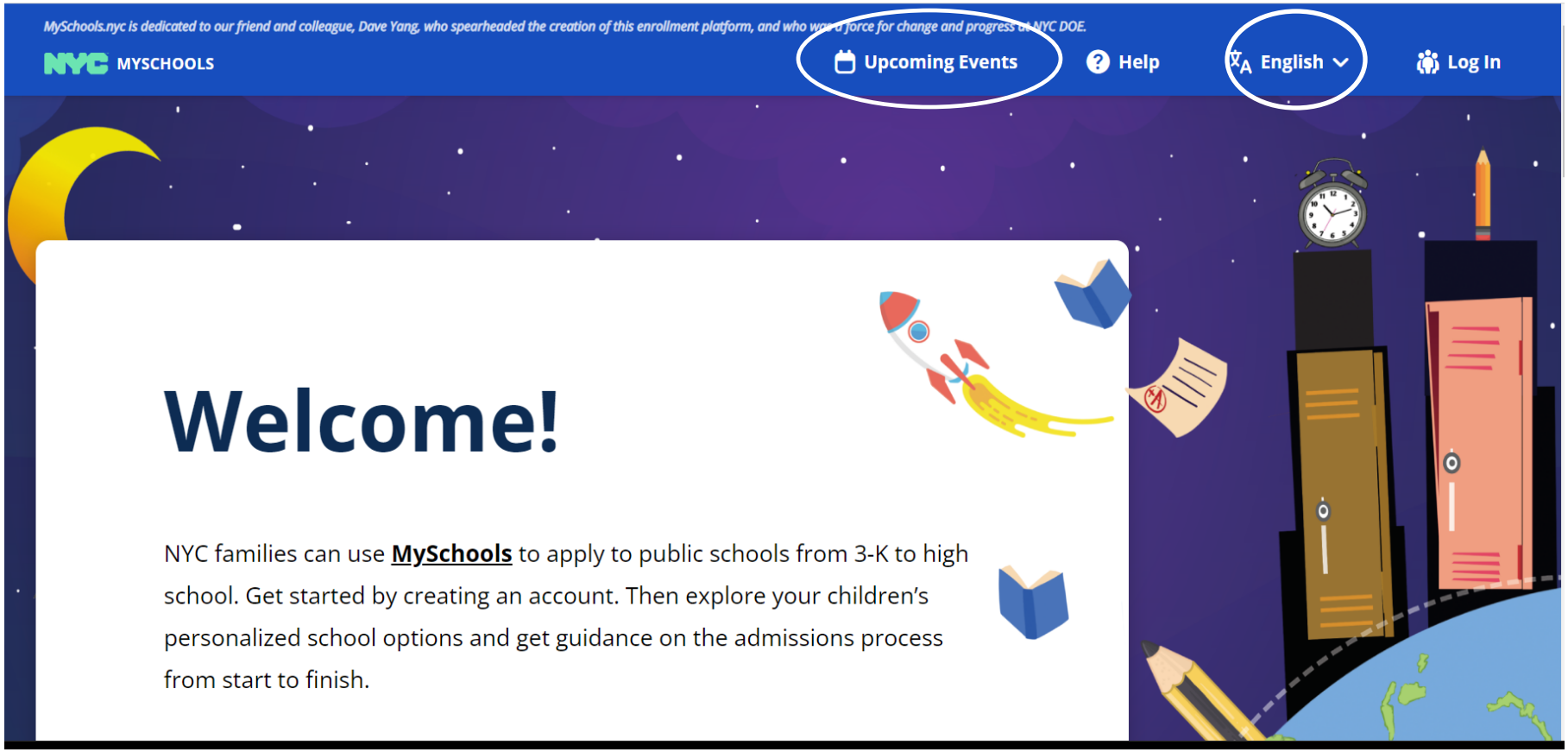
- 400+ middle and 400+ high schools in NYC
- Search and apply for schools using MySchools
- Schools use different admission methods & priorities
- Students are automatically waitlisted at higher-ranked schools

Dates to remember

Middle School	Starts Oct 14	Apply by Dec 11	Offers on Apr 7
High School	Starts Oct 6	Apply by Dec 4	Offers Mar 3
SHSAT	Sign up by Oct 30	Test in Nov	Offers by Mar 3
Charter Schools	Apply by April 1		

Sign up for admissions alerts with the DOE

Visit https://www.myschools.nyc/



Use MySchools to research schools, RSVP for events, and complete students' applications

Things to think about...

-Seats and Demand

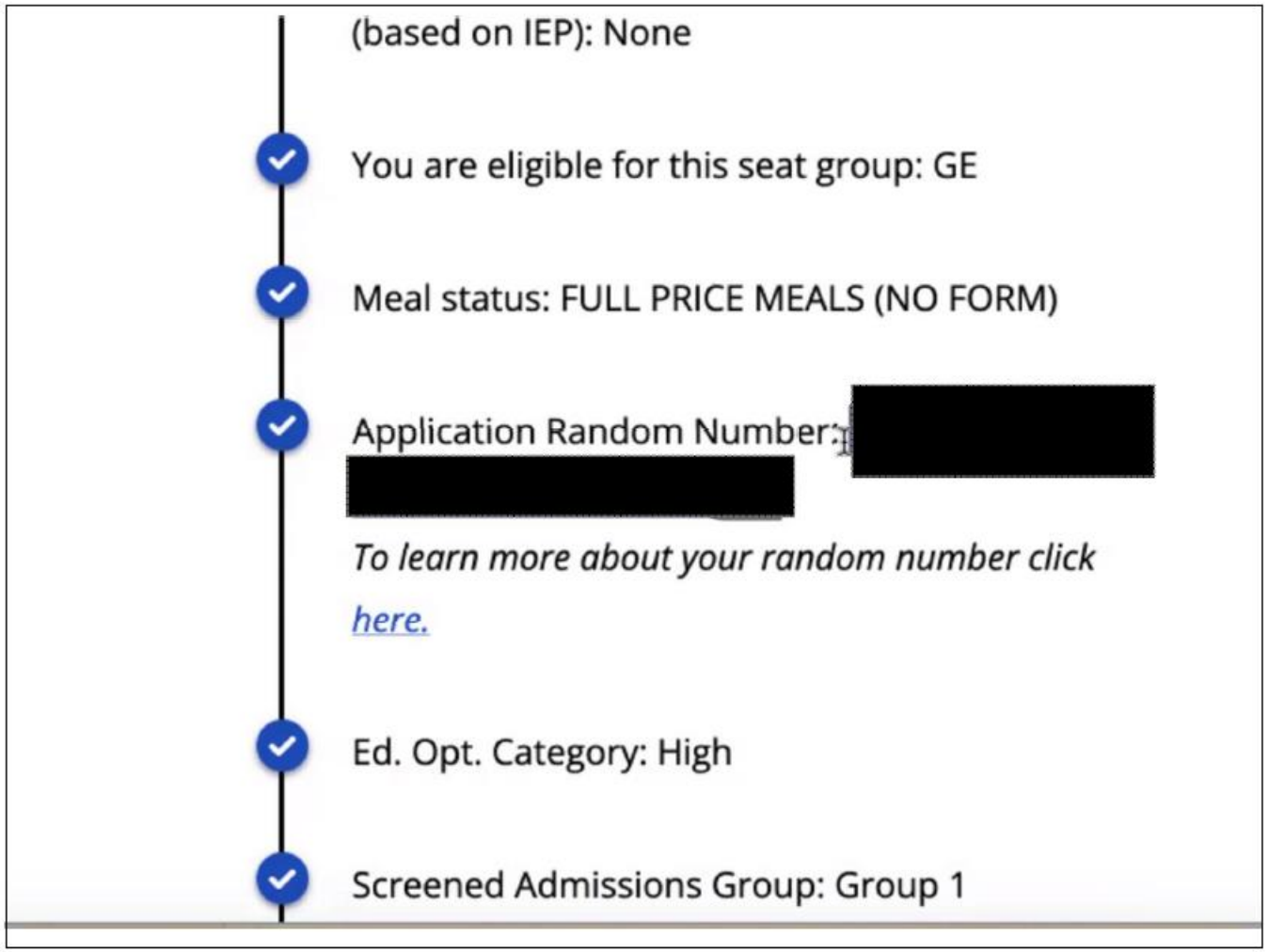
-Priority groups/Screens

- No Appeal – but there is a waitlist by lottery number

- Chances of offer feature in the HS application

- Check out Enrollment Help

Click on "Profile" to see lottery number and grouping



What is a random number?

A random number is a long string of letters and numbers, for example: B51920AF-F1C6-40EC-8E9A-3E1E50CB13BB (this is a real random number!). Random numbers are used in admissions to determine the order in which students are matched to schools during admissions. These numbers are sorted in numeric and then alphabetical order like this: 0, 1, 2 ... 9, A, B, C, D, E, F.

For example, when the following two random numbers are sorted, the number that begins with "5" comes first:

1. 5B1920AF-F1C6-40EC-8E9A-3E1E50CB13BB
2. B51920AF-F1C6-40EC-8E9A-3E1E50CB13BB

Process

11

Offers will be made in Spring (March/April)

Waitlisted at any school listed above match

Can join waitlist (but will be at the bottom)

Check waitlist in real time

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle Schools Admissions

13

Zoned

Guaranteed spot or priority

Enter your address here to check

District

Only open to students in that district

Borough

Open to all students in that Borough

Citywide schools

Open to any NYC student

Middle School Admissions

Screens	Some schools screen for grades or have auditions, check in myschools
Location	Some prioritize students in their zone, district, or borough
Diversity	Some prioritize low-income students, Multilingual Learners, and students in temporary housing
Lottery	Lottery for each priority group if more applicants than seats

Questions?

HIGH SCHOOL

HS Admissions Methods

Specialized	Screened/ Audition	Ed Opt
• SHSAT screened • Offers based on score	• Based on 7th grade core class average • Some require essay, interview, audition, etc.	• Take a range of academic levels • Some seats are filled through ranking, others random

HS Admissions Methods

Screened Language

- For multilingual learners
- Consider time in US, language proficiency, etc.

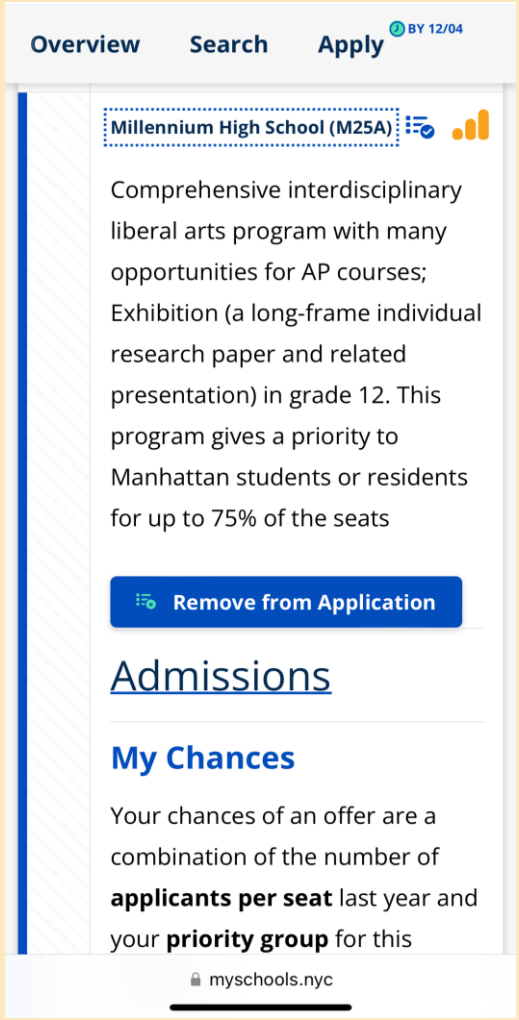
Transfer

- For older students
- Check program age and academic requirements

Zoned & Open

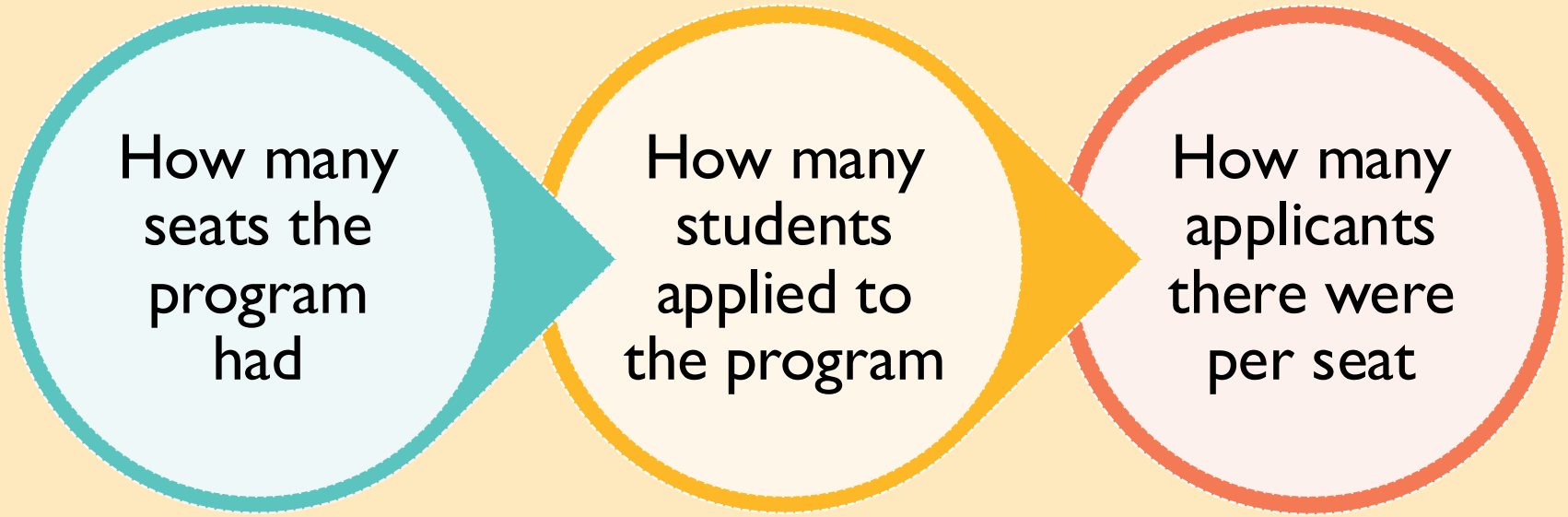
- If you live in Zoned school area, just apply
- For Open, take anyone, random ranking

Chances of offer: High, Medium or Low



- High school students will see an icon indicating whether they have a high, medium, or low chance of receiving an offer
- Based on the applicant's admissions characteristics like grades, priority group, etc.
- The DOE has more detailed information about this on their chance of an offer webpage

Demand for the Program Last Year



Charter Schools

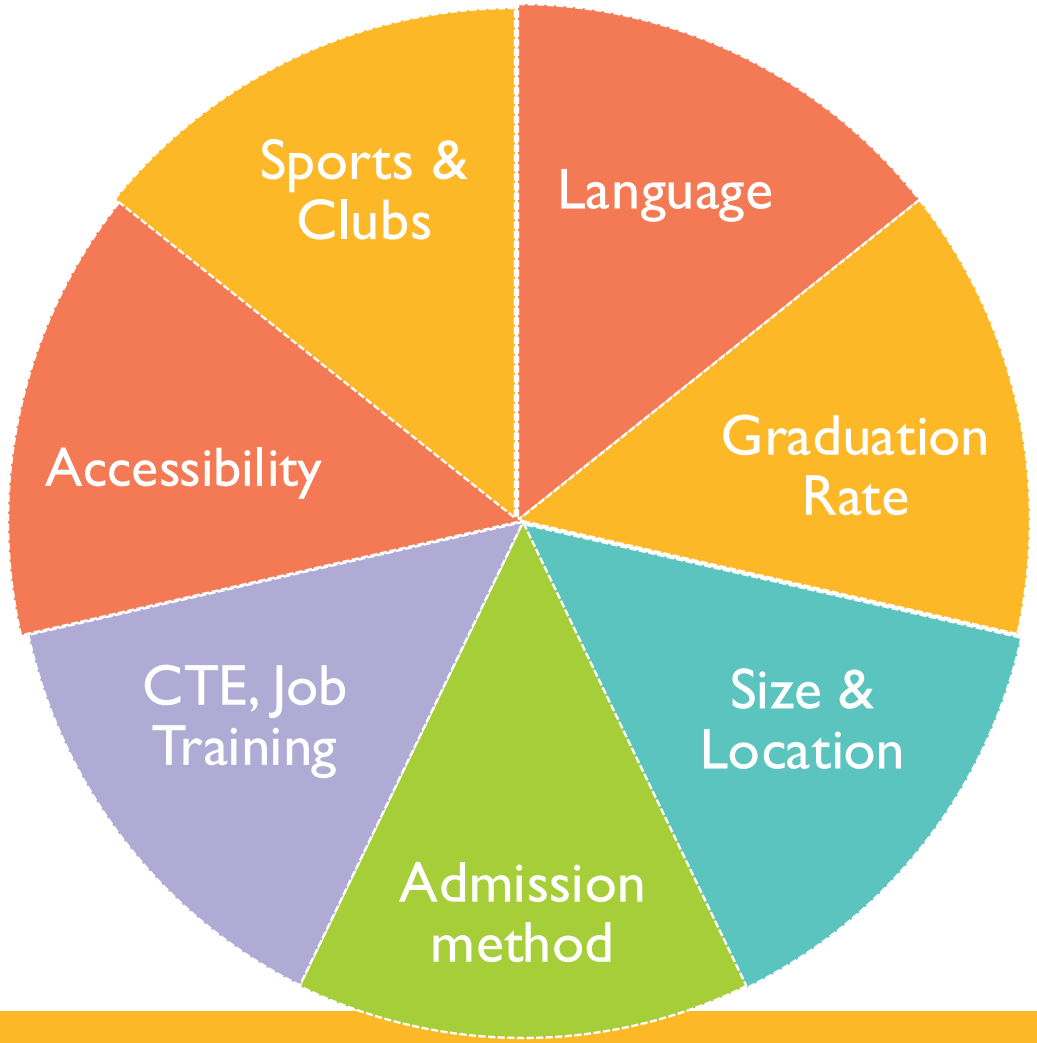
Applications are due April 1st!

NYC Charter School Center:
https://nyccharterschools.org/

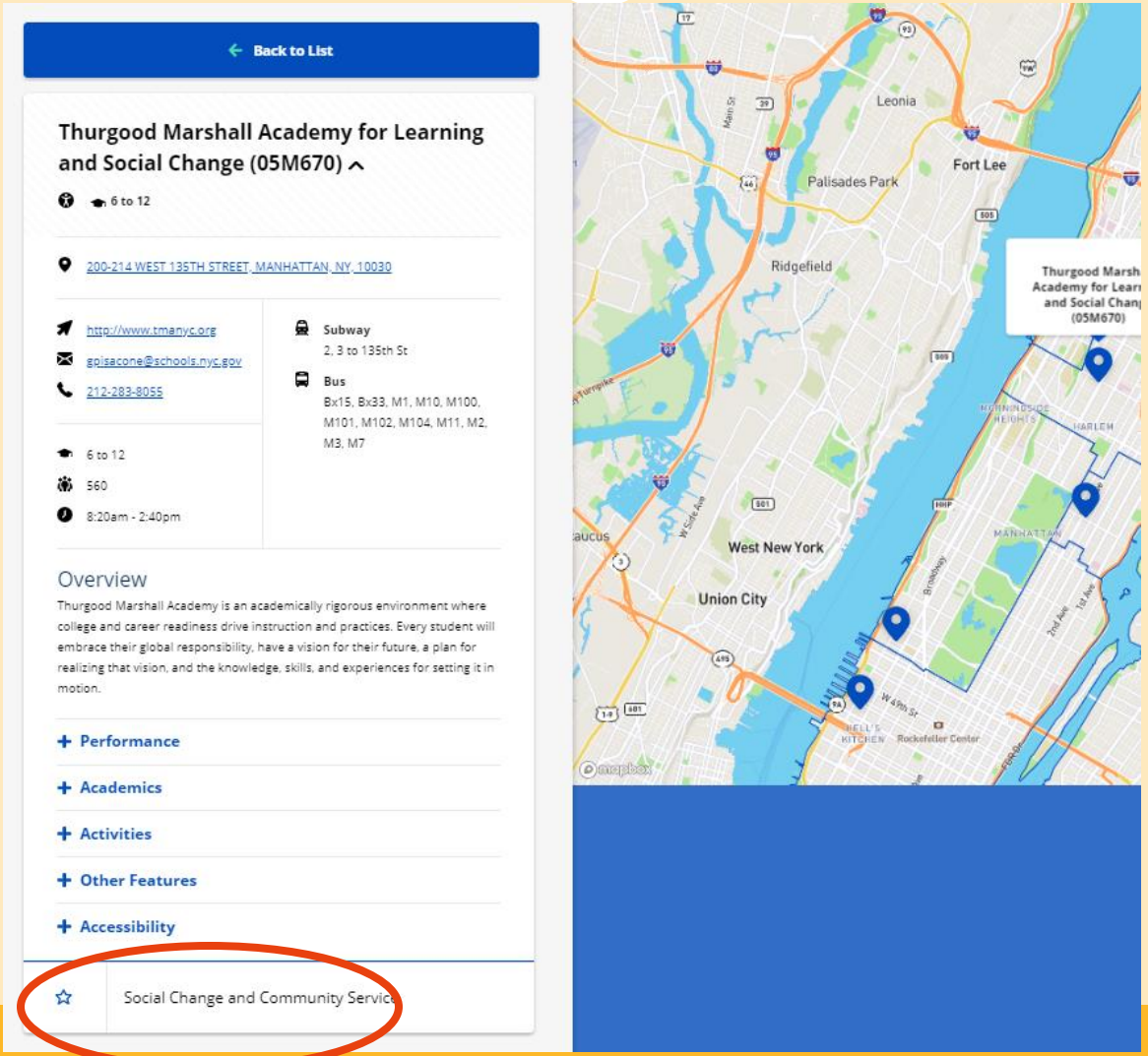
LEARNING ABOUT A SCHOOL

22

What are you looking for in a school?



Looking up school info on MySchools



Myschools: Baruch College M87A

25

◉ General Education ○ Students With Disabilities

Seats and Demand Last Year

28	**Applications Per Seat**
93	Seats
2633	Applicants
All Seats Filled	

Priority Groups

1. New York City residents

(There were about 1270 applicants eligible for free or reduced price lunch in this group and about 110 received offers last year. There were about 1360 additional applicants in this group and about 50 received offers last year.)

DIVERSITY IN ADMISSIONS

This school has a Diversity in Admissions Initiative.

- Applicants eligible for free or reduced price lunch will be considered first for 66% of seats.
- For the remaining 34% of seats, all students will be considered.

○ General Education ◉ Students With Disabilities

Seats and Demand Last Year

5	**Applications Per Seat**
25	Seats
120	Applicants
All Seats Filled	

Priority Groups

1. New York City residents

(There were about 60 applicants eligible for free or reduced price lunch in this group and about 20 received offers last year. There were about 60 additional applicants in this group and about 10 received offers last year.)

DIVERSITY IN ADMISSIONS

This school has a Diversity in Admissions Initiative.

- Applicants eligible for free or reduced price lunch will be considered first for 66% of seats.
- For the remaining 34% of seats, all students will be considered.

Screening Methods

Screened schools: Rank students

Middle school based on 4th grade scores

High School based on 7th grade scores

Different ranking groups based on core class grades

Audition

28

Students prepare a vocal, musical instrument, drama, dance, or art portfolio piece

Apply on Myschools.org. Virtual and some in-person options

Screened Language

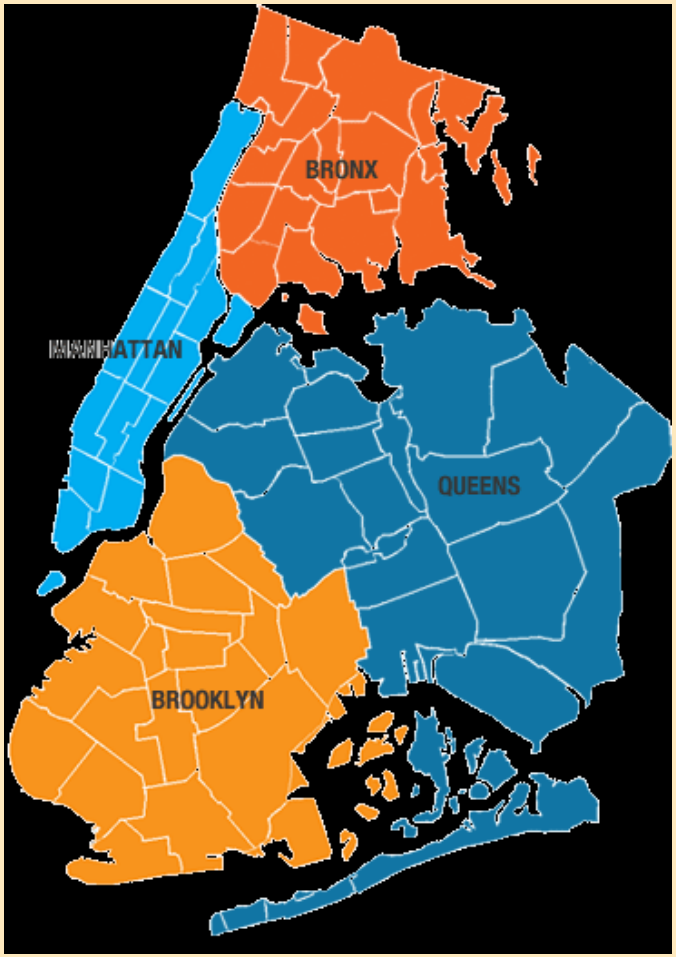
Students are matched based on English proficiency or a specific language spoken at home.

Continuing students

Guaranteed match regardless of available seats for K-8 or 6-12 schools

5th & 8th Graders

Zoned & Geographic



Students receive priority/guarantee based on where they live.

High School: No district preference

Specialized Programs

Bilingual ICT or Special Class

ASD Nest & Horizon (Autism)

ACES (Intellectual Disability)

Barrier Free/ Accessible Schools

How do I find out if a school is accessible?

Look at accessibility on MySchools

Look up BAP Score 0-10

Visit the School

https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/buildings/building-accessibility

Diversity in Admissions: many programs

- Income (Free/Reduced Price Lunch)
- Students learning English
- Student in temporary housing

https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enrollment-help/meeting-student-needs/diversity-in-admissions

Questions?

Seats for Students with IEPs

If more than 20% of classes (not lunch) are special ed (SETSS, ICT, Small class)

=

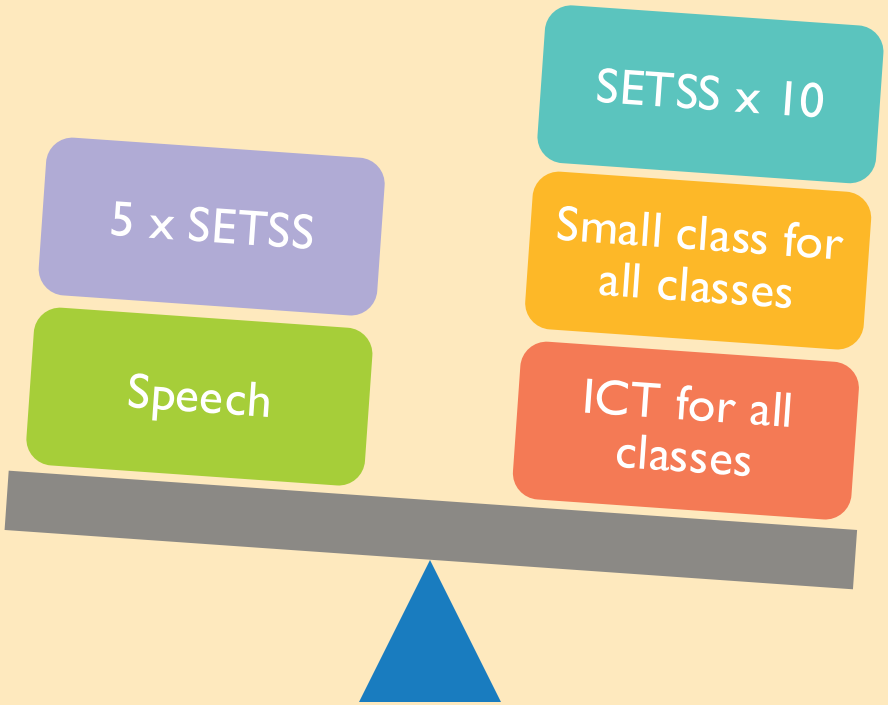
Students with disabilities (SWD) set aside

Example of SWD seat for 35 classes/week

Less than 20%

More than 20%

≠ SWD



= SWD

Special Education Admissions

Students with IEPs apply the same way as other students

New school MUST implement the IEP.

Any change must be based on student's needs NOT school's program!

BUT REALITY CAN BE COMPLICATED!

NYC School Level Class Size Report

https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/government-reports/class-size-reports Click on "Detailed School Level Data" Excel file

Gen Ed	English	MS English Other	10	1	10.0	<15	<15
ICT	English	MS English Core	159	6	26.5	25.0	29.0
ICT	Math	MS Math Core	159	6	26.5	25.0	29.0
ICT	Science	MS Science Core	159	6	26.5	25.0	29.0
ICT	Social Studies	MS Social Studies Core	159	6	26.5	25.0	29.0
SC	English	MS English Core	34	3	11.3	10.0	12.0
SC	Math	MS Math Core	34	4	8.5	<6	12.0
SC	Science	MS Science Core	34	3	11.3	10.0	12.0
SC	Social Studies	MS Social Studies Core	34	4	8.5	<6	12.0

TIP: You can sort by district and type of class to find out how many schools had a type of program/grade in that district (i.e. 6th grade ICTs in D14, 9th grade 15:1s in D10, etc.)

Tips for Applying

Only apply to programs you'd be happy to attend

Rank your TRUE preferences

Make your last pick a "safe school"

Look into schools with multiple programs

NEW! Chalkbeat story and webinar Oct 15

https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2026/10/07/how-to-find-nyc-public-schools-parents-guide/

Language Access Rights: Translation & Interpretation

Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian-Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Urdu

NEW! Albanian, Uzbek and Ukrainian

Translation:

- letters
- forms
- meeting notices
- report cards
- special education documents

Interpretation:

- parent-teacher conferences
- parent association meetings
- suspension hearings
- meetings with school staff
- special education meetings

DOE language access complaints: (718) 935-2013 or Hello@schools.nyc.gov

Tips if your child is suspended

- Notice must be in writing
- No out of school suspensions!
- Principal's suspensions: Ask for a conference
- Superintendent's suspensions: Get the packet
- Call AFC for help

Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Call us with questions!

Helpline: 866-427-6033 (toll free)

Monday-Thursday, 10am-4pm

info@advocatesforchildren.org