



The Computer School
Environment for Advanced Learning
100 West 77th Street
New York, NY 10024
Phone: (917) 441-1236 Fax: (212) 678-5908
Henry Zymeck, Principal

The Computer School Guide ***to the*** ***High School Process***



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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the high school admissions process!

We recognize that this process can bring confusion and frustration. Our goal is to help minimize the anxiety and stress of this important experience by showing you how to be well-informed and realistic. We have created this information packet to help clarify things as you and your child search for high schools.

TIP #1: The high school admissions process really begins during the summer. It is very important that you take time in July and August to do research, make a list of possible high school choices and become familiar with those schools and their admissions criteria. All of this information can be found in the High School Directory (which you will receive by the end of June) or on the school websites.

TIP #2: Set up a calendar in a prominent place! As your search progresses, you will need to keep track of fairs, tour dates, open houses, assessment dates and interviews. Please make a special effort to attend our two H.S. Process presentations if you possibly can: the seventh grade parent meeting in the spring and the high school info session that will be part of Curriculum Night in the fall.

Please understand that this information packet is intended only as an aid and not as a sole source of information for your research on high schools. For a detailed description of the process and a list of helpful resources, please refer to the inside cover and introductory pages (labeled with Roman numerals) of the High School Directory. We will distribute the directories in school when we get them at the end of June.

We look forward to working with you!

Best regards,

Erin Hill
School Counselor

Jaime DeGaetano
School Counselor

BEING PREPARED FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL PROCESS

I. What you will need:

- Several copies of your child’s final 7th grade report card. You will receive a copy of the 7th grade report card at the end of 7th grade and another copy at the beginning of 8th grade, so please **make several more copies**. (Some schools may ask for 8th grade report cards as well.)
- 7th grade work (Math, Science, Social Studies, ELA). Some screened schools ask for samples of student work—usually only one example. Students may ask their teachers at the beginning of 8th grade for their portfolios in order to choose a piece of work they would like to present in their interview portfolio.
- Standardized test scores. Most screened schools consider test scores, so you will need to know your child’s scores in order to select schools for which your child is qualified.
- Accurate attendance records. If you believe there is a discrepancy, contact the main office immediately. Attendance records cannot be changed after June.
- Calendar to coordinate interviews, auditions, etc.

II. *Please be aware that you are responsible for making ALL arrangements for attending interviews and tours. Contact the schools directly.* Tours and open houses can fill quickly so sign up early. All contact information along with dates and times of specialized high school tests and auditions can be found in the High School Directories. Information about open houses, interviews and some individual high school assessment tests may be found on specific school web sites. **Please be extremely mindful of potential conflicts when scheduling interviews and auditions, as many schools have the same dates and times for when these events occur.**

Obviously there are many high schools conducting tours and open houses so please make sure to check this information by contacting the schools directly or by going on to www.insideschools.org. Please tour as many potential schools as possible. The more schools you rank on your application, the better chances you have to be matched to a school. While as a courtesy we may send out announcements regarding tours for schools that have specifically reached out to us, we are not able to provide tour information for all schools. We have requested the DOE to set up a page on their website where high schools can directly submit tour information for all interested applicants to view. We will keep you informed if this page comes to fruition.

High schools provide attendance letters to students who attend open houses, interviews and tours. Your child must bring proof of a high school visit to the main office in order to be excused from classes that were missed during the tour or interview. Your child should not miss the whole school day for a high school visit. Students should bring a letter from home if they will need to leave school after the first few periods for an afternoon tour; they should return to The Computer School in the afternoon if they attend a morning tour.

III. Accurate address information:

It is vitally important that The Computer School has your current address on file. If your address has changed over the summer or during the year last year, please make sure to communicate this change to The Computer School. The district you live in can affect high school acceptances, so we must know this information by early September. Please provide evidence of home address to Ms. Mifflin in the main office. Acceptable documentation of a change of address includes the following: utility bill (gas, electric, or water), deed to a house, document from the City Housing Authority, or from the Human Resources Administration, medical or insurance card with home address, or a statement that verifies your address from an employer, a social service agency, a community-based organization or a religious institution. A telephone bill or driver's license is not acceptable proof of address. A lease by itself is not acceptable.

IV. Protocol for letters of recommendations:

As part of the application process, VERY FEW screened schools require or suggest that students supply letters of recommendations. As a rule, teachers may agree to write letters of recommendation at their own discretion and are under no obligation to do so. Our teachers are generally happy to help as long as they are given appropriate advance notice. A suggested timeframe is a minimum of three weeks, since many students may be requesting letters in the same time period. Requests for letters should come from students, not from parents.

Letters are confidential; they are sent directly to schools, usually in addressed, stamped envelopes provided by the student.

Recommendations are written based on an accurate assessment of academic progress and behavior. To do otherwise would compromise the trust that prospective schools might have in future applicants from our school. Please consider this when asking teachers to provide recommendations.

V. Specialized High Schools & Audition Tickets:

Students will be asked during the first week of September to indicate whether they intend to audition for any high school and/or take the specialized high school test. It would be very helpful if you discuss this decision with your child prior to September.

Once your child has indicated his/her decision, it is his/her responsibility to notify Ms. Hill and Ms. DeGaetano of any changes (i.e. to take the specialized exam or not).

****There are no audition tickets given out. ONLY LaGuardia and Specialized High Schools use audition tickets and entrance tickets***

Specialized High Schools:

Bronx High School of Science
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
LaGuardia High School (audition school – does not require a test; just an audition)

VI. Testing Modifications

Students who require test modifications must also indicate whether they intend to take the specialized high school test. Typically, the specialized test for students with test modifications takes place within one to two weeks of the test for students without modifications. It is important that all students with 504 forms (for test modifications) are filled out properly and are sent to our school for approval by June for the following school year.

Also, if your child has an IEP due for an annual review in September or October, please double check with the school to be sure that it is completed on time. This will ensure that the Specialized High School Admissions people will have all the necessary and updated information that is required.

VII. Jupiter Grades

During the year, you will receive a great deal of information via Jupiter Grades. We rarely send anything home in print, therefore, it is extremely important that you check to make certain that the school has accurate email information for your family. If you do not use email (or do not check it regularly), PLEASE let us know immediately so that we can ensure that you receive hard copy of all our communications.

VIII. Filling out the high school application:

When listing the high schools you have chosen, the code, the program name and the school must all be filled out. There is no need to fill in the report card grade portion of the application as this has already been entered into the system.

All students should aim to list no fewer than eight schools on their applications to increase the odds of getting into a school of their choice.

Please make sure that you are comfortable with the schools you put down and have done as much research on them as possible. If you follow and adhere to the selection criteria of each school, the chances that your child will have a successful match will increase. Also remember that the more schools you put down the greater the chance of receiving a match. However, do not put down a school to which you would not consider sending your child. It is also important to realize that, unfortunately, there are NO strategies,

gimmicks, or tricks to listing choices. You simply rank each school in order of preference.

IX. Notification Process:

- **Main Round:**

All students, whether they took the Specialized High School Exam or not, will be notified of results in mid to late February.

- **Second Round:**

If your child was not matched to a high school, the Department of Education will provide you with a list of schools that have vacancies and any of The New High Schools that will be opening in the fall. From this list you will again be asked to rank schools based on your preference. **ALL STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY TO ANY SCHOOL ON THE SECOND ROUND LIST AND ANY NEW SCHOOLS.** For students who have already received a match, but choose to apply to schools in the second round, there are two possible outcomes: If the student does not receive an offer in the Second Round, then s/he will still retain the Main Round match. However, if the student does get an offer in the Second Round, s/he forfeits the Main Round match.

Each year, within a couple of days of receiving the results of the Main Round, We hold a special meeting for students (and their parents/guardians) who did not receive a match. We work very closely with those families to try to ensure that they will have a successful Second Round.

- **Appeals Process:**

You may make an appeal *if and only if* your child has received an offer from a high school. As part of the process, you will be asked to write a short (1000 character) explanation of your decision to appeal. Most appeals are denied. In the past, appeals have been granted only for circumstances where a child really *could not* attend a school (e.g. health issues or a recent move). Appeals are not granted based on siblings who attend a particular school, not liking the neighborhood a school is in, or your personal preference for a specific school. This is why it is important that you are realistic about admissions criteria when choosing high schools.

X. Attendance and Lateness Issues:

It cannot be stressed enough what an important role your child's 7th and 8th grade attendance and punctuality play in this process. We drive home this message throughout the school year, beginning in sixth grade. This is a highly competitive process and it increases your child's chance of success if attendance and punctuality are very good. There have been several instances within the last two years where a high school has rejected a student solely based on lateness and absence. Therefore, we recommend that you take your child's attendance history seriously when ranking schools.

XI. Deadlines:

Your child will be receiving time-sensitive information throughout the admissions process. It is **CRITICAL** that deadlines are met: missing deadlines can negatively affect the outcome of your child's high school match. Please make sure that you communicate with

your child the importance of being responsible about bringing home notices and returning them on time.

XII. Setting up meetings with the School Counselor:

Meetings will not be scheduled until after Curriculum Night (in September)

Please understand that scheduling a meeting with the counselor is not necessarily the absolute next step. If you are well prepared, then usually a simple email or phone call will suffice, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The point is, the more time spent with parents, the less time the counselors are spending with your children.

If you still need to schedule a meeting with a counselor, we ask that you please come prepared with a list of at least 5 schools that you have already done some research on and are thinking of pursuing, in order to make the best possible use of time. Meetings may also be scheduled to be conducted over the telephone. If you are unable to make a meeting, your child is more than welcome to request a meeting themselves with a counselor.

Resources

- **A Computer School Guide: Preparing for the High School Process Handbook**
- **Our website: <http://www.thecomputerschool.org> and go to the Guidance/Counseling Department webpage**
- **Insideschools.org to obtain updated information.**
- **Book - New York City's Best Public High Schools, by Clara Hemphill**
- **We will be sending out emails periodically. Please make sure your Jupiter Grades email is correct.**
- **High School Directory – given out at the end of 7th grade and available on our website and the DOE website.**
- **Talk with students and parents who attend the schools you are interested in.**
- **Talk with school safety officers when you visit schools.**

Summer Homework

- **Look through the high school directory and become familiar with the schools that interest you and your child.**
- **Look at the criteria of the school and make sure that your child meets most if not ALL of them. Use the back sheet of the High School Handbook to help guide you.**
- **Take trips to the school and look at the surroundings. Do you feel comfortable there? Would you feel comfortable sending your child there? Letting your child stay late for after school programs? Etc. Was it a long, complicated trip to get to the school? Will your child be able to make it on time every morning?**
- **Talk with parents and students who attend the school and get their input.**
- **Visit insideschools.org and find out what people are saying about the schools. Excellent resource!!**
- **Discuss with your child whether or not s/he will be participating in the SHSAT and/or auditioning for LaGuardia and other audition schools.**
- **The more preparation you do now about finding information on high schools, the easier it will be to make wiser decisions.**

Here is a list of potential questions that your child may be asked during an interview. Please take a moment to go over these questions and discuss possible answers in order to help your child feel more comfortable in an interview setting.

Standard Interview Questions

These are representative of the kinds of questions you might be asked in an interview. However, you should be prepared for the full spectrum of questions that may be presented. If you can get comfortable coming up with thoughtful answers to these questions, you will be well on your way to being a successful interviewee!

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How would you describe your ideal school?
3. Why do you want to come to this school?
4. What goals do you have while in high school?
5. How do you plan to achieve these goals?
6. How do you evaluate success?
7. Describe a situation in which you were successful.
8. Are you a team player?
9. What motivates you?
10. Why should we accept you into this school?
11. Tell me about some of your recent goals and what you did to achieve them?
12. Have you ever had a conflict with another student or teacher?
How did you resolve it?
13. What is your greatest strength?
14. What is your greatest weakness?
15. If I were to ask one of your teachers to describe you, what would he or she say?
16. What changes would you make at your middle school?
17. How has middle school prepared you for high school?
18. What were your favorite classes? Why?
19. Who were your favorite teachers? Why?
20. Why do you have unsatisfactory marks on your report card?
21. What do you know about our school?

Student Name: _____

Final 7th Grade Grades: Math _____
Eng _____ Sci _____ SS _____

7th Grade total attendance: # times late _____ # times absent _____

Standardized Test Scores: (circle one) ELA: 1 2 3 4 Math: 1 2 3 4

High School Planning Chart

Name of School	School #1	School #2	School #3	School #4	School #5	School #6	School #7	School #8
Do I meet the school's admissions criteria? (grades, attendance, test scores)								
Does the school require an interview?								
Does the school require a portfolio or audition?								
Is the school diverse?								
Does the school hold tours? When?								
Does the school require a test? When?								
Does this school require a teacher recommendation?								

1. How many copies of my 7th grade report card and standardized test scores will I need to make? _____
2. Have I asked my teachers (at least 2 weeks in advance) for recommendations? _____
3. Have I begun to schedule tours? _____
4. Who will help me with my art portfolio if necessary? _____
5. Do I need to prepare a monologue, dance or musical piece? _____