

Mayor Adams, Chancellor Banks Announce Expansion of Gifted and Talented Programs Citywide

April 14, 2022

Addition of Over 1,000 New Kindergarten and Third Grade Gifted and Talented Seats

Brings Access to Accelerated Learning to All New York City Public School Districts

Video available at: https://youtu.be/yGwB_l8KoiE

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Education (DOE) Chancellor David C. Banks today announced the expansion of the New York City public school’s Gifted and Talented program serving elementary school students. Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks are adding 100 kindergarten seats and 1,000 third-grade seats, expanding both entry points to all districts. Through this expansion and updates to the admission process, the city’s Gifted and Talented program will serve every community citywide for the first time. Applications for both programs open on May 31st.

“Expanding our Gifted and Talented program to all New York City districts is about giving every child, in every zip code, a fair chance and making sure no child is left behind,” said **Mayor Adams**. “We’re doubling down on this administration’s commitment to our youngest New Yorkers by adding additional seats and removing inequities in the admission process to allow students throughout this city to gain access to accelerated learning. And thanks to this expansion, for the first time ever, there will be a Gifted and Talented program in every school district in this city. This is how we give every young person an opportunity to grow, to learn, to explore their talents and imagination.”

“Today we move to end the era of scarcity — the era of making families fight amongst themselves for limited Gifted and Talented seats in far off schools,” said **Chancellor**

Banks. “Through this expansion, we are providing more opportunities for accelerated learning to more families, while providing an equitable, fair process to identify the students who will excel with accelerated learning.”

The 2022-2023 elementary Gifted and Talented expansion is the result of the DOE’s engagement with parents and community stakeholders to establish priorities for this year’s admissions. Specifically, the DOE met with a diverse set of parent representative groups and advocacy groups with a dedicated interest in this topic and which provided thoughtful, nuanced feedback.

"All students, regardless of race, income, or the neighborhood they live in, deserve equal opportunity to accelerated academic learning and challenges," said **New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams.** "The Council looks forward to continuing working with all stakeholders to make sure the new version of Gifted and Talented not only helps more students to succeed, but also reflects the diversity of our city’s students."

"I’m excited by the announcement of the expansion of Gifted and Talented in all school districts," said **New York City Councilmember Rita Joseph.** "Moving forward, we must place a special emphasis on ensuring that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status or familial wealth, are able to benefit from the program."

"Today the mayor and chancellor showed once again that they don’t just talk, they get stuff done. Since the fall, parents, community leaders, and elected officials have consistently called for Gifted and Talented to be restored, and today the mayor and chancellor demonstrated that they are listening," said **New York City Councilmember Linda Lee.** "By not just expanding the number of seats available citywide, but also expanding programs to every school district in the city, and allowing students to test into the program at later ages, this new program will prove that we can have equity and educational excellence at the same time. I thank the mayor and chancellor for this announcement and look forward to working closely with them to ensure smooth implementation in the months to come."

"Expanding the number of Gifted and Talented programs is essential to addressing the inequalities afflicting New York City’s public schools," said **Ronald Lauder and Richard Parsons, co-founders, Education Equity Campaign.** "While some Manhattan districts currently have as many as seven Gifted programs, some communities of color in

Brooklyn and Queens have just one. By adding 1,000 new seats for gifted students across the boroughs, Mayor Adams is taking a giant leap forward for our public schools and we are deeply grateful he answered our call to action. We look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks to make New York's public education system the best in the country.”

Even though their perspectives may have differed, three focus areas became clear: 1) Expanding the number of seats, 2) Creating an equitable screening process, and 3) Providing an expanded third-grade entry point in every district. These perspectives helped the DOE shape its plans, and the agency looks forward to even more expansive engagement on this topic in the future.

Historically, kindergarten has been the initial entry point for New York City Gifted and Talented programs. For the 2022-2023 school year, approximately 100 new kindergarten seats are being added to the Gifted and Talented portfolio — expanding the program to all 32 districts and bringing the total number of seats to 2,500.

To fill these seats, every current pre-K student will be evaluated by their current teacher for a potential nomination. Universal pre-K screening takes the initial burden off families and creates access for more children with a more diverse eligibility pool. First implemented for the 2021-2022 school year, universal screening led to a more diverse pool of students receiving invitation to apply for Gifted and Talented programs. Students enrolled in non-DOE programs and those not yet enrolled in school will participate in an interview with DOE staff to confirm eligibility.

Families of eligible, nominated children will receive an eligibility letter inviting them to apply before the application opens.

For the first time ever, every district in New York City will provide an additional third-grade Gifted and Talented entry point, amounting to a baseline of one program in every district and a total of 1,000 seats. Child development research shows that identifying gifted behavior in later grades may provide a more accurate assessment of gifted ability.

Determined by grades in the four core subject areas, the top 10 percent of second graders in each school will be invited to apply to a third-grade Gifted and Talented program. Using grades in the four core subject areas ensures the DOE is using multiple

measures to determine eligibility for the program. Grounding the screen at the school level will ensure that district programs are representative of the district's population. Families will be considered for placement at all of their application choices and offers will be made based on district and sibling priorities, as well as seat availability. Grade three programs will grow to grades four and five in subsequent years.

A pillar of the Adams administration is authentic parent, family, and community engagement on the issues that matter most to our students. As previously announced, engagement and conversations about the future of enrollment and admissions in New York City public schools will continue this spring and summer. More information about how families can participate and have their voices heard will be announced soon.