

What They are Saying: New Yorkers Support Mayor Adams, Chancellor Banks Expansion of Gifted and Talented Programs Citywide

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NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Department of Education Chancellor David Banks yesterday unveiled the expansion of Gifted and Talented programs citywide.

See below for what they are saying:

“I’ve long supported the Gifted and Talented Program in New York City schools and have consistently called for it to be expanded throughout our city,” said **U.S.**

Representative Grace Meng. “I am pleased that Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks will be doing that, and I thank them for taking action. As I’ve said, Gifted and Talented curriculums have provided students with crucial challenges that help them reach their full potential in the classroom. All students deserve to benefit from them. They should be an option for every child, regardless of where students reside.”

“Gifted & Talented programs maximize students’ full academic potential and accelerate the development of skills needed to be competitive in the real world,” said **U.S.**

Representative Nicole Malliotakis. “I’m pleased to see Mayor Adams reverse the previous administration’s nonsensical decision to eliminate these programs. Expanding these programs and adding seats so more of our students can be challenged in the classroom and more successful in life is the right move.”

“All students deserve access to high quality education at their learning level. I have long been calling for expanded accelerated learning access, and I’m glad to see it happen

now,” said **New York State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “I look forward to working with Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks to ensure all needs are met.”

“Schools in the Bronx have one of the lowest graduation rates in the state. I have spoken to many parents in my district and they have told me that they did not include their children in programs like this because they were not available in the South Bronx. Not only does this provide us with opportunities to better ourselves, to advance our children's future and to have the same resources that others have, but it provides justice to the South Bronx,” said **New York State Senator Luis Sepúlveda**. “I thank Mayor Eric Adams and Chancellor David C. Banks for this great step, you will always have my support in measures that invest in the education of our people.”

“As a consistent supporter of the city’s Gifted and Talented programs, I feel encouraged to hear that Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks understand the importance of reinstating and enriching these programs,” said **New York State Assemblymember Peter Abbate**. “It’s imperative to provide an engaging learning environment for the gifted and talented population, while bolstering all aspects of public education. This is great news for our District 20 schools, along with the rest of the city’s school districts.”

“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, chair, Committee on Education**. “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.”

“For years I have joined with advocates to call for Gifted and Talented programs in every school district in our city. Today, Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks have made that a reality. Expanding access for communities of color is what's necessary in order to provide equality of opportunity for students in every zip code,” said **New York City Councilmember Justin Brannan**. “More seats, an equitable screening process and an

expanded 3rd grade entry point — this is how it's done. I appreciate this administration's commitment to welcoming input from all stakeholders through robust community engagement on the issues that matter most to our students. We are all dedicated to the success of this new version of Gifted and Talented.”

“I support offering a variety of diverse opportunities to students, and the Gifted and Talented program is one component of an educational experience that the Department of Education should be offering. I am pleased that the mayor and the chancellor are expanding Gifted and Talented in kindergarten and 3rd grade, the programs will be diverse because all students will be screened for their gifted behavior and not tested, and the citywide programs are being preserved. Congratulations to DOE staff for their visits to schools to find best practices, and for being responsive to many groups of parents,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale A. Brewer**.

“Every child has unlimited potential and possibilities. But we must provide them with the tools needed to succeed,” said **New York City Councilmember Oswald Feliz**.

“Expanding the Gifted and Talented program will have countless benefits, including ensuring that students from all neighborhoods have access to life-changing tools that will prepare them for the future and help them achieve their dreams. As councilmember of a disadvantaged district in the Bronx, I thank Mayor Adams for this important step and initiative.”

“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.”

“Our children only get one shot at a great education. While the coronavirus pandemic has taken a tremendous toll on our children's learning, the announcement by Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks goes a long way to providing the best education opportunities for our kids. One of the key elements of my campaign platform was to

expand gifted and talented programs to all local elementary schools and today's proposed expansion of slots and updated admission process will improve education access, equity, and quality education for students throughout the city," said **New York City Councilmember Lynn Schulman**.

"Expanded access to the city's Gifted and Talented programs is long overdue," said **Michael Mulgrew, president, United Federation of Teachers**. "Providing seats in every district and expanding options in third grade will enable more of our students to flourish. We look forward to working with Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks to create the gifted program our children deserve."

"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."

"I am thrilled that this administration embraces diversity of thought and engaging parents with different points-of-view. I get the sense that it's not just talk with Chancellor Banks, and even if the outcome isn't always on my side, he'll have listened and considered it. I am in favor of the expansion of a model that provides the appropriate educational environment for children but has been systematically stripped away from so many communities, rendering high-achieving kids — particularly kids of color — unidentified and underserved. I am particularly looking forward to the training/re-training of Gifted and Talented teachers. Children with accelerated academic capabilities often have specific and challenging social-emotional issues that can be misunderstood and go undiagnosed because they happen to be academically strong. This includes but is not limited to the twice-exceptional child. Accelerated learners are often illegally denied services or are made to choose between a Gifted and Talented and an ICT environment. So often I've heard detractors of Gifted and Talented talk about it being based on scarcity. I agree and I applaud this chancellor and mayor for recognizing that we should replicate successful models, not tear them down," said **Community Education Council 30 President Deborah Alexander**.

“Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks truly understand how education empowers students and provides a path to success. For too long, leaders have deprived many of our children of the advanced learning necessary to reach their full potential. Today our administration stopped that pattern of sabotage. The expansion of the Gifted and Talented program into every borough makes New York City the national leader, and possibly the world leader, in providing an accelerated education to the largest number of its under-served population. The world is watching us,” said **Community Education Council 2 President Robin Kelleher**.

“Equity does not mean access when it comes to accelerated learning opportunities in New York City historically. Today advances were made in both areas of equity and access for the Gifted and Talented program in New York City and we are grateful to Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks. Going forward, every district now has a Gifted and Talented program and more students from various demographics have access and an opportunity to enter a learning model which suits their learning abilities best,” said **Community Education Council President Vajah Ramjattan**.

“New York is a world class city and it deserves world class schools. The Gifted and Talented program is the only option for New York City students who need an accelerated curriculum and can’t afford private school. Thank you, Mayor Adams and Chancellor Banks, for listening to families and expanding this popular program,” **Community Education Council 2 Vice President Danyela Souza Egorov**.

“I am very grateful that Chancellor Banks took action on our CEC 26 resolution on restoring and expanding the Gifted and Talented program. After the previous mayor decided to phase out the Gifted and Talented program, the parents in District 26 overwhelmingly expressed their desire to retain the program in a special town hall discussion we held last year. Chancellor Bank’s commitment to engage the parent community on major policy decisions is truly appreciated. CEC 26 is looking forward to work with the chancellor and his team to restore popular and needed academic programs at the middle school and high school level,” said **Community Education Council 26 President Al Suhu**.

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