
The School at Columbia University High School Placement Manual 2008-2009

Jacqueline Sirgo
Dana Emmerich
High School Placement Counselors

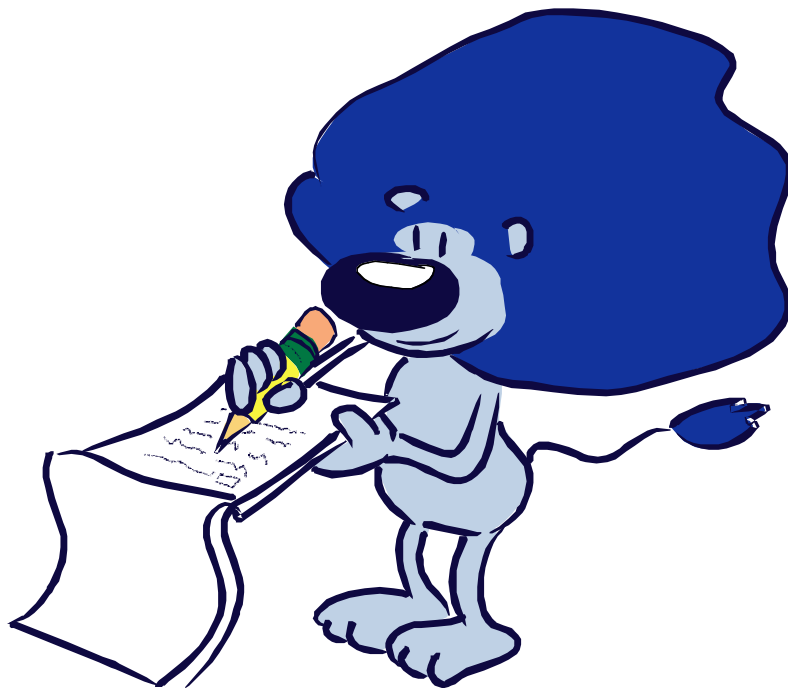


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High School Placement Calendar

2008-2009

September

- * Parents request high school applications and set up interviews for all schools.
- * Public High School Directories will be distributed, and New York Independent Schools Directory will be available for purchase (\$20).
- * Attend Part Two of the High School Placement Meeting.
- * Arrange a meeting with the high school placement director to solidify final high school choice list.
- * Students will revisit and update high school essays.
- * If applicable, register for the Beacon High School interview session, and submit the Bard High School application to the high school placement director by September 19th.
- * Sign-up for the Specialized High School Admission Test (SHSAT).
- * Write teachers a kind note requesting - and then thanking them for - letters of recommendation.
- * Supply the high school placement director with any additional schoolwork from your child's past academic years that should be include in academic portfolio.
- * Arrange high school tours and interviews, and attend New York City public and independent school fairs.

October

- * If applicable, register for TACHS, the New York City diocesan high school placement exam.
- * If applicable, register for the ISEE (Independent School Entrance Exam) and the SSAT (Secondary School Admissions Test).
- * Fill out public school audition request form for performing art schools such as LaGuardia, Talent Unlimited, and Professional Performing Arts School.
- * Prepare and organize academic and art portfolios.
- * Submit Part One of the Independent High School Applications. Please be advised that Calhoun, Fieldston and Trinity have early application deadlines.
- * The NYC Specialized High School Admissions Exam will be administered on October 25, 2008.
- * Attend tours, and prepare for school interviews.
- * **BY OCTOBER 31, 2008, ALL REQUESTS FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT DIRECTOR.**

November

- * The TACHS & ISEE will be administrated. The ISEE should be taken before the first weekend of December 2008.
- * Keep interview dates with public schools such as Beacon, Manhattan/Hunter Science, School of the Future, Millennium, Manhattan Village Academy, and New Exploration into Science Technology and Math High School. Be prepared to bring admissions essay and academic portfolio to interview.

- * Attend required informational admissions sessions to schools such as Frederick Douglass Academy I and Young Women's Leadership School.
- * Complete public and catholic school application forms and submit them to the high school placement director before November 19th, 2008.
- * Auditions for performing and visual art programs begin and run through December.

December

- * Public high school applications will be mailed out the first week of December.
- * Catholic high school applications will be mailed out the second week of December.
- * All independent and boarding school applications will be mailed out by December 19th.
- * Remember to thank again teachers for their letters of recommendation, and send out thank you notes to interviewers at prospective schools.

January

- * If applicable, take the SSAT before the 3rd weekend in the month.
- * Update and correct any errors to the public high school application.
- * Catholic high school decisions are sent home during the 3rd week of January.

February

- * First week in February, specialized high schools mail out their acceptances.
- * Second week in February, independent schools mail out their acceptances.

- * If needed, arrange a meeting with high school placement director to discuss options.

March

- * Second week of the month, boarding schools mail out their acceptance letters.
- * Third week of the month, main round public schools mail out their acceptance letters.
- * Make arrangements to visit the school you will be attending in the fall to schedule placement examinations.

April

- * High school placement examinations are administrated.
- * Public school 2nd round choices are submitted in the event a student was not admitted to any of their initial high school choices.

May/June

- * Final grades are submitted to respective high schools.

An Overview of Public High School Admissions

(The following was adapted from the New York City Department of Education's website - <http://schools.nyc.gov>)

- * Parents and eligible students (students who have met 8th or 9th grade promotional standards and are residents of New York City) work with the high school placement director in November and early December to fill out a high school application for the 2009-2010 school year.
- * The high school application form includes a High School Choice page which asks students to select 12 programs/schools.
- * Students use the High School Directory to compare and choose schools. They list their schools/programs in order of preference on the High School Choice page of the application. These 12 schools/programs are in addition to the specialized high schools for which students elect to take the entrance exam and/or audition.
- * Each school carefully evaluates all applicants. High school admissions committees will make their acceptance decisions without taking into account how students ranked their program.
- * If a student wishes to attend their local zoned high school, they must list the zoned program of that high school as one of the choices on their application.
- * In the spring students will receive one school match, the highest ranked school that has accepted them. To optimize placement for everyone, school waiting lists have been eliminated.

The Seven Types of Public High School Admissions Programs

Educational Options Programs

From the applicant pool of incoming students for each program, 50% of the students are selected by school personnel and 50% are randomly selected by computer. Both groups are chosen from within the following distribution of student's previous year's standardized reading test scores: 16% in the high range, 68% in the average range, 16% in the low range.

Zoned Academic Comprehensive Programs

- Students living in specific neighborhoods have priority for admission to the zoned program of their zoned school.
- Students wishing to attend the zoned program of their zoned high school must list that program as one of their 12 choices.
- Students listing the zoned program of their zoned school as one of their 12 choices, if not matched to a higher choice on their application, will automatically be matched to the zoned program of their zoned school.
- Students are not guaranteed or given priority for a match to any program in their zoned school other than the zoned program.
- A student living outside of a school's zone may apply to the zoned program of that school, but will not have priority for admission.

Audition Programs

These school programs require that a student demonstrates proficiency in the specific area for that program. For example, if a student auditions for a dance program, they may have to prepare a dance routine as part of their audition. LaGuardia High School (considered one of the [specialized high schools](#)) only accepts students to its programs based on their auditions.

Test Programs

These school programs require students to take the Specialized High Schools Admissions

Test for entrance. Student acceptance is based on test results and students' priority order of the schools. Students rank the six [specialized high schools](#) on the day of the test.

Screened Programs

These schools program selection is based on previous academic record, standardized test scores and attendance. Students are asked to review the range of test scores for last year's accepted students to determine whether they have a strong chance of being accepted into that program.

Unscreened Programs

A computer randomly selects students for acceptance into these programs. Many schools require parent/student participation in an orientation in order to be included in the selection process. Priority is given to students who, with their parents, attend a school's information session.

Limited Unscreened Programs

Priority is given to students who, with their parents, attend a school's information sessions, open house, etc. It is necessary for you to sign-in at these events.

Public High School Admissions Notifications

Specialized Round

In February, students accepted to one of the testing Specialized High Schools and/or a program(s) at LaGuardia High School will learn if they also were matched to one of the 12 high schools/programs listed on their application. At that time, these students must accept one of the schools/programs to which they have been offered admission; this is where they will go in September 2009. Students not accepted to a Specialized High School will be included in Round II. Students who relinquish their seat in a Specialized High School and their Round I match will be included in the Main Round.

Main Round

In late March, students will receive a letter informing them if they were matched to one of their 12 choices. Students will be matched to their highest ranked school/programs which also ranks them. All the [new schools](#) are included in the Main Round.

Supplementary Round

Students **who are not matched** to one of the 12 choices listed on their application will use their unmatched letter to make new choices. Students will be asked to prioritize their new choices based on a list of high schools that will be provided. Students will receive a letter informing them of their Supplementary Round match in late April.

An Overview of Private High School Admissions

According to the Parents League of New York, there are more than 70 independent day schools in the New York City area, including single-sex, coeducational, and schools with religious affiliation. The ISEE is required for admissions to most of these schools; in rare cases, schools administer their own test.

There are over 108 boarding schools in the Northeast of the United States. Some boarding schools are seven-day boarding schools, and some are five day. Many have religious or military affiliations. There are boarding schools that cater to students with learning differences, and those aimed at gifted and talented students. The SSAT is required for admissions to most of these schools; some boarding schools will accept the ISEE.

All independent day schools and most boarding schools have their own application. Students are required to apply to each school separately and meet the admissions criteria set by the prospective institution. However, some members of the Association of Boarding Schools have adopted a common application. Before starting the boarding school application process, be certain to check <http://www.schools.com/> to determine whether the schools of interest accept the common application.

Independent schools application season is a year-long process. Students are typically asked to tour the schools during the months of October and November before they are given an application for admissions. Upon completing the touring sessions, students are asked to submit part one of the application - often before November 15th. All requests for letters of recommendation from the faculty at The School at Columbia must be submitted to the high school placement director by October 31st. Please be advised that the Placement Office will not honor any late request. During the months of November and December, teachers will be working on letters of recommendations and students should be taking their designated standardized admission examinations along with interviewing

at prospective high schools. Occasionally, a prospective school may ask a student to take an in-house assessment as part of their admission process or to determine the student's ability to handle the first year coursework. Examples of such schools are Regis High School, the Loyola School, and the Marymount School.

Independent school admission notification letters will be mailed out to parents by the second week in February of the application year. Admissions notifications from boarding schools are mailed out the second week of March. If your child has received an acceptance letter, he or she is expected to participate in a welcoming dinner or day at their prospective high school before accepting a seat at the school. Parents will also have another opportunity to ask questions they may have not had a chance to pose during the fall.

High School Tours, Visits & Interviews

High School tours and visit are the most exciting part of the high school application process. From beautiful rolling hill campuses to the urban modern Mecca, the physical space of a high school campus will influence a student's feelings about their options. When touring a school, try to visit when classes are in session. It will give you a better understanding how students operate on campus. The School has professional development and vacation days during the fall when other schools are in session - these are ideal times to schedule visits and interviews. Although we recommend that interviews be scheduled after school or on weekends, if your child must miss school to interview please keep the visit/interviews to a maximum of 2 days.

Make certain you have thoroughly reviewed the school's publications and ask questions that are not addressed in their publications such as learning specialists, transportation, and the number of students receiving financial aid (this is applicable to private schools). Not only will the tour reveal aspects of a school you could not have know otherwise, but it will also give you a chance to get a feel for the commuting distance along with an understanding of the cultural climate.

When preparing your child for an interview, have them spend time with a colleague or friend your trust and respect. A simple communication over dinner will aid your child in developing his or her communication skills and comfort level with strangers. It is important to remind your colleague or friend to ask questions such as what are you looking for in a high school or what do consider is your strongest subject?

Remember your child should always wear business attire when touring and interviewing at prospective high schools. First impressions are key to a successful interview!

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendations are the integral part of the high school application. They are meant to give admissions counselors an intimate look at a student's academic abilities and work ethic. Typically for independent day and boarding schools, teachers are asked to fill out a form speaking to a student's strengths, weaknesses, quality of work, and personality and character traits. Good admissions counselors are not only looking for a student that can academically compete, but they are looking for a student that will fit the culture at their respective schools. The letters of recommendation are mostly written by the 8th grade faculty. On occasions, a 7th grade faculty member may be called upon by a prospective school for further insight. The letters of recommendation will be accompanied with a confidential student profile that will provide schools with an overall picture of a student and include comments made by faculty other than the Math and English instructors. It is important that we teach our children to take a role in the application process, therefore, we ask the students to thank their teachers for writing their letters. A simple verbal acknowledgment is sufficient, but written requests and thank yous are preferred.

For the most part, the student profile will be sufficient to satisfy New York City public school admission criteria, however, a school may ask a subject teacher to write an additional letter. If a student is asked by a New York City public high school for a supplemental letter of recommendation after the October 31st deadline, the request must be submitted to the high school placement director within 3 days of notification by the prospective school.

All requests for letters of recommendation must be submitted directly to the high school placement director, in a single packet. The top sections of each letter indicating student's name and address must be completed before submitting them to placement director and will be returned if not properly filled out. All complete recommendation letters will be sent directly from the placement office, and copy will be kept in the student's folder. These forms are confidential and are only shared with the admissions committee at the prospective high schools.

Testing Information

According to the Department of Education for the City of New York, the Specialized High School Admissions Test is required for students applying to New York City's Specialized High Schools which are: 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, and Stuyvesant High School. This test is only administered once in late October or early November. There is no fee for the test, but you will need to register for the exam with the high school placement director in the fall.

The Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE) and the Secondary School Admissions Test (SSAT) is done independently from the school. Parents are responsible for registering their child for the exam. For the ISEE log on to the ERB website <http://www.erbtest.org/> and for the SSAT log on to <http://www.ssat.org/>. Both programs provide fee waivers, however applications must be submitted as soon as possible. For additional information, see the high school placement director no later than the end of September.

If your child has an IEP or a learning difference that the High School Placement Office is not aware of, please inform them as soon as possible. Testing accommodations may not be possible without sufficient time and documentation.

Academic Portfolios

Each 8th grade student will have an academic portfolio located in the high school placement office. This portfolio will contain the student's best 7th grade work from all subject areas. Students will have the option to bring in materials from home to supplement their portfolio. Students will be given a copy of their portfolio and will be responsible to reproduce any additional copies. Students and parents have the liberty to add current 8th grade work if they like as well. The only requirement of most admission committees is that the student's work have teacher comments and grades.

Financial Awareness & Obligations

New York City Public High Schools are tuition-free. Tuition at independent day and boarding schools ranges from \$5000 to \$ 45,000 a year. Many independent day and boarding schools have an endowment fund designated to assist families with the cost of tuition, however financial aid is not guaranteed. Parents must fill out the the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) to be considered for aid. Based on the information you provide, SSS will determine a dollar amount that you should be able to pay toward your child's tuition. Many schools will also ask for additional information and proof to support your application for aid.

Many independent institutions will ask The School to comment on a prospective family's financial commitment to The School for the previous and current year. Please check with the business officer to ensure all debts have been taken care of before the applications are submitted to high schools.

Reporting Disciplinary Matters

The School at Columbia will report suspensions and patterns of disciplinary problems that have occurred during and after the 7th grade when requested by prospective schools. It is the School's moral and ethical responsibility to respond to these questions in the

most accurate manner. This policy is applicable until a student graduates. Should a student be suspended after a high school acceptance, it will be the family's responsibility to inform the respective high school of the matter within ten days. After ten days, the high school will be contacted by the placement office. If your child has been suspended, please arrange a meeting with the middle school principal and high school placement immediately to review the conditions of your child's suspension and discuss how it will be reported to prospective high schools.