

The following FAQs accompany the detailed information about High School Admissions included in the [Introduction](#) of the [High School Directory](#).

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Overview

1. Who can participate in the NYC HS Admissions?

New York City residents who are 8th graders interested in attending a public high school are required to submit an application for high school admissions. First time 9th graders are also eligible to participate in high school admissions. 9th graders should meet with their guidance counselors in September if they wish to apply to different programs. Students in the 10th grade or above are not eligible to apply to high schools.

Information for families new to New York City can be found [here](#).

2. Does my 8th grade students have to apply to a high school?

To attend a New York City Public High School, students must submit the high school application. This applies to students wishing to attend their zoned school as well as students in a 6-12 school who wish to remain at that school for the 9th grade. Every public school 8th grader receives a high school application from their guidance counselor in the fall. High school applications are also available to New York City residents attending a private or parochial school, and should be requested from the student's guidance counselor.

3. Can I visit a high school before applying?

There are several opportunities for you to visit and become acquainted with high schools before the application deadline in December. In September and October, there are high school fairs for each borough as well as a city-wide fair. High schools also host their own open houses. This information can be acquired directly from the high schools, often on their websites, and in the High School Directory.

4. Where do I get a High School Directory?

If you are a student attending a New York City public school, you will receive a High School Directory at the end of 7th grade. You can also obtain a High School Directory at Admissions events and at Enrollment Offices. It is also available [online](#).

5. Can I go to the school that my older sibling attends?

There is no sibling priority in high school admissions.

6. Is the process different for me if I am a student with disabilities?

No. Students with disabilities may apply to all programs listed in the High School Directory, subject to the same admissions requirements as their peers. You may take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) and apply for all audition-based programs, including Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art

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and Performing Arts. Testing accommodations will be provided during the SHSAT administration, as outlined in your IEP or 504 plan. If you are a District 75 student transitioning to high school and are considering a community high school, you should work with your District 75 school to participate in high school admissions. If your IEP currently recommends a specialized District 75 program, you will be notified of your high school placement in May or June by the District 75 Placement Office.

7. Is the process different if I am an English Language Learner (ELL)?

All 8th graders have the opportunity to participate in high school admissions regardless of their English proficiency. If you are interested in a program that specializes in addressing the needs of students with limited English proficiency, you may want to look at Screened for Language programs (see question below). However, English Language Learners (ELLs) can receive a range of programs and supports in New York City High Schools to ensure that you receive the services necessary to excel in high school. The High School Directory indicates which of the ELL program models (Dual Language, English as a Second Language or Transitional Bilingual Education) are currently offered in each high school, based on self-reported data.

8. How do different schools evaluate students?

Schools evaluate students differently based on the admissions method and priorities of each program. Please check page 6 in the High School Directory for more information on admissions methods¹ for each program.

Admissions Method	Evaluation Type
Audition	Audition (May also include attendance, grades, and test scores)
Educational Option (Ed. Opt.)	English Language Arts standardized test scores
Limited Unscreened	Attendance at a school Information Session or Open House event
Screened	7th grade report card grades, standardized test scores, attendance, punctuality (May also include interview, essay, or additional diagnostic test score, or other criteria – check each school’s page for further details)
Screened for Language	Proficiency in English and other home language
Test	Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) only
Unscreened	None - students who apply are selected randomly
Zoned	None – priority given to students who live in the geographic zoned area of the high school

9. I am moving to New York next year. Can I submit the High School Application now?

Only current New York City residents can participate in High School Admissions. You cannot receive an application, take the SHSAT, or audition for LaGuardia before being permanent residents of NYC.

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10. I am currently attending a private or parochial school. How do I obtain the High School Admissions application?

Students should meet with the middle school guidance counselor or other school staff who may have access to the HS application. If your school is unable to assist, you or your family should visit an [Enrollment Office](#) to receive a copy of the application and other information related to high school admissions.

11. Can I transfer high schools outside of the admissions process?

Transfers may be granted in cases of documented hardship: if your travel to school is more than 75 minutes or if you have a documented medical or safety issue. Please visit an [Enrollment Office](#) if one of these cases applies to you.

Types of High Schools

12. What are zoned schools and how can I find one in my neighborhood?

Zoned schools give priority to students who apply and live in the geographic zoned area of the high school. Every student does not have a zoned school, but you can check online by using our [school search function](#): <http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolSearch/>.

13. What are screened schools and how do I apply?

Screened programs evaluate applicants selectively based on or more of the following criteria: their academic grades, standardized test scores, attendance and punctuality, writing samples, interviews, group activities, diagnostic tests, academic portfolios, or online activities. Activities required for screened programs are listed under “Selection Criteria” under each program in the High School Directory.

14. I excel in one of the performing arts areas. What would you recommend?

There are many schools and programs that focus on each area of the performing arts. They can be found in the High School Directory. You can also search for specific schools and programs online. Most of the performing arts schools require that students demonstrate proficiency in the specific area of the program through an audition and/or portfolio. However, there are arts programs that do not require an audition. To learn more, attend the Information Sessions and Open House events at the schools and visit their websites.

15. How do I register for an audition at another performing arts school besides LaGuardia?

Please meet with your school’s guidance counselor who can arrange an audition directly with performing arts schools. Information about each school’s auditions can also be found on their High School Directory page.

16. How should I prepare for an audition?

If you have an interest in the arts, New York City has an array of high school choices dedicated to cultivating artistic talent. To gain admission to audition schools, in addition to demonstrating your academic aptitude, you must also exhibit strong artistic skills in the form of an audition and/or portfolio. For information on preparing for specific auditions in the visual arts, drama/theater, music, and dance, please refer to [this handout](#).

17. What do Career and Technical Education programs offer?

Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools and programs integrate academic study with workforce skills in specific careers. CTE programs of study differ from industry to industry but share common elements, including:

- A cohesive sequence of academic courses paired with CTE courses and integrated content as appropriate, arming students with core academic knowledge and specific technical skills
- Specific mechanisms that connect the entire high school program to a related industry and post-secondary pathway
- Graduation with a recognized credential or certificate and explicit post-secondary opportunities

You would apply to a CTE program if you wish to learn “hands-on” career skills while earning a Regents Diploma in order to prepare for college, other higher education studies or the work force. In addition to school laboratory settings, you would have the opportunity to take part in internships, receive mentoring, and participate in job shadowing and other industry-based, real-life experiences.

Specialized High Schools

18. Which schools are the Specialized High Schools?

There are nine Specialized High Schools:

- Bronx High School of Science
- The 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
- Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts

19. How can I get into a Specialized High School?

For eight of the Specialized High Schools, you are required to take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). The SHSAT is the only requirement for admission. The score required for acceptance to a specialized school varies year to year and depends upon the school. Unlike all the other Specialized Schools, Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts requires you to audition for each of the programs/studios you are interested in. You do not need to take the SHSAT to apply to LaGuardia.

20. Who can take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) and/or audition for the programs/studios at LaGuardia?

All 8th graders and first-time 9th graders who are New York City residents are eligible to take the SHSAT and/or audition. In September of the 8th or 9th grade, you should inform your guidance counselor of your decision so that an admission ticket can be issued for the appropriate test and/or audition(s). This is true even for students who attend private/parochial schools or are homeschooled.

21. What is the content of the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT)?

The Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT) is a written test consisting of two sections: Verbal and Math, including:

- Scrambled Paragraphs: students are asked to arrange five sentences in logical order to create the best paragraph
- Logical Reasoning
- Reading: students analyze and interpret passages by answering questions
- Mathematical word problems and computational questions
- Problems in arithmetic, algebra, probability, statistics and geometry

22. How can I prepare for the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT)?

Students should ask their guidance counselor for a copy of the [Specialized Schools Handbook](#) which includes two sample tests. In addition, the Handbook describes audition requirements for LaGuardia's six studios. You may also access the Specialized Handbook online. When you are an 8th or 9th grader, your guidance counselor will provide more specific information about the SHSAT. In the meantime, use the following suggestions to help prepare for the test:

- Keep up with schoolwork. It is the best possible preparation.
- Continue reading books and articles because reading helps increase vocabulary, comprehension, and general knowledge.
- Practice taking the sample tests that are in the Specialized High Schools Student Handbook.
- Check your answers and read the explanations of the correct answers in the Handbook.
- Research study guides, test preparation services, and tutoring opportunities.
- Discuss additional opportunities for test preparation with your school guidance counselor.

23. My SHSAT test date and LaGuardia audition are on the same day. What do I do?

Students taking the SHSAT who have a conflict with the audition schedule are to report for their audition(s) on the weekend assigned to their borough on the Saturday or Sunday for which there is not a conflict with the SHSAT. If you have an approved audition exception, please have your guidance counselor contact the LaGuardia Admissions Office for rescheduling an audition.