



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER MARK S. WEPRIN

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EASTERN QUEENS ELECTED OFFICIALS SAVE GIFTED & TALENTED SEATS IN COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 26

After hearing concerns from parents and their elected representatives in Community School District 26, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has agreed to allow all elementary students currently matriculated in the Gifted & Talented (G&T) programs to transition to G&T programs at their local middle schools after fifth grade graduation. DOE will also create more middle school G&T programs for high-performing general education students who meet the requirements for the program.

"I am pleased that the Department of Education will allow Gifted and Talented students to attend their local middle schools as families had expected. With the opening of additional classes for incoming students who qualify for the program, the agreement is good news for parents across the district," said Council Member Mark Weprin (D-Oakland Gardens).

It was previously announced that beginning in September 2014, fifth grade students, including those already matriculated in G&T programs, would have to submit applications and seek admission to middle school G&T programs based on their fourth grade New York State ELA and Mathematics scores. However, a number of parents indicated that they were not aware of the modification until close to the end of 2013; in the past, students in elementary G&T programs automatically articulated to their local middle school G&T programs.

"I would like to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Fariña for considering the concerns brought to light by the parents of students in School District 26. I am very pleased that the Department of Education is listening to me and my colleagues, and allowing the Gifted and Talented elementary school students to transfer together to middle schools," said Assemblyman Edward C. Braunstein (D-Bayside).

"There is no more important issue in our community than the education of our students," said Assemblywoman Nily Rozic (D, WF-Fresh Meadows) who represents many of the families who participate in District 26's Gifted & Talented programs. "I am

thrilled about this victory and thankful that this collaboration between parents, the Community Education Council, my colleagues in government and NYC DOE was a success. The new policy reflects the children and parents in District 26 and will allow families to focus on getting their children off to a strong start in middle school."

"The Gifted and Talented programs in our schools are vitally important to the education of our students. After listening closely to the needs of parents, the community, and elected officials, I applaud the Department of Education for its decision to add more G&T seats in District 26 as well as allow current students through fifth grade to remain in the program," said Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-Queens).

The new plan is that starting in September 2020, G&T elementary school students applying for sixth grade admission will no longer have priority for any middle school G&T program.