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PRESS RELEASE:

School Diversity Advisory Group Releases Recommendations on School Admissions

New York, NY (August 27, 2019) - The **School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG)** is proud to release its second report, [Making the Grade II: New Programs for Better Schools](#), a set of research-based recommendations intended to support the transformation of the public schools system into one that works effectively at educating all students by dismantling the architecture of school segregation.. This report expands on *Making the Grade*'s Race and Enrollment section and specifically addresses New York City's screened schools and G&T programs.

These programs have long been the subject of public criticism because they are not representative of the diversity of the city, with regard to a number of different measures, including race, socioeconomic status and disability. It is also true that research and other districts are moving away from these exclusive programs because of the benefits of more forms of enriched programs and the admissions policies that advance them. Within the next three years, we recommend resourcing and developing new models of interest-based and enrichment programs and other innovative programming to support advanced learning, individualized learning support and greater integration. This includes (1) Discontinuing the use of the Gifted & Talented admissions test, instituting a moratorium on new Gifted & Talented programs and providing resources for community school districts to develop enrichment and other alternatives with community and stakeholder engagement; (2) Eliminating the use of exclusionary admissions practices proven to foster segregation by race, class, disability, home language, and academic ability and providing resources for community school districts to develop district wide admissions priorities with community and stakeholder engagement; (3) Instituting a moratorium on the creation of new screened high schools, and examining models to retain and support a diverse student population to be successful.

Please join us on the steps of **Tweed Courthouse**, today, August 27, 2019 at **1pm** for a press conference.

“The School Diversity Advisory Group deserves great credit for laying out next steps to expand on the work we've started, learn as we implement, and build on that momentum to take much more ambitious action to desegregate our schools. We must take this opportunity to move forward with a bold agenda to make our schools the laboratories of true, inclusive democracy that we know that they can be. I urge Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza to move forward, to engage with students, parents, educators, and communities across NYC in this critical work, and to implement the SDAG recommendations,” said **Councilmember Brad Lander.**”

“Allowing a system to remain the same guarantees that we will continue to uphold systemic racism. We applaud the School Diversity Advisory Group for calling to eliminate Gifted and Talented programming and other discriminatory “screened” admissions as they reflect tools to hoard resources, which tend to be concentrated in white affluent communities. In a system that has been severely underfunded for decades, we believe it is imperative that all schools in New York City are accountable to serve all students. We call on the Mayor and Chancellor to act swiftly in implementing these and other recommendations,” said **Maria Bautista, Campaign Director for the New York Alliance for Quality Education**

Hazel Dukes, President of the NAACP New York State Conference remarked, “It has been an honor to serve with the Chairs and members of the Executive Committee as we worked diligently to have a report that reflects the concerns from students, educators and community advocates to ensure we begin to implement goals that all New York City children receive a quality education.”

The SDAG report has many recommendations that will certainly change our public schools for the better. SDAG is recommending desegregating middle and elementary schools which will provide an enriching and diverse learning experience for those students. Until we remove all admissions that perpetuate segregation, such as screens based on grades and test scores, we will continue to push for equity and integration for all students,” said **Benji W and Eliza SMiddle School Student Leads at IntegrateNYC**

Parent leaders, Shino Tanikawa and NeQuan McLean said, “The topics we covered in this second set of recommendations were very difficult. While SDAG members were aligned in our vision and values, we had diverse opinions on how we achieve our goals. This set of

recommendations truly represents the commitment of SDAG members to creating an equitable education system for our students. We were honored to have worked with such dedicated people.”

Sister Paulette LoMonaco, Executive Director, Good Shepherd Services said, “Good Shepherd Services believes in developing and cultivating what is possible in all of our children and youth. We recognize that requires a commitment to expanding resources and opportunities to all children. Eliminating policies that have a segregative effect will guarantee that more young people have access to opportunities they rightfully deserve. We see the work of integration as an imperative part of racial justice and educational equity. It is our responsibility to do our very best for the generations to come, even when we are challenged by the prospect of change. These recommendations bring us closer to a more equitable education system.”

Principal Asya Johnson remarked, “Aside from the need to hire high-quality teachers to teach in the county ranked number one for poverty in the State of New York, what keeps under-resourced and under-performing schools stagnant is the lack of diversity in admissions screening for high schools.”

Parent Leader Marco Battistella said, "The combined effect of the two complementary plans that the SDAG has released, unlocks the full potential of New York City by allowing children from different backgrounds to finally be allowed to learn together and from each other. By eliminating barriers of entry into all NYC schools, we now allow the same access to much needed resources to all children and deliver a "win-win" higher quality education to everyone."

“With each day our economy becomes more global. Our young people entering the workforce need to be exposed to diverse groups of people to prepare them. The SDAG’s second set of recommendations take a critical step toward shaping a more inclusive educational culture based on evidence based research and best practices. New York City has the most segregated school system on the nation. We strongly urge Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza to give serious consideration to implementing all of the SDAG recommendations so we can begin to introduce system wide change,” said **David R. Jones, President and CEO of the Community Service Society of New York**

"As an organization advocating for equity and opportunity for marginalized Asian Pacific American children and families, CACF believes that SDAG’s recent recommendations on enrollment policies will help build a more integrated, inclusive, and equitable public education system in NYC. The APA community is incredibly diverse and most of our students do not qualify for G&T programs or attend exclusionary screened schools. Implementing inclusionary practices over exclusionary ones and shifting to schoolwide enrichment models of G&T

education will fulfill the individual needs of our students as they learn alongside their peers of different abilities and experiences. We encourage the Chancellor and the Mayor adopt these recommendations to ensure that our most vulnerable students, including APA students, have the opportunities to thrive in enriching, safe, and healthy learning environments,” said **Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Director, Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)**.

David Tipson, Executive Director of New York Appleseed remarked, “New York City stands practically alone in its widespread practice of separating children into different classrooms based on evaluations of their behavior and performance when they are nine years old and younger. The entirely predictable result is intense segregation along lines of race and privilege. The School Diversity Advisory Group has correctly identified these exclusionary policies as major contributors to the City’s status as one of the most segregated school systems in the nation. New York Appleseed urges the mayor and chancellor to waste no time in adopting the recommendations of this report and eliminating competitive admissions processes for young children.”

Kim Sweet, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York, “We are excited by the potential to develop models for school-based enrichment that are both inclusive and stimulating for the broad range of students. We urge the city to invest in creating new programs that encourage excellence and creativity without furthering segregation.”

“The NYU Metro Center believes the School Diversity Advisory Group policy recommendations outlined in this report offer crucial steps towards transforming New York City school enrollment policy and should be implemented immediately. For far too long, New York City school enrollment policies have facilitated patterns of educational segregation and inequitable concentrations of privilege and vulnerability. Today, along with our colleagues on the SDAG, we emphatically say New York City schools must commit to equitably serving all students and, coupled with the 62 policies adopted from our first report, we believe New York this report will set us on the right track. This report does not represent the end of the conversation, but rather a step in what must be an unwavering commitment to building more diverse, inclusive, and equitable schools for all New York City students. We stand ready to continue our service and commitment to supporting the Department of Education, and all educators, families, and students across New York as the changes outlined in our report take effect,” said **David Kirkland and Richard Gray, Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director of the NYU Metro Center**.

Amy Stuart Wells, Professor and Director of Reimagining Education: Teaching and Learning in Racially Diverse Schools & the Public Good Project, Teachers College,

Columbia University; past-President of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), stated, "This second SDAG report should not be seen through the lens of "taking from" those students who have historically been tapped for screened and gifted and talented programs. Rather, it should be seen for what it is: a set of research-based recommendations that, in enacted, will free all students in NYC to be smart, talented and gifted in their own authentic way -- to feed the cultural diversity and the power of difference that makes this the greatest city in the world. The research evidence from brain science and the socio-emotional development of children tells us that students learn better, smarter and deeper and enhance their critical thinking skills when they are learning from and with peers who have different ways of being "smart." Let's give all our children this intellectual advantage by following the win-win SDAG recommendations!

Ramon Peguero, Esq., President & CEO, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families (CHCF) said, "The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families (CHCF) believes that every child holds a unique set of gifts and talents that should be cultivated from birth. This means ensuring that every child is gaining access to high-quality, equitably resourced, enriched learning environments that allow their skills to flourish. CHCF joins parents, students, and community advocates in calling for the rapid dismantling of systemic segregation and exclusionary screening practices in New York City schools. Current enrollment practices have become a perpetuation of inequity in access that starts as young as 6 weeks old, dividing children based on privilege and access to resources, which has a severely disparate impact on low-income children, and overwhelmingly Black and Latino/a/x students. As a member of the SDAG, we support the set of recommendations being put forth today, with hopes that New York City will create an enrollment system that ensures each child is given access to an education that recognizes their worth, equitably supports them in developing into their best selves, and breaks down barriers in access to college and career opportunities.

"The architecture of segregation and systemic inequities cannot be maintained. These recommendations aim to spur intentional steps towards a more diverse, inclusive, and supportive educational system. All of the policies outlined should be implemented immediately. We look forward to continuing this critically important work regardless of how difficult defenders of the status quo may make the road ahead," remarked **Ryan J. S. Baxter, Founder of Promoting Access to Specialized Schools in New York City (PASSNYC)**

"If education is a basic human right for all, nationwide, the current setup is revealing itself to be inhumane for an overwhelming majority of students who make up our public schools. This does not have to be the case for New York City. Let us come together and support SDAG and the Department of Education in reimagining public schools so that ALL students have access to resources, benefit from equitable best practices, and can fully actualize their right to a high

quality education-no matter their race or zip code,” said **Cassandra Baptiste, Teacher, District**
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