



THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
*Black, Latino and Asian Caucus*

CITY HALL  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
(212) 788-7354

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 22, 2015**

Contact: Dynishal P. Gross  
917.209.4097

**BLAC URGES BLACK & LATINO FAMILIES TO  
“REQUEST THE TEST” FOR GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAMS  
IN GREATER NUMBERS**

*Parents must request the test by November 9<sup>th</sup>.*

**Brooklyn, NY** – Today, the Black, Latino & Asian Caucus of the New York City Council (BLAC) held a press conference encouraging Black & Latino families to request gifted and talented testing for their pre-K through second grade children.

The Department of Education’s gifted and talented programs provide an extremely high quality, free educational option to students who perform at a high level on the gifted and talented exam. This school year, students will be tested at their local public schools in late January & early February. However, children will only have this opportunity if parents take the first step and request the test by the November 9<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Black & Latino participation in NYC DOE’s gifted and talented programs has declined from 27% to 22% since 2012. Moreover, all of the four community school districts without local gifted and talented programs are represented by BLAC members, further reducing awareness. The BLAC links low participation in gifted and talented programs to lower levels of participation and success on the extremely competitive entrance exams to New York City’s specialized high schools, such as Brooklyn Tech and Bronx Science. The Caucus’ goal is to increase the number of children of color seeking and gaining access to this public educational resource.

“It’s a BLAC priority to ensure that the Communities of Color we represent have the same access to educational opportunities as the affluent or white population. There is anecdotal, as well as statistical evidence that proves what we know to be our reality—here in NYC, Communities of Color don’t have the same programs, resources and access to educational opportunities as the affluent or white population. All parents, irrespective of how much they make or the color of their skin, should have access to and the availability of the City’s DOE Gifted and Talented programs in their own zip code area. Anything less just perpetuates the educational gentrification of the NYC school system. Today, we start by asking parents to register their child to be tested for the DOE’s Gifted & Talented program by the November 9th deadline.” --  
**Councilwoman Rosie Mendez, Co-Chair of the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus**

“It is unacceptable that our city’s children of color are drastically underrepresented in gifted programs. Some Black & Latino parents don’t know that the program exists or what resources are available to prepare their child for the G&T test.” said **Council Member Andy King, Co-Chair of the Black, Latino & Asian Caucus**. “We need to encourage the DOE and teachers to refer all eligible students for possible participation in the program so that no child of color misses out on this opportunity for higher educational

development. And, I'm urging all parents in communities of color to have their child take the Gifted & Talented Exam."

**Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.**, described his work with CEC16 to create the #CentralBKIsGifted campaign, saying, "Demand for gifted & talented programs in central Brooklyn is at an all time high. The number of children sitting for the exam already increased last school year, but my goal in working with CEC16 is to push that number completely over the top by November 9th. Parents in BedStuy & Crown Heights should sign up with confidence that community-based tutoring will be available to ensure that our children live up to their full potential on exam day."

"I want to see schools, in every community of color, that are equipped to teach our most talented minds," **said Council Member I. Daneek Miller (D – St. Albans)**. "Southeast Queens has one of the highest performing elementary schools, yet there is an overflow of families looking to receive its services. Eligible children must then travel further, or families must relocate, in order to facilitate enrollment in available Gifted and Talented seats. As we fight to expand Gifted and Talented opportunities, I encourage parents to continue to demonstrate their demand by signing up for the gifted and talented exam this year."

"The educational advancement of our city's scholars requires parental engagement and access to opportunities that will inspire and challenge their young minds. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus of the New York City Council, Chancellor Carmen Farina, and the New York City Department of Education to encourage parents to request the test and expand access to gifted & talented programs throughout the five boroughs," **said Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo**.

"The relatively small pool of students that take the gifted and talented qualifying entrance exams each year is reflective of the socioeconomic achievement gap so many of our communities' children have fallen into. The Department of Education must vigorously promote this opportunity in underserved districts, and then expand capacity to meet the demand. I'm pleased to be part of a BLAC that's focused on making this change." – **Councilman Ruben Wills**

"The young scholars in my district who could benefit from gifted and talented programs absolutely deserve the same access as their peers. As I encourage parents to sign up their children for the gifted and talented exam this year, I also hope that the Department of Education will continue much needed outreach to underrepresented communities to ensure that internal policies around gifted and talented education do not exacerbate inequities in our schools." – **Chair of the Committee on Public Safety Council Member Vanessa L. Gibson**

"As a former educator and principal in the Department of Education, I find it extremely unacceptable that gifted and talented programs still do not exist in my community and other Black and Latino communities, but can be found in more affluent neighborhoods. It is disturbing that this administration has continued the practice under the Bloomberg Administration, that systematically removed gifted and talented programs from community districts across the city. It's reflective of the thinking that only a limited number of Black and Latino children were talented and did not exist in sufficient numbers to warrant localized gifted and talented programs in their own neighborhoods. I call on Chancellor Carmen Farina and Mayor Bill de Blasio to work with members of the City Council, principals, educators, unions and parents to restructure the manner in which gifted and talented programs are designed, so that they will be readily available and convenient to children in our local community schools" -- **Council Member Inez D. Barron**

Request for testing forms were distributed at today's event. Forms are also available at public schools and online at <https://prod.semsnycdoe.com/parentsite/>.

#####