Department of Education
Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

Parents' Guide to New Small Schools 2008-09

The Department of Education has worked to create high-quality choices for New York City students and parents. At the start of the 2008-09 school year, 10% of public school students will be enrolled in schools that didn't exist in 2002. Many of these schools are new small high schools, which offer students rigorous alternatives to large high schools. Some new small schools are situated in newly-constructed buildings. Others have replaced schools that have closed, and still others share space with existing schools.

How are they operated?

New schools offer educational options to all New York City students based on the following principles:

- **Academic rigor**: Students are provided with a clear definition of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn, and classes are designed to ensure that all students achieve at high levels and graduate ready to succeed in college and life.

- **Personalization**: The schools enroll approximately 100 students in each grade, enabling teachers and principals to provide students the academic attention and support they need to succeed in the classroom.

- **Partnerships**: Most new small schools collaborate with an intermediary organization such as a university, youth development agency, or educational organization. These partners can provide valuable educational resources to schools. Partnerships with local community organizations, cultural institutions, and businesses can also help strengthen schools' ties with the communities they serve.

How have they performed?

New small schools serve more under-privileged students than their peers across the City.

- New small schools are enrolling traditionally underserved students at greater rates than other City schools, and once enrolled in these schools, underserved children are achieving at higher levels. In 2007-08, the incoming ninth grade class of new school students included higher percentages of African-American and Latino students, English Language Learners, and students that performed below grade level on 8th grade exams than their citywide peers. The percentage of ninth grade special education students at new small schools is roughly the same as the citywide average.

- In 2006, the 15 new small schools with senior classes had an average graduation rate of 77% compared to a citywide average graduation rate of 60%. In 2007, the 47 new schools with senior classes graduated an average of 76% of students. Many schools reside on campuses where large comprehensive high schools are phasing out. On average, new schools are graduating nearly 40% more students than the schools they replaced.

New schools bring intellectual, human, and financial capital to public schools.

- More than 120 community-based organizations enhance the educational and youth development opportunities provided to students in new schools. Each school develops its own partnerships based on the school's mission and curriculum.

- Many new secondary schools have been created in collaboration with intermediary organizations that serve as partners. Intermediary partners offer additional support—including school designs, curriculum, and professional development—throughout school start-up (planning through year 1 implementation), school phase-in (years 2, 3, 4), and school sustainability (year 5+). The multiple forms of capital intermediaries bring to new school development enable increased quality and scale.

How to apply to a new small school

Students apply to new small schools through the regular high school admissions process. To learn about high school admissions, go to www.schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High, or call a borough enrollment office. A list of borough enrollment offices can be found at www.nyc.gov/schools/ChoicesEnrollment/NewStudents/BEO+Contact+Information.

If you are interested in helping to create a new small school, please review the application guidelines and timelines posted on the Department of Education Web site at www.nyc.gov/schools/ChoicesEnrollment/SpecialPrograms/NewSchools/NewSchoolCreation/.